



[DR. SHIRLEY'S CAREER CORNER]

By: DR. SHIRLEY A. WHITE
President
Success Images

Reprinted from the May 2007 issue of BIC

Making presentations with confidence, control — part 2

Your effectiveness as a speaker depends upon what you have to say about your topic. Knowing where to look is a starting point for finding the best possible information. Four good sources of information are personal knowledge, observation, personal interviews and research.

Preparing the body of your presentation

At this point, I'll bet you are asking yourself, "What happened to the introduction? After all, since the introduction is the first part of the presentation, it should be the first section to write."

Like a good introduction, a good conclusion is not a matter of accident. It results from careful planning.

Actually, if you think about it, you'll realize that it is somewhat difficult to work on an introduction until you know the nature of the material you will be presenting. Organizing the body of your talk involves selecting and developing the material that explains or supports your main points. Basically, you can organize your presentation in three major ways: time order, topic order and problem/solution order.

Time order presents the main points in a chronological sequence. This kind of order often helps explain how to do something, how to make something or how something happened.

Topic order is a type of organiza-

tion that allows you to utilize your main points in developing parts of your purpose. The points may go from general to specific, least important to most important or some other logical sequence.

Problem/solution order organizes the main points to show that there is a problem that requires a change in behavior and/or attitude, that your solution will solve the problem and that your solution is the best or one of the best ways to solve the problem.

These methods of organization can provide alternative structures for your presentation. They help your audience understand the point of your talk. Remember, though, to develop your ideas through the use of examples, stories, statistics, comparisons/contrasts, quotes, personal experience and so on.

Preparing the introduction

A typical introduction has at least three potential purposes: to get initial attention, to create a bond of goodwill between speaker and audience, and to lead into the content of the presentation.

The most effective way to ensure that you will make an effective introduction is to try out two or three different ones, practice them, and then pick the one that seems best. Introductions can range from 10 percent to 30 percent of your presentation. How long should yours be? Long enough to put the audience in the frame of mind that will encourage them to listen to you.

Some examples of attention-getting strategies are a startling statement, a rhetorical question, quotations, anecdotes, illustrations, suspense, compliments, humor and personal reference.

Whichever one or combination of several you use, it should be appropriate to your topic and in good taste.

The introduction is not going to make your presentation an instant success, but an effective one will grab an audience's attention.

Preparing the conclusion

Shakespeare said, "All's well that ends well," and nothing could be truer of a good presentation. Like a good introduction, a good conclusion is not a matter of accident. It results from careful planning.

The major goal of the conclusion is to summarize the presentation in a way that reminds the audience of what you said and to hit home in such a way that they will remember your words, consider your appeal or act on what you said. Examples of conclusions that will work for both short and long presentations include the summary, the persuasive appeal, the challenge, the emotional appeal and the humorous conclusion.

As with an introduction, it is difficult to tell whether a conclusion is effective unless you have something to compare it with. My recommendation is that you work on several conclusions for any presentation you prepare, and then choose the one that seems best.

Now that your presentation is prepared, you are ready to work on delivering it with confidence and credibility. Stay tuned for part 3 to learn the key elements of effective delivery.

To inquire about Dr. White's programs and publications, please contact her at (225) 769-2307 or visit her Web site at www.successimages.com. □