

Attracting the Audience When Giving a Presentation

Jitka Kolomazníková

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děkan



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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo zjistit, které kroky vedou k vytvoření prezentace, která by byla zajímavá pro publikum.

Teoretická část popisuje příslušné kroky a techniky, které by měl mluvčí zvládnout, aby dosáhl požadovaného výsledku.

Praktická část je zaměřena na skupinu lidí, která vyplnila dotazník, a jejímž záměrem bylo objasnit, v čem se odpovědi shodují či v čem se liší s ohledem na teoretickou část.

Klíčová slova:

prezentace, mluvčí, publikum, myšlenky

ABSTRACT

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to find out, what steps lead to a good presentation that would be interesting for the audience.

The theoretical part describes several steps and techniques that the speaker should master to gain desired result.

The practical part focuses on a group of people that filled in a questionnaire, and its aim was to clarify which answers confirm ideas explored in theoretical part and which turn out differently.

Keywords:

presentation, speaker, audience, ideas

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INTRODUCTION

In my bachelor thesis I have decided to deal with the issue of creating a presentation that listeners would really appreciate.

During these three years spent at Tomas Bata University we went through some special courses where we have learnt many interesting things that we could apply in the large amount of presentations done every semester. And since I am convinced this topic becomes more and more important not only in career of top managers, I thought it might be useful to have a detailed look at this issue.

For many people the presentation or simply a public speaking might be just a horrible and stressful task they have to face when working on a project. The fear of speaking in front of other people, the possibility there is always something that goes wrong and any other problems which influence the presentation. Then the speaking results as a boring speech, not at all interesting. Only, because the speaker wants to have this task done, and leave. But has he ever been wondering there might be a way how to change it? How to make it better even the best for the audience?

In my bachelor thesis, I hope I successfully explain the process of preparing a really good presentation that any listener would like. The aim of it is to prepare some kind of a guide that may help to plan a speech.

My bachelor thesis is divided into two parts. There are eight chapters. The first seven of them make the theoretical part where I deal with steps that lead to a good presentation. This part consists of chapters describing the process from the very beginning. It starts with choosing the topic, then it comes to preparing the speech, understanding and mastering the body language and at the end of the theoretical part there is one more chapter dealing with media.

I go through the most important actions that should be complied when delivering a presentation. I also try to describe common mistakes that may appear in the speech and since it is easy to get into contact with reporters that might be interested in recording the speech I want to explore a little bit the issue of presenting on TV and on the radio.

The most interesting chapter, at least for me, is the chapter where I explain the theory of six principles that every message should have and other pieces of advice that helps the audience to understand what is the issue about.

In the practical part that consists of only one chapter I explain the purpose of the questionnaire I created. Firstly, I introduce the group of people that was answering my questions and then I deal with results I got.

I. THEORY

1 FIRST STEPS

Among the first steps of the process of preparing a presentation there are three or four points that might be included. It is the decision about the topic, about the presentation type and the preparation of speech that comes along with understanding the audience.

1.1 Choosing a topic

The process of choosing a topic is extremely important. Since it is the beginning of the whole process of preparing a presentation, it should not be underestimated. In general, there are two possibilities to consider.

Either the topic is given, or the topic can be chosen by its presenter. When dealing with a given topic, the speaker can skip to choosing the type of his presentation or even to collecting materials.

According to the Presentation Magazine, there is nothing difficult on choosing a topic if the speaker is aware of two basic rules:

- 1) The topic should be chosen according to interests of both parties.
- 2) If the topic is accompanied by photos and pictures, it is always better. (Pearce 2011)

The audience is simply able to recognize if the speaker is or is not interested in the topic since they can easily understand the body language. A person that is interested in something, shares his passion with others when speaking about it. (Ibid.)

Pictures, on the other hand, help the audience to remember ideas and facts better than a written text.

Moreover, it is much easier to speak about a thing the speaker is an expert in. When speaking about anything else, the speaker may feel as an actor in a certain role that is not always authentic. (Ibid.)

Sometimes, unfortunately, it is not possible to choose, however, the speaker should try to do his best to achieve the same success as in case he could pick up his own topic. It might be hard but following certain rules when creating the presentation there is a high probability he will gain recognition for his work.

1.2 Types of presentation

As soon as the speaker knows the topic he should decide on the type of the presentation. The type certainly depends on the topic and on the purpose.

There are several types of presentations. Randall P. Whatley describes such types as informative, instructional, arousing, persuasive and a decision making presentation. (Whatley 2011)

1.2.1 Informative presentation

As the name suggests, in an informative presentation the speaker simply delivers a certain piece of information. It answers simple questions and it is usually short and not much complicated. (Ibid.)

1.2.2 Instructional presentation

In this kind of presentation people are usually given instructions. It is a bit longer than the informative one since it consists of a bigger amount of explanations. (Ibid.)

1.2.3 Arousing presentation

After having attended an arousing presentation, people should think about the issue that was explored. (Ibid.)

1.2.4 Persuasive presentation

The purpose of a persuasive presentation is to make people agree with presenter's opinions and ideas. There must be enough evidence to convince them. (Ibid.)

1.2.5 Decision making presentation

In a decision making presentation people are told what they should do and how they should do it. (Ibid.)

1.3 Searching for materials and their organization

Having chosen a topic and maybe the type that suits, the speaker should put an effort into collecting right material as soon as possible, studying it carefully and thinking about what he is going to say and how. He should think ahead and dedicate a lot of time to his research. This part of the preparation should be subordinated to audience. The whole

speech is addressed to them, they evaluate the performance. The speaker wants his listeners to gain new information and it is his turn to find a suitable way how to do it.

1.3.1 Getting to know the audience

As it has been already mentioned, needs of the audience should be met. The speaker should care about his listeners from the very beginning. Everybody has to realize that listeners are real people with their own needs and they are those who can give a feedback. (Reimold and Reimold 2003, 5)

Ann Nicholls describes these needs as a factor that is more important than any other thing considered during the process of preparing a presentation. (Nicholls 1999, 25)

Before the speaker begins to write a draft, he should realize to whom the speech will be given. He should find out something about his listeners. He has to know who they are. He should pay attention to their interests, age, occupation, sex, etc. He should find out what they have in common and whether their attendance is compulsory or voluntary.

The speaker should be adaptable since he can meet different groups of listeners. He should be ready to come across different cultures, there might be a problem with religion, or with stereotypes and prejudices.

1.3.2 Putting listeners first

Even if it is a bit hard, or really impossible, to meet needs of every single attendee sitting in the room, the audience always comes in first place. The main aim is to make listeners feel relaxed. The speaker might be dealing with following obstacles:

- bad timing; i.e. the timing of the presentation is just not right
- people pretend to be listening
- listeners are busy
- the audience does not feel comfortable (Taylor and Lester 2010, 38)

Or the audience might be tired and not able to concentrate on anything. (Witt and Fetherling 2009, 89)

Unfortunately, most of the time the speaker cannot influence the existing situation and he has to face these obstacles. On the other hand for some people it is a great challenge.

It is necessary to realize that listeners evaluate the speaker and the performance is addressed to them.

1.3.3 Organizing materials

As far as I am concerned, the presentation requires a lot of time to collect as much material as possible. Even if a half of it might not be useful, the speaker should have a wide range of material and sources to choose from. He should collect old materials and together with them information that are up to date. From those the speaker can cut out everything that seems less important or irrelevant to him. At the same time he can compare information he found, put it all together and in some way, get to the essential core. After having completed this step, the speaker can think about writing his speech and about the delivery.

2 PREPARING A SPEECH

The speech is still only on presenter's mind. It might be changed many times until it is perfect and its final version is ready to be written. Moreover, when preparing a speech, it is not about arranging a single act since it is formed from parts that differ from each other.

The presentation should consist of following parts:

- the opening (the introduction)
- the main part
- the conclusion

These parts are connected together and they cannot be omitted. When notes or materials are ready, this order is respected. On the other hand, I would argue the process of writing the presentation out begins with the main part.

2.1 Main part

It is always good to start from the main part of the presentation. It usually contains facts, the most important part of the whole speech. It is also the longest part. And materials should be ready at this point. The main part is based on interpretation of these materials and sources. It might be based also on ideas. In this case a research should precede the writing to prove it.

In this part the speaker should focus on what he wants to achieve, on what information and knowledge he would like his listeners to gain when speaking to them.

2.2 Openings

Many speakers open their presentation with a simple salutation and maybe saying who they are with an intention to approach the audience. Jeff Davidson believes this kind of opening may cause low interest among listeners that dislike such an ordinary opening. (Davidson 2003, 269 - 270)

I partially agree with Davidson's words but I would add that it depends on the occasion and the setting. Special occasions require an appropriate opening and also a correct greeting.

The speaker often appears in the room before anybody else. When the listeners start to enter this is the right moment to greet each of them. In my opinion just a little glance and whispered “Good morning.” or “Hello.” are enough. This is also a great opportunity to look at who participates. If the speaker greets all of his listeners like that, there is no need to greet them again at the beginning of his speech.

When everybody is in, the presentation starts and the presenter can soon get to his point. By this written above I do not mean that thinking about opening it is a waste of time. What I am saying is that in the opening part the speaker should focus on a preview of his presentation. He should say what it is going to be about.

There is one more possibility how the speaker can open his presentation. He may do it by asking a question. And the audience will know the answer after the presentation. (Marathe 2007, 37)

2.3 Closing

The closing should consist of the repetition of the most important facts or of a brief summary. Some time at the end should be reserved for questions. I think that question time can contribute to clarifying things that remained obscure.

The speaker should be ready to answer questions that have something to do with his field. There might be some questions that with no doubts would appear. He should listen carefully to the question to avoid misunderstanding and should not interrupt his listeners in the middle of a sentence. Then before answering he should think about the question carefully and about the answer, too. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 59)

The speaker may also encourage his listeners to ask, if he believes there were things worth asking. (Ibid.)

Speaker's answers should contain as much details as possible to provoke more and more questions. With good questions and answers it may turn into a great discussion. (Ibid.)

At the end Shirley Taylor and Alison Lester advise that after an important talk, or in this case after a presentation, it is good to send an email with the most important points. Or at least a summary to make sure that everybody understood. (Ibid.)

2.4 Inviting listeners

When reading about the email sent after the presentation was given, it made me consider also an email sent before the presentation takes place. It might be some kind of an invitation for listeners.

Company's corporate email may serve as a way how to invite people to a presentation. Such invitation gets to more people. Or a simple publishing on company's website might be enough. It should consist of basic information, of an outline saying where and when it happens, to whom it will be delivered. A good idea is to reveal only a part of the issue to make people want to come and participate. If the invitation is written well it may interest also people that have nothing to do with that field.

The speaker should not expect a great attendance if he does not inform anybody. It means he loses opportunity to speak in front of many people.

3 THE DELIVERY OF MESSAGE, IDEAS AND OPINIONS

When writing the main part of the speech, it is useful to think about how to deliver the message or how to spread it among people.

When reading through several books dealing with the delivery I was impressed by the theory of six principles written by Chip and Dan Heath.

3.1 Six principles

Chip and Dan Heath explored several more or less credible stories and compared them with economic or technical speeches and extracts of texts and they came to a conclusion about six principles. Contrary to professional material, stories had those six principles in common and that was the reason why they were easy to remember. They were dealing with the idea of putting these six principles into many other messages and it worked. (Heath and Heath 2007, 16 - 19)

According to their research the message should consist of following aspects:

- simplicity
- unexpectedness
- concreteness
- credibility
- emotion
- story (Ibid.)

3.1.1 Simplicity

The principle of simplicity means that your message should be short with profound meaning. No expressions which are hard to understand. (Ibid.)

3.1.2 Unexpectedness

This principle refers to how the spokesperson certainly gets the attention of the audience. He should surprise them somehow or find a way how to make them curious. To make them want to know more and more. (Ibid.)

3.1.3 Concreteness

Ideas are not clear unless words and expressions that everybody can understand or imagine are used. If too technical vocabulary appears in the speech, all effort leads to misunderstanding. People can also get bored. (Ibid.)

3.1.4 Credibility

Few years ago people used to look up to authorities. Now it is a bit harder to persuade somebody. The question is how to make people trust the speaker. (Ibid.)

3.1.5 Emotion

Listeners should feel something when listening to a speech. The message containing emotion is much easier to remember. (Ibid.)

3.1.6 Story

The speech is more effective if the speaker adds a story into it. The story can enrich the message and let people picture it in reality. (Ibid.)

When thinking about all principles that were mentioned above, I remembered news, articles in newspapers and what they have in common, why people read them. And they all must contain these principles.

Another point I would like to mention is that in my opinion it depends on words that are used in the text. Words carry the meaning of the message, make people feel something. Every speaker should pay attention to the usage of words when writing his speech.

3.2 Engaging audience

When writing a speech, the presenter should think about how to engage audience. From my point of view if the presentation is short or simply informative, the audience does not have to be somehow engaged. Engaging the audience serves either to wake your listeners up or change the monotonous course of the presentation.

I am not sure that I agree with this idea. It all depends on the kind of people sitting in the room. Since nobody apart from the presenter expects to be active, an attempt to engage the audience can be seen as bothering.

On the other hand their reaction might become some kind of feedback for the speaker. And as Witt and Fetherling explain, it makes people feel they are creating the presentation with the spokesperson. (Witt and Fetherling 2009, 35)

3.3 Understanding the audience

Concreteness and simplicity help the audience to understand speaker's ideas and thoughts. On one hand it is great if the speaker uses them when explaining a particular issue, on the other hand it might not be enough.

Soon after having explored six principles, Chip and Dan Heath discovered that another step that must be complied is understanding the audience and their “lack of knowledge”.

Basically, for the speaker it is “impossible to imagine what it's like to lack that knowledge”, e.g. he cannot imagine how it feels to do not know what is going to be revealed. (Heath and Heath 2007, 19 - 20)

We can see this situation in everyday life, at home or at school. Children study to gain new information and this information should be delivered according to what I explained before.

One of barriers that leads to misunderstanding when sharing ideas might be the age. It might be an age difference together with experience that older people have in contrary to younger people.

As soon as the speaker understands how it feels to have no idea, he may adjust his speech to make it clearer.

I think the easiest way how to understand it is to find a friend similar to people that would be sitting in the audience and ask him about it.

3.4 Telling a story

I have already explored a little bit the issue about putting a story into the message. Of course, the message becomes a bit longer, however, more interesting at the same time.

People like listening to stories. Films, books are based on stories. And people remember them. The story makes them understand the situation better. They see real pictures in their minds. (Heath and Heath 2007, 208)

3.5 Avoiding mistakes

There are several mistakes that can destroy the whole impression. When planning a speech the speaker should not leave a space for silly mistakes. Among those I would include:

- unpleasant jokes (about women, other races, other religious groups, politics)
- vulgar vocabulary
- making fun of people sitting in the room (Taylor and Lester 2010, 35)

Generally, the speaker should never enrich his speech by adding any of those things if he wants to avoid problems. Also negative comments addressed to anybody who is present or away are not appropriate.

In case he wants to joke, he can joke about himself or he can tell funny stories that happened in his life. (Ibid.)

3.6 Length of the presentation

It is impossible to determine the right length of the presentation. There are so many topics and each of them requires another length. More complex topics cannot take only 10 or 20 minutes. And it has no sense to talk about a simple topic for more than 30 minutes. But it depends on the delivery and on the presenter. If he can catch the attention of people and keep it for a longer time, it is perfect. If not, he may make people feel they came to waste their time.

Nowadays the speaker is often given precise time that restricts his possibilities. In such cases it is important to stick to the main part of the presentation to deliver as much as possible and shorten the introduction and closing if it is necessary.

4 VOICE AND BODY LANGUAGE

At this point, the speech is written or at least prepared and it is time to focus on voice and body language. Especially the voice has to be trained since it accompanies the whole presentation. And he should focus on it when practising his presentation alone or in front of friends.

When meeting somebody for the first time people often notice clothes, accessories, physical appearance (gender, height, race, etc.), age, behaviour, voice, words, face, posture and other qualities that might be seen or heard. Moreover what people see is influenced by previous experience, religion or education. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 22 - 23)

Having read what people notice about newcomers it should mean voice and body language are among the most important qualities and they are worth improving.

Carmine Gallo talks about rehearsing, that is the key point for him when finishing his preparation before delivering the speech. It should be done as if it took place in real, step by step. Then if the speaker has a possibility to record himself he should take advantage of it. Video or audio of his rehearsing would help the speaker when trying to avoid mistakes. And he can see himself presenting from listener's point of view. (Gallo 2005)

That is a great possibility how to improve voice, body language and together with them the first impression. The speaker can also see his progress day by day, which may help him to remove all more or less visible mistakes.

4.1 Voice

Not only what is said is important but also the way it is said. The tone of voice and the pronunciation are crucial. It is the voice that can cause a big misunderstanding. We live in a multicultural society and when the speaker has to face listeners that speak other language, the articulation and pronunciation have a huge impact on the delivered message. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 154 - 157)

This is certainly true. Even though many people do not have any experience with foreigners, they may have problem with understanding people speaking the same language. (Ibid.)

It is hard to communicate with a person that cannot articulate. Also when using a language that is not native for both – speaker and listeners, it is important for all of them to try to do their best to avoid misunderstanding.

4.1.1 Common troubles

There are few things about voice that the speaker should avoid, such as speaking too loudly/quietly, voice shaking, murmuring or hesitating. Similar troubles make the message sound untrustworthy. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 83 – 84)

When speaking too loudly, the presenter sounds aggressive. When speaking too quietly or murmuring, people can see it as a lack of self-confidence. Voice shaking may appear at the beginning of a presentation as a result of fear of public speaking and/or when the speaker is not sure about his words. (Ibid.)

4.1.2 Working with voice

Shirley Taylor and Alison Lester advise a simple exercise concerning saying one simple sentence using different tones of voice. That is the way to find the most pleasant tone. If it sounds good to the speaker, it will be probably sound the same to the public. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 82)

4.1.3 Better understanding

In real life people often have problems with understanding. They might have a little time to listen (and to speak) or there is a lot of noise. These conditions may exist also during the presentation. Speaker can avoid this situation like that:

- speaker slows down
- speaker uses less professional vocabulary
- speaker uses visual aids, pictures, leaflets, where the most important information is written. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 79)

4.1.4 Emotions in voice

In some situation, emotions can appear in your voice. The voice may shake in case of the fear of public speaking. On the contrary, people may hear also excitement in speaker's voice. Everything the presenter feels is easy to recognize from the voice.

In such situation, the speaker should wait and calm down before continuing his speech. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 82)

The voice sounds differently if the speaker is angry, sad, happy or nervous. I think everybody is aware of it when listening to voices of other people or his own. It changes a lot and it takes only a short time.

4.1.5 Breath

Stress may cause the speaker's breath is not calm but rather quick. That is wrong. Even though it is hard to concentrate on it the speaker should try belly breathing, i.e. breathe slowly and deeply. Otherwise he cannot make it with his voice. (Witt and Fetherling 2009, 165 – 166)

4.2 Body language

The body language includes everything that is expressed by the body not only during the presentation. It is mostly about the posture, gestures and the face. Even the clothes might be included. It does not matter if the person is sitting, standing or walking. The body gives clear signals and influences the first impression.

That is why I believe that it is good for the speaker to master this so-called silent language and make an advantage of it.

4.2.1 Posture

Posture or simply the position of the body says much about the speaker and also about listeners. Observing someone's posture helps to find out how the person feels, what he thinks and maybe what kind of person he is.

Most of the time when presenting the speaker walks or stands but he can also sit down on a chair. In all of these cases the posture might be upright or slouch.

The upright one definitely indicates the person is relaxed, has a certain experience and is self-confident. He shows that he has no reason to hide anything. (Koegel 2009, 56)

A slouch posture makes the other part feel the person is not interested in the issue or he does not take it seriously. Most of the time it is a chair that makes people to feel relaxed and take this posture. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 89)

There is no doubt the speaker should seem to be self-confident and persuasive. And it would be impossible to achieve it with a slouch posture.

4.2.2 Gestures

In some cultures, gestures make part of a daily communication. I would say all kinds of gestures, apart from those vulgar, are generally accepted. The only trouble is when there are too many gestures.

The safest way to avoid a high number of gestures is to stay calm with arms attached to the body at the beginning of the presentation. (Koegel 2009, 56)

My advise would be to practice the presentation also with gestures.

On the contrary, certain moves with arms and hands are required when pointing to something (not to somebody) or explaining a specific issue.

4.2.3 Face and eye contact

Face and eye contact are as much important as the posture and gestures. Face can show any of your feelings. And when the speaker looks at his listeners he might see whether they understand his words or they are confused.

From the listener's point of view, for most people it is pleasant to look at people that smile a lot. A face that frowns evokes a negative impression and fear.

The eye contact between the speaker and the listeners is useful. It makes people feel that the message is delivered to each of them.

The speaker's face should reflect the meaning of the message to make it more credible. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 93)

4.2.4 Clothing

Now it might be obvious that the clothes the speaker wears may have an impact on the outcome of the presentation. From my point of view, some people care and some people do not care about clothes. Young people might be more relaxed.

The speaker should pay a special attention when giving a speech to people coming from other countries. Some nations may require a certain dress code. So he should be precisely informed about what kind of clothes he should wear to avoid embarrassing situations.

It depends also on the company and how the boss wants his employees to represent the image of the company. This is worth finding out in case the speaker comes to another company that respects rules about clothes set by company.

5 NERVOUSNESS

I do not think that being nervous when delivering a speech is a mistake or a reason to do not prepare any presentation. It is obvious it is connected with a lot of stress and the fear of public speaking is just unbearable for somebody.

5.1 How to deal with nervousness

Nervousness may appear any time before delivering a presentation. Some people have serious health problems, their hands or voice can shake or they cannot eat and sleep. Presentations made nowadays are really demanding.

Important is to realize that nervousness does not have to be only negative. It can be regarded as a very positive factor.

Koegel claims that our nervousness forces us to become better in our activities. And in case the speaker can turn it into a positive force, he can get unbelievable results. (Koegel 2009, 135)

5.2 Getting rid of nervousness

Exercising the speech or the rehearsing explored in chapter 4 could help a lot. After rehearsing for two or more times in front of speaker's family or a video camera, the speaker becomes more and more self-confident and the final speaking does not sound as if he was speaking for the first time. It sounds more professional.

Or if the speaker is brave, he can seek for every occasion to give a presentation and with a higher number of given presentations his fear will decrease or even disappear completely.

The speaker should not panic in case he realizes he forgot to say something very important. If it happens, he can go back to it at the end of the presentation.

Everybody forgets. It can happen to anyone. (Koegel 2009, 137)

Not only old people cannot remember something. Many speakers spend few nights before the presentation studying material and a lot of pages. It is not easy to learn a large amount of text in a short time. So it is not necessary to learn the speech by heart and be nervous when some word slips one's mind.

6 VISUAL AIDS

As a story may be included into the message for better understanding of the reality so may visual aids. They support the delivery of the message and every speaker, nowadays, takes advantage of them. Such aids may turn a usual speech into an unusual one.

Any aid related to sight can be included. I would divide them into two basic groups. In the first group I would include simple visual aids and in the other one visual aids using modern technologies.

Simple visual aids include:

- pictures, charts (printed)
- leaflets (easy to distribute)
- various samples (of products)

With the expansion of modern technologies the speaker may use:

- Microsoft PowerPoint
- video
- pictures, charts (this time showed on the screen)
- 3D illustrations (the most up to date)
- etc.

Of course I could mention one more group consisting of speakers that enjoy presenting without using any kind of aids.

6.1 Simple visual aids

Simple visual aids have been used for ages before the modern technology started to be available for ordinary people. These aids are proven, the speaker does not need any special equipment. When speaking about leaflets that are often printed there should not appear any grammatical mistake in the text.

6.2 Visual aids using modern technologies

Modern technologies may seem more attractive to listeners. Before planning their usage it is important to find out whether the room where the presentation takes place allows using such aids, mainly the most modern. If not, it is useful to bring some equipment, or do it without.

6.3 Advantages of using visual aids

Visual aids give a great opportunity to imprint real pictures or thoughts in listeners' minds. If something cannot be described by presenter's words it is time to show it. And the issue becomes less and less abstract for the audience.

Visual aids should be prepared primarily for the audience but they can become very helpful also for the speaker. Visual aids such as PowerPoint presentation can easily substitute notes and lead the speaker slowly through the whole presentation. But still it is not accepted if the speaker watches the screen all the time without trying to reach any eye contact.

Such a presentation made in PowerPoint often includes various pictures, animations and a video. And it is the most spread kind of a visual aid. It can offer slides in various colours to catch the attention of the audience. There is no doubt pictures make the presentation more attractive in eyes of listeners and this is proved by many people, among them by Dorothy Leeds.

Dorothy Leeds' theory about a visual society is based on a research that says people remember much more about facts they have seen. (Leeds 2008, 147)

Charts including numbers, which are crucial in many companies, sometimes mean more than pictures and have a bigger value.

Leaflets are cheap and listeners can take them home and the picture of your presentation could have a greater and longer impact. On the other hand I would classify them as a bit old-fashioned kind of aid, and at the same time easy to get lost.

6.4 Disadvantages of using visual aids

When using visual aids the presenter should know about difficulties that may go along with it. It may happen that they do not work. Visual aids should not be taken for granted.

Even if almost everybody can work with a computer in these days, there are still some individuals that are unable to do so. For those using visual aids becomes a huge problem. It is not necessary to use visual aids. The older generation is used to handle with simple aids and the presentation without modern technology might be as much effective as the one with it. Their experience comes from the number of speeches they have given so far. So it is better to avoid using certain visual aids if the speaker does not know how to use them.

Younger experienced presenters may have difficulty with using a borrowed laptop or computer. The presenter may come across some technical problems that rise the level of possible nervousness. It is always better to try to switch on and test the given equipment before attendees come in. In case of malfunction an appropriate person such as an IT technician should be called to solve it.

In case the speaker wants to encourage his listeners to search for more information and the PowerPoint presentation contains links to show where, the access to the Internet is needed.

The last thing that may go wrong is that the material prepared on computer does not work. To prevent such situation the presentation should be proven using equipment of somebody else.

Unexpected problems might make the presenter feel ashamed. For some people it is an unpleasant or even a very embarrassing situation.

6.5 Graphics and layout

When preparing a PowerPoint presentation there is a lot of space for creativity. I have already mentioned colours and pictures.

Background should reflect the topic or the mood of the presentation. Colours should be chosen according to the setting. Writing should be big enough, clearly visible and not hidden among a huge amount of pictures.

I think the speaker should put an effort in creating an unusual presentation using different layout and colours that fit together so that listeners can stare, admire it and remember it as an uncommon presentation never seen before.

6.6 Other aids

Many other aids can take part in a presentation. Such aids influence the rest of senses. It might be touch, hearing or even taste and the sense of smell. The chapter where I explored emotions says the speaker should make people feel something. This is a similar case. Here people get in touch with something for the first time and gain some experience.

Audio is connected with hearing. It is not usually a fixed part of the presentation, it is one of the aspects of a video. So it does not have to be described.

New products should be available so that people could touch them, find out what they are made of (in case it was not said before).

When presenting some kind of products that are intended for eating or some kind of a scent, people should be allowed to taste it or to try it. Maybe a little sample of the product is a good idea. Such experience may immediately rise their interests in products. It may encourage the audience to ask more questions during the presentation or at the end of it.

6.7 How to use visual aids

The speaker might have an experience with using visual aids but he must make himself sure that he can use them correctly.

Visual aids must be seen, it should never happen somebody from the audience cannot see a thing. If somebody cannot see it, it is useless to show it. (Witt and Fetherling 2009, 139)

Visual aids should not be given to the audience, as soon as they get a sample of any product they do not listen to the speaker anymore. (Ibid.)

I do not agree with the last statement, from listener's point of view I want to get a sample to check whether it is as good as the speaker says. Otherwise it is useless for me to attend the presentation. A solution to make both listeners and speaker satisfied might be giving samples at the end of the presentation before launching question time.

7 DEALING WITH MEDIA

Media, including television and radio, may sometimes play a very important role. The speech can be somehow recorded, sometimes the speaker has to face a video camera.

All pieces of advice and rules that were explored in previous chapters are helpful when dealing with media, too. Moreover, this kind of presenting in public gets to a wider range of spectators (various age categories) or in case of the radio to a huge amount of listeners also via online archives that save such material for a very long time.

7.1 Television

There is not much difference when speaking on television in contrary to an ordinary speech. The speaker has to be aware of his posture, his face and voice.

On television there is usually less time to speak so it is necessary to get quickly to the core and do not bother people with unimportant information. Having seen some speeches or short performances on television, among which I would include also news, I think the video camera focuses mainly on the speaker's face and microphone.

In case of speaking to a reporter, it might seem as a face to face conversation though the message is delivered to many other people.

Since the face is the main visible thing, the presenter should have something that makes people want to watch him and listen to him. It is not always about good-looking face. It is the charisma that works here.

Janet Trewin argues that the presenter might be good, his speeches may be brilliant, but he cannot succeed with no charisma. (Trewin 2003, 145)

Charisma is a little bit abstract as a term. There might be many qualities that influence it. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English defines this term as

“a natural ability to attract and interest other people and make them admire you”. (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 2011)

The presenter should be concentrated and calm no matter what happens around. (Trewin 2003, 13)

Again, the face should reflect the message. (Taylor and Lester 2010, 93)

7.2 Radio

I am not sure how many people listen to the radio nowadays but still there are stations that focus mostly on broadcasting news or interviews and they have their faithful listeners. Many people are used to listen to the radio in their cars or at work however, I would say they do not pay much attention to it. Unfortunately there was no statistics available online to compare how many people listen to the radio instead of watching television.

When speaking on the radio the strongest instrument the speaker has is his own voice. It must be healthy. If the speaker knows he is going to give a speech on the radio he should try to prevent himself from consuming alcoholic drinks, milk and smoking. Also a cold or an illness may cause the voice does not sound good. (Live Science 2006)

Many shows on air are successful because the speaker has an amazing voice. I would say that it might be some kind of charisma such as in case of presenting on TV. It is hard to say what exactly it is but everybody can hear it. For me it is the way of speaking and vocabulary that often show whether the spokesperson is educated or not.

II. ANALYSIS

8 QUESTIONNAIRE

In the practical part I decided to ask several people about their experience with presentations in general using a list of some questions.

The questionnaire was given to employees of the District Court of Zlín and few other people that have some experience with presentations. Most of them are graduates or they are studying at university to obtain more qualifications than they have now.

8.1 Examined group of people

As I have mentioned above, most of the people examined in my questionnaire, work for the District Court of Zlín. They participate in various presentations both as listeners and speakers. They are regularly given various presentations and lectures within their workplace and/or they visit lectures taking place in other cities such as in Kroměříž. Those that are currently studying, attend lectures at the Department of Pedagogical Sciences at Tomas Bata University in Zlín.

In this group there were also people working as IT technicians, judges, various assistants, accountants and managers.

I asked thirty-three employees to fill in my short questionnaire, to be precise, twenty-five women and eight men, aged 30 - 50.

8.2 Questions

I have chosen twelve practical questions to ask since I wanted to find something about these people and their experience with presentations or with public speaking. All the questions were chosen carefully according to the theoretical part of my bachelor thesis. I did not want to use too complex questions and that is why I asked about:

- their gender
- their age
- experience with presenting
- role of speaker/listener
- what attracts them about the speaker
- what attracts them about the presentation

- what qualities the speaker should have
- what is the ideal length of the presentation
- presenter's clothes
- whether they are active participants or not
- whether they take the advantage of question time at the end
- whether it is necessary for the speaker to know the audience before
- whether they care about the age of the speaker
- whether they recognize nervousness

8.3 Filling in

I have to say that all people who participated were thinking about their answers carefully and it took them appropriate time to finish writing. There were not any problems with understanding the questions thanks to accurate instructions. All the questions were clear.

8.4 Results

In this part I would like to comment on results of the questionnaire and on what people answered. Some results were pretty unexpected for me.

8.4.1 Experience with presenting

In the first question I asked people about their experience with presenting and they could simply answer yes/no.

Most of them, some 94% answered they do have such experience.

8.4.2 Listener or speaker

Next question was connected with the first one. People, who answered yes in the previous question, had to clarify, whether they have an experience in the role of a listener, in the role of a speaker or both.

More than half of them (61%) underlined they rather participate as listeners, 21% as speakers and 6% ticked both.

8.4.3 What is attractive on the speaker

I wanted to find out what they focus on when seeing the speaker so they could choose from three possibilities - appearance, voice and body language.

Appearance catches the attention of 64% of them. Then it is the voice (27%) and the body language is the last one.

The body language was ticked by only 9% of people.

This amazed me a lot. I thought that employees that meet new people every day for a long time do not care about their appearance but about the body language.

8.4.4 What is attractive on the presentation

In this question people could choose from the topic of the presentation, visual aids and the graphics.

For 85% of people the topic is the thing that attracts them the most. Only 6% voted for visual aids and 9% for graphics.

I think it is like that because employees of court are mostly interested in facts and they do not care about graphics or colours since similar things are not a part of their field. So the content is crucial for them.

8.4.5 Skills

There were several skills I mentioned in my theoretical part so this question offered five different answers. People could tick following skills:

- working with voice
- cooperation with audience
- using visual aids
- keeping the eye contact
- mastering body language

Result showed people want the speaker to cooperate with the audience (64%) then he should know how to work with his voice (27%).

Each of the last three possibilities got only 3%.

8.4.6 Length of the presentation

I wanted to know how long the presentation should be and I let people choose from:

- 10 – 20 minutes

- 20 – 30 minutes
- 30 – 40 minutes
- it does not matter

Answers showed people think the presentation should take 20 – 30 minutes (40%) or it might be shorter, too (30%).

8.4.7 Clothes

I asked what clothes the presenter should wear to make a good impression. Whether his clothes should be formal, informal or it does not matter. And because the society is open minded I put there also sports clothes. Just to see if somebody ticks it.

For people the clothing is still important since 73% went with formal clothes. Other possibilities mentioned above were chosen by a small percentage of people.

Here I verified that even though many employees wear casual clothes in their workplace (they wear also jeans) when dealing with visitors, they still appreciate formal clothes.

8.4.8 Participation

I was wondering whether they are active participants or not. They could answer simply yes/no or that they do not know.

Most of people answered they are not active participants (61%). The question should be more specified since I expected most of them to answer yes. Maybe they participate but not with enthusiasm since their participation is compulsory. Many of such courses take 8 hours and do not take place in Zlín. This means they have to travel to participate.

8.4.9 Question time

The question time should be part of every presentation so I wanted to know if they ask the presenter if there is such possibility.

A half (52%) answered they do not ask, 18% of them ask and 30% sometimes. This is maybe influenced by the fact they are not active participants. In case the topic is boring for them, they have no reason to ask at the end of the presentation.

If I have asked another group of people I think I would have got a similar result.

8.4.10 Getting to know the audience

Having explored the issue about the fact that the speaker should find out who will attend his presentation, I asked whether they think it is necessary.

Unfortunately most of them (61%) think it is not necessary. I was surprised by this result. However the examined group of people attends speeches of experts from the same field. It makes me think they do not need to know more about each other.

8.4.11 Age

The age might play also an important role in the presentation. I asked what they think about it.

Majority of people answered that it depends on the presenter and his skills that the age does not mean anything.

Before having seen written answers I thought they prefer older speakers that have more experience in the field. But as I found out they are given speeches by experienced presenters of all age categories.

8.4.12 Nervousness

In the last questions I wanted to know how much they are aware of speaker's nervousness. I bet everybody has seen a presentation delivered by a nervous man or woman or felt like that so the result was not surprising.

Nervousness is clearly visible for 67% of people filling in my questionnaire, 9% of them claim they do not recognize it and 24% of them do not care about nervousness.

CONCLUSION

In this bachelor thesis I was trying to show the whole process of preparing a presentation, a good presentation that the audience would like.

Firstly the topic must be considered. The topic should suit the speaker and the audience. If the spokesperson is given a less interesting topic he has to think about the delivery and try to gain the same goal as with the interesting one.

Then when preparing a speech it is good to get know the audience. Who are they? Their age, interests, sometimes gender and so on. The speaker should realize that his audience is the most important part of the whole presentation.

As soon as he gets to know his audience, the speaker should prepare and organize materials. Special attention should be paid to avoiding mistakes. Mistakes could easily damage the whole presentation. Then he should think about parts of the whole speech.

As the next step I included the delivery of speaker's ideas and opinions. He should think about the opening of possible argument and about how to engage the audience. There are also so-called "six principles" that any argument should have.

Later when the speaker starts to prepare his talk he needs to be sure that he is able to work with his own voice. It should sound as a voice of an interesting and confident person. At this point he should be aware of his breath, too.

If the talk is ready, the speaker should practice mastering the body language that will also talk to his audience. Mastering it is an advantage that can lead to a better delivery. The speaker will not show anything that would be wrong for his presentation and at the same time he can read the body language of his audience. If he does not care about body language it is a huge disadvantage.

Visual aids can sometimes enrich every presentation. The presented topic will become more concrete for the audience.

At the end of the theoretical part I got to dealing with media, to be precise, to how to talk on TV when almost the whole body is seen and the voice is heard and how to talk on the radio.

In the practical part I had a possibility to work with a group of employees that filled in my questionnaire. And they have done it with pleasure. Their answers confirmed some things that were explored in my theoretical part and on the other hand there were some answers I did not expect at all, such as in case where I was asking what attracts them about

the speaker and what attracts them the most when seeing him. I would say that the examined group of people likes the routine.

However, I think I have explored the most important steps that should appear in the process of preparing a really good presentation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- E.g. For example.
Etc. And so on.
Ibid. In the same place.
I.e. In other words.

APPENDICES

P I Questionnaire

APPENDIX P I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Vážení respondenti,
prosím vás o vyplnění dotazníku k mé bakalářské práci, týkající se prezentování před publikem. Vyplnění vám zabere jen pár minut. Předem děkuji za váš čas a za spolupráci.

DOTAZNÍK – Jak zaujmout publikum při prezentování

Jste : žena muž (označte prosím křížkem)

Váš věk:.....

Máte nějakou zkušenost s prezentováním? (označte prosím křížkem)

ano ne

1. Pokud ano, tak jako posluchač či prezentující? (podtrhněte)

2. Co vás na prezentujícím nejdříve zaujme?

(očísľujte od 1 do 3, /1 = nejvíce/)

vzhled

hlas

řeč těla

3. Co vás na samotné prezentaci nejvíce zaujme?

(očísľujte od 1 do 3, /1 = nejvíce/)

téma prezentace

vizuální pomůcky

grafické zpracování (barvy, typ písma, fotografie, atd.)

4. Co by měl ovládat správný prezentující? (očísľujte od 1 do 5, /1 = nejvíce/)

pracovat s hlasem spolupracovat s publikem používat vizuální pomůcky
udržovat oční kontakt s publikem ovládat řeč těla

5. Jaká je ideální délka prezentace? (podtrhněte)

10-20 minut 20-30 minut 30-40 minut nerozhoduje

**6. Jak by měl být prezentující oblečen, aby působil dobrým dojmem?
(podtrhněte)**

sportovně ležérně formálně
na oděvu nezáleží

7. Patříte mezi aktivní účastníky prezentací? (podtrhněte)

ano ne občas, záleží na tématu

8. Pokud je na závěr prezentace prostor na otázky, využíváte jej? (podtrhněte)

ano, vždycky ne, nikdy občas (uved'te konkrétně kdy)

**9. Je podle Vás nutné, aby prezentující znal své publikum předem?
(podtrhněte)**

ano ne nevím

10. Záleží na věku prezentujícího? (podtrhněte)

ano, s věkem přibývají zkušenosti ne, je to individuální
nemůžu posoudit

11. Poznáte, že prezentující je nervózní? (podtrhněte)

ano – třese se mu hlas, potí se,...

ne, nepoznám

nezabývám se tím