

Self-presentation and communication in front of the audience

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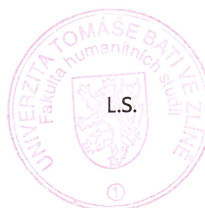
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ABSTRAKT

Tato práce popisuje jednotlivé kroky přípravy prezentace. Zaměřuje se na cíle přednášejícího, analýzu publika, definuje základní typy prezentací, se kterými se mohou lidé nejčastěji setkat. Vysvětluje, proč je důležité zabývat se místem prezentace, sbíráním materiálů, jejich následným tříděním a výběrem audio-vizuálních pomůcek. Dále se zabývá neverbální komunikací a nervozitou, které mohou značně ovlivnit průběh prezentace. Cílem této bakalářské práce je zjistit, jestli je prezentace pro lidi skutečně důležitá a zda má příprava vliv na samotný projev přednášejícího.

Klíčová slova:

Prezentace, mluvčí, cíle, publikum, typy prezentací, materiály, audio-vizuální pomůcky, vzhled prezentátora, nervozita, otázky, hodnocení.

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes single steps in preparing a presentation. It focuses on the speaker's objectives, analyzing an audience, and defines the basic types of presentations which people can meet. The thesis explains why it is important to consider the venue, the collection of materials, their classification and the right choice of audio-visual aids. It considers non-verbal communication and nervousness, which can influence the whole process of delivering the presentation. The aim of this thesis is to find out if the presentation is really so important for people and if the preparation has a crucial impact on the speaker's speech.

Keywords:

Presentation, speaker, goals, audience, types of presentations, materials, audio-visual aids, presenter's appearance, nervousness, questions, evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

People are surrounded by information everywhere. They are confronted by it from advertisements, magazines, newspapers or the internet. Today, the majority of young people want to study at university because of their dream future job but this means that they must absorb large amounts of information. Many people think that to have knowledge is enough, but they are wrong.

The crucial thing is to know how to express gained information to other people. It is useless to have a particular knowledge when people are not able to deliver it. Today, the most used way to express one's own thought is via a presentation. It seems to be a new invention but in the past people made speeches too. They called it rhetoric. Presentations are a way of expressing thoughts, persuading people or informing them.

Presenting is not only a speech about a certain topic, presenting is an art. Each presentation is unique. When two people are asked to give a presentation on the same topic, both presentations will be totally or slightly different. This is the reason why professional speakers love making presentations. It requires them to be creative and emphatic. It is nothing more pleasant for the speaker than being questioned about things connected with his speech by the audience or them leaving with new and useful information.

Today's trend says that everybody should have a basic knowledge of how give a speech. Children and young people face presentations in primary and secondary schools and also in high schools. It could be a short speech about famous author. As children grow, requirements for their ability increase. At university, students are taught how to prepare and deliver presentations. Later on, students are requested to show their gained knowledge.

Today, we can exaggerate that people are divided into two groups. The first group thinks that giving a speech is easy. They know some basic information from school and other knowledge is a waste of time for them. They have never spent much time in preparing the presentation. On the contrary, the second group, mostly professionals or people who work in higher positions, insist on proper preparation. For them it is essential to be well prepared so they can say: "I did my best and I'm satisfied enough with my presentation to deliver a great speech." Is it essential to spend time on lengthy preparation? Are presentations really so important or are they over-popularized and overestimated?

On the one hand we can see responsibility, a willingness to be better and improve oneself, but the presenter must invest his free time in preparation. On the other hand, we can see an easy-going speaker who thinks that some steps in the preparation of a speech are useless, a waste of time and therefore they omit them. What is a better and more effective approach?

1 TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS

A presentation helps the presenter introduce, persuade or give instructions. If the presentation is to be successful, the speaker must make a plan. It is unprofessional and usually ineffective to present something without prior, at least slight basic knowledge about preparing the presentation. Presentations can be divided according to the length and main purpose of the speech. It is not true that shorter speeches are easier to prepare than longer ones. Professional speakers know that they must choose suitable and valuable information and structure it well to touch the audience.

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

Lao-tzu

(Reynolds 2008, 222)

1.1.1 Basic rules

Basic rules are crucial for any type of presentation. The first rule states that the speaker gives objective and true information. The presenter uses diagrams, charts and other supporting visual materials. He collects facts and figures from reliable sources. It is obvious that the speaker chooses quite different information for different presentations.

It is recommended to have prepared a presentation based on true information but also support it by telling stories, giving one's own experiences, examples or using comparisons. It is necessary to give all the collected information in the right order. Information which the speaker wants to give must be delivered from the audience's point of view.

Is information clear enough for people to understand it? Is it professional enough not to bore the audience?

The speaker must consider these and other points before the speech. The presenter must remember that the speech and information must be intriguing and important for the audience.

Last but no less important is timing. If the speaker has a 5-minute presentation, it shouldn't last more than 5 minutes. He shows he is professional, well-prepared and respects the audience's free time. According to Emil Hierhold, the main part (body)

of the presentation shouldn't take up more than 85 % of the whole speech. Every presentation usually lasts about 10 or 20 % longer than originally expected.

1.1.2 An extremely short presentation

Sometimes it happens that the speaker doesn't have time to prepare or he is asked to speak shortly about a given topic. Most often, a short speech is used in a company between colleagues or staff to give a report to their boss. In this case, the speaker should focus on 3 main points:

1. the current situation
2. the speaker's proposal(s)
3. benefits for the company (Hierhold 2005, 105-106)

1.1.3 Five-minute presentation

Many people can't imagine how to give a 5-minute talk. They think the more time they have, the more information they can give the audience. They are wrong. It is a known rule: cut, cut and cut again. The audience is not interested in long speeches full of special terms. They prefer short informative speeches where they get to know what is discussed and its valuable results. After 5 minutes, the audience has an idea about the topic. If they are interested or if they need to know more details, the presenter continues with his talk or they start to discuss. This kind of presentation is used by managers for professional or informative speeches.

According to Emil Hierhold, the first 30 seconds are enough to attract the audience and to introduce oneself and the topic of the speech (usually just the title of the presentation).

Then the speaker has 4 minutes to speak about the content of the presentation. If he wants to inform the audience, he uses information whereas when he wants to persuade, he uses arguments. It is said that one sentence requires about 5 – 15 seconds. If the speaker has 4 minutes, he should choose about four main points and support them with facts.

The last 30 seconds are for the finish. It should be a short but valuable conclusion of the presentation.

It is obvious that 5 minutes is not enough for all facts but it is enough to interest the audience. People make their own opinion. After the short presentation, the audience ask questions and a discussion can start. Then the speaker adds only the information and facts which are required. (Hierhold 2005, 77)

Figure 1.1. Five-minute presentation

30 seconds:

- *Greet*
- *Welcome*
- *Introduction of speaker himself*
- *Topic: Increasing number of unemployed graduates.*

4 minutes:

1. point: overestimated employer's requires

- *Knowledge of two or three foreign languages*
- *Knowledge of PC's programs*
- *Driving licence*
- *To be used to working under pressure*
- *To be pleasant and nice*
- *At least 2 years of experience*

2. point: disadvantages of graduates

- *Fewer practical skills*
- *Not used to working alone – require help*
- *Require training program*

3. point: advantages of graduates

- *No bad experience with working*
- *Willingness to self-educate*
- *Full of optimism and energy*

30 seconds:

- *Summary*
- *Solution: Having fewer compulsory subjects but more practical experience.*

1.1.4 Instructional presentation

The main task of the speaker is to give directions or orders. This kind of presentation lasts longer (individual problems are discussed more deeply). After the speech, the listeners should gain some extra knowledge.

The speaker explains why the instructions are important for the audience and the result of knowledge of new information. At the end of the speech, people should ask questions. (Whatley)

1.1.5 Arousing presentation

An arousing presentation should force people to think about the spoken problems. The speech should be given in vivid language. The speaker must attack the audience's emotions. Very often, presenters tell stories or give their own experiences. It is necessary to explain to the audience why the problem is so important for them. The speaker can offer his own solution or he can ask people to help him to solve the problem. (Whatley)

1.1.6 Persuade or inform?

It is obvious that speakers can't persuade people without information or inform the audience without some kind of persuasiveness. If the speaker wants to achieve his goals, he must distinguish a persuasive presentation from an informative one. The structure of each presentation is very different.

An informative presentation is usually connected with expert topics or it is given by specialists in a certain field. The main task of the speaker is to inform the audience – without his own opinion(s), scientifically and in an intriguing way, whereas a persuasive presentation is full of emotions. It must attract the audience. After the speech, they should be prepared to give their opinions and start to discuss. If the speaker wants to carry out a task, he must offer a solution in a persuasive way. If the presenter works well, the audience accepts it.

A persuasive presentation is used by employees and employers, between them or two companies. The simplest example, which is seen everywhere around us, is advertising. The AD shows us a problem and then the solution.

Figure 1.2. Example of the advertisement

Do you want to lose weight? Buy product XY.

Weight is a problem and buying product XY is the solution.

It works for the AD but for a professional speech it isn't so easy. Successful presenters know they can't start their speech with their solutions. At first, one must show the problem and then, step by step, suggest solutions. It must be the best solution, not just some weak proposal.

Before the speech, it is essential to prepare an outline. The outline has 5 main points that helps the speaker deliver a great persuasive presentation. The points are only headlines; later they will be supported by facts and figures.

The outline:

1. Introduction of the situation and problems.
2. A negative impact. It must persuade the audience to know it more deeply.
3. A suitable and simple statement.
4. An explanation and the most important advantage of the statement mentioned above. Why is it useful for people?
5. Final solution. What to do. (Hierhold 2005, 87)

Figure 1.3. The outline

The company ABC focuses on seeking employees for different companies.

1. *Unrealistic requirements of companies increase the number of unemployed graduates.*
2. *Unemployed graduates – closing universities.*
3. *Help called “job mediation”.*
4. *Skilled graduates increase the profit of the company in future.*
5. *Try to use the service of a company which focuses on job mediation.*

Professional speakers usually add 3 more points (1, 4 and 8 in example 4) but they are not necessary. They support the presenter’s speech. Sometimes, they are hidden goals of the speaker. (Hierhold 2005, 90)

Figure 1.4. The outline used by professionals

1. ***It is necessary to be graduates?***
2. *Unrealistic requirements of companies increase the number of unemployed graduates.*
3. *Unemployed graduates – closing universities.*
4. ***Give graduates a chance!***
5. *Help called “job mediation”.*
6. *Skilled graduates increase the profit of the company in the future.*

7. *Try to use services of company which focuses on job mediation.*
8. ***Graduates – irreplaceable on the labor-market.***

The whole speech must be given in a determined voice. Also, gestures must correspond to the verbal communication. If the speaker isn't persuaded by his speech, his gestures reveal him. The audience will not believe his words.

It doesn't matter how long the presentation lasts, be it 5 or 45 minutes. All the points above help the speaker to deliver his thoughts. It is necessary that the structure of the presentation be in a logical order. Once it is correct, the speaker can move to looking for supporting information and facts.

It is recommended not to have many points and information in the outline. If people are interested in the topic, the speaker makes a second presentation.

If the speaker has an informative presentation, it is necessary to think about the audience. People must think that the topic and the whole presentation are connected with them. For this reason, the speaker must recognize his listeners. During the presentation, the presenter must be sure of what he is speaking about. The audience looks at him as an expert in the spoken topic.

The informative presentation has 5 main points:

1. Choosing the right title for the presentation. It must attract the audience. Very often speakers use questions.
2. First point of the presentation.
3. Second point of the presentation.
4. Third point of the presentation.
5. Summing up of the speaker's presentation.

Figure 1.5. Example of the informative presentation

1. *Do we really want to have fewer graduates?*
2. *Situation on the labor-market.*
3. *Advantages and disadvantages of graduates.*
4. *Excessive requirements.*
5. *Educated people represent the whole of society.*

In this case, it is recommended to determine what the speaker will not mention. One presentation can't include everything. The same rule applies as for persuasive presentations. The speaker can say he is omitting information XY but if people want, he can prepare another speech later.

The presentation helps the speaker introduce, persuade or give instructions. If the presentation is to be successful, the speaker must make a plan. It is unprofessional and usually ineffective to present something without prior preparation. The basic rule that helps him/her deliver a great presentation is to be aware of his goals, both personal and professional. He should know as much as possible about his audience and choose the right structure for his presentation. These three steps are the first stage in delivering a great speech.

2 PREPARING THE PRESENTATION

The basic rule that helps the speaker deliver great presentation is to be aware of his goals. He should know as much as possible about his audience. If he is aware of these two first steps, he can move on. Another step is connected with the place of the presentation. After that he can focus on finding materials and structuring them.

2.1 Goals of the presentation

The most common mistake is confusing the words “task” and “goal”. A task is the duty to do something whereas a goal is a planned activity – what somebody should do. For example, the speaker’s task is to *introduce a new system of training employees* but his goal is to want *the audience to accept a new system of training employees and use it in their company*. (Hierhold 2005, 37)

The awareness of clarifying objectives helps the speaker to prepare the content and make a better presentation. The first question that the presenter should ask himself is: “Why am I giving the talk?” and the second one is “What am I going to say?” When writing the speech he mustn’t forget this.

In general, the basic goals of the presentation are to inform and to persuade. It is clear that a combination of these is possible. When the speaker wants to inform through his speech, he should think about what kind of particular information he wants to give his audience. Whereas in the second case, persuading the audience, the speaker must know what he wants the audience to do. In both cases, the basic materials are the same but the interpretation and selecting the best information depends on the type of presentation. (Hospodářová 1998, 15)

Very often, speakers don’t know what their objective is. Questions that can help them are “What do I want to gain by my presentation?” or “I want my audience to do or accept...”

Figure 2.1. The task and the goal

The head of the financial department of the company ABC gives a talk about the budget for the next year. His task is: to inform his superior about the financial situation of the department. Whereas his goal can be: to gain some extra money for a training program for new employees or to invest in new technologies.

Someone can counter by saying that planning a presentation is a waste of time. This is the biggest mistake that inexperienced speakers make. Clarifying the goals leads the speaker straight ahead without digression. The speaker works better and the whole job of preparing and planning is then reflected in a satisfied audience after the speech. (Steps to Success 2010, 3)

An important goal which should be clear before every talk is awareness of the presenter's personal goals. The audience evaluates the whole speaker's image. He should make the most of this – something from his personal objectives. (AV MEDIA CZ, 2007)

Figure 2.2 Example of the presenter's personal goals

The speaker can be invited to give a talk for the next time. A boss in the audience can offer him a new job in a higher position or maybe the presenter can dream about being press agent - if he doesn't look nervous in front of the audience.

It is reasonable and very helpful to clarify objectives but it is important to be realistic. (Hierhold 2005, 72) When the speaker works for a company which is threatened by the world financial crisis, it is highly unlikely that his department will gain some extra money. More realistic is the superior's assurance that the department works well and in future, after the crisis, they will discuss questions about money.

It is better to gain the promise of future help than hear “no” to the speaker's question. When somebody says no, it is really hard to change his decision.

2.1.1 Believe in your own speech

“What we think, we become.”

Buddha

(Reynolds 2008, 214)

Buddha's quotation describes exactly why the speaker should believe in what he is going to talk about. During the whole presentation the audience is able to hear the speech and also evaluate the whole image of the presenter. It is known that people don't speak only through words but they also express their thoughts through gestures, the voice...

Now, the speaker knows what impression he wants to make. It is useless to want to be funny when the real world is serious. The correct way is to highlight natural character rather than be affected. If the speaker is serious, responsible, a pedant and specialist in a certain field, his presentation will be without jokes. On the contrary, he offers a very well prepared scientific presentation. It helps the audience to get relevant and new information from the scientific field. (Steps to Success 2010, 3)

2.1.2 Discuss or not?

Sometimes, speakers don't want to be asked questions at the end of the presentation. It is one of the possible goals. To have a presentation without a discussion at the end is usually a beginner's wish or if the presenter doesn't know much about his topic.

Professional speakers usually want to discuss because they know it is an essential part of the whole presentation. In the other case, either they have a lack of time or they think that everything important has been said and discussion would be useless and a waste of time. If the speakers want to hand the audience one or two questions on the theme, this usually creates a lively discussion.

2.2 The audience

A presentation is a dialogue. It requires a speaker and a hearer. The speaker is considered someone who knows the most about a certain topic. He is reliable, intelligent, responsive and open-minded. He has his own experience, interests and general knowledge. Whereas the audience is a group of people who are curious and maybe professionals in the certain field of the presentation who want to compare their own knowledge with the speaker's or they are "only" non-specialists. They also have their own experience and knowledge. If the presentation works well, their interests must join. There is no worse situation than when the speaker talks about scientific research and his audience is full of students or people who don't have that particular knowledge. (Hospodářová 1998, 9)

A good speaker thinks about his audience and then himself. During the introduction of the presentation it is recommended to outline why the topic is important for the audience. If the audience is familiar with the topic of the presentation, they will ask the speaker or they will agree or disagree with his idea. Their opinions indicate that they are interested. (Hierhold 2005, 55)

Before the speech, the speaker should find out:

- Size of the audience (small audience – fewer than 15 people, large audience – more than 15 people)
- Average age of the audience (children, teenagers, adults, older people)
- If males or females predominate in the audience
- The knowledge of the audience (professionals or laymen)
- Speaker's and people's interests
- Culture
- Relationship between the speaker and listeners (Hindle 2007, 8-9)

It is recommended to distinguish the personal and professional interests of the audience. Everybody is unique and therefore their interests are different and also their restrictions. If the speaker had to think about every single man from the audience, he would go mad, especially in large meetings. A good way to manage this problem is to focus on one person (e.g. boss or superior) in the audience or divide the people into smaller groups. (Hierhold 2005, 56)

2.2.1 Focus on one person

When the speaker realizes that his audience is a group of people from the same company or from the same department, he must focus on one of them. He can't find out and then remember information about every single employee of the department. In this case, he chooses only one of them, usually the most "typical" or the most important one. The speaker must consider his professional and personal interests. He should also predicate questions, the professional and personal restrictions of the person the speaker focuses on. If the presenter works out the outline, he prepares himself for the speech and he has more chance to gain his goals.

Figure 2.3. Focus on one person

Topic: New projects in the next year.

Speaker: employee of the advertising department

- *Professional interests:*
 - *Attract people and customers*
 - *Gain new investors*
 - *Cooperate with other companies*
 - *Be able to compete with other companies*
 - *Address young people (students)*
 - *Build up working teams*
- *Personal interests:*
 - *Gain more skilled employees (project at universities)*
 - *Be opened to new trends*
 - *Gain extra money for his department*

The most important person: boss of the advertising department

- *Questions:*
 - *How many employees will be interested in the new projects?*
 - *Will they require training programs?*
 - *How much will it cost?*
 - *How many projects do you plan?*
- *Professional restrictions:*
 - *Restricted budget*
 - *Restricted number of employees*
- *Personal restrictions:*
 - *Skeptical view of graduates*
 - *Company should support the goodwill of the company*

Supposed results:

- *Minimal:*
 - *Agreement to later discussion.*
- *Maximal:*
 - *Agreement to starting new projects.*

2.2.2 Make a group of people

When the speaker gives a talk in front of a large audience it is highly unlikely he should gain and then remember the interests, attitudes, threats and possible questions of every single member. If the audience consists of people who have something in common (e.g. people working for one company), he can divide them into small groups and focus on the same things as in the previous case. The created group usually includes three or four people. (Hierhold 2005, 60)

Figure 2.4. Division of members

The example is focused on possible division of members of an audience and following analysis of the three members.

Purchase of a new computer program focuses on personal management in companies.

The head of the company:

- *Interest: company's prosperity*
- *Threats: bad investment*
- *Questions: Who else uses the program? Are they satisfied?*

Head of the department:

- *Interest: more qualified employees*
- *Threats: expensive training for employees*
- *Question: Will we be forced to reduce staff?*

Personnel management:

- *Interest: the latest technology*
- *Threat: overestimated program*
- *Question: When will the first result appear?*

2.2.3 The unknown audience

It is easy to say you should find out the most about the audience but in some cases it isn't possible. The speaker is not familiar with the audience, he doesn't know their age, knowledge, interests... The solution is to work out the board with questions. On the board are written questions and possible answers and people from the audience mark what they

are familiar with. When the people mark their answers it is usually funny and the situation becomes more pleasant. The biggest advantage of this system is everybody from the audience knows why the speaker is mentioning some issues.

The speaker can realize from the results of “board-research” possible questions and prepare for them. The main reason for using the board is to find out the audience’s interests. It is essential to know about the audience’s knowledge, why the speaker’s opinion should be important for them and which one is the most important. Then the speaker can join his and their interests and make an intriguing presentation. It is obvious that “board-research” is suitable for smaller audiences.

2.3 Where and when

The presenter knows his goals and the audience. Other important issues which influence the progress of the presentation are where and when it takes place. Where it takes place is connected with location and venue. Individual steps in the preparation of the speech should be made slowly but reasonably.

2.3.1 Location

The presentation can be very well prepared but if people can’t find the building or room where the speech will be given it can be useless. The location must be accessible to the audience. The speaker or the organizers must know if it is near a railway station, bus station or airport. The location must be chosen also according to the size of the audience. The surroundings shouldn’t be noisy because people would be disturbed by noise from outside. (Hindle 2007, 15)

2.3.2 Venue

Professional speakers usually want organizers to send them a detailed floor-plan to know how the venue looks. In case the presentation is highly important, it is recommended to visit the venue personally.

The venue must fill all the speaker's requirements. The right size of the room where the talk will be given is crucial. A small room frustrates the audience whereas in a large room, people do not fully concentrate on the talk. It is said that the right size is when people can reach others by hand. Size is also important for the speaker. During the talk he and the audience must feel pleasant and comfortable. (Plamínek 2008, 149)

When the speaker is also the organizer or helps to organize the meeting, he chooses the seating order. If he isn't limited by the shape of the room he can choose from two possibilities. The first one is a semi-circle. It is more suitable for informal talks or in situations when the speaker and the audience know each other well. It makes the discussion easier. In the second case, the speaker faces the audience. It is also recommended to be careful of obstacles in the room, like columns, platforms or the speaker's podium. (Hindle 2007, 16)

The speaker must know which audiovisual aids he can use in the chosen room. It is recommended not to use more than necessary. The room should meet the speaker's requirements for using audio-visual aids. If he uses a computer, the room must contain a plug. It is obvious that in the room there must be the right temperature, neither too hot nor too cold, and good acoustics.

2.3.3 Time

It is necessary to know how much time for the speech the speaker has. When there are more speakers, they must know the right order. If the speaker has a 10-minute speech, he should keep to it. Professionals also take into account time for discussion. They know that there is no more unpleasant situation than when the time for the given speech is over and the speaker is still speaking and the audience are looking at their watches... At the beginning, the speaker should tell the audience the rough time for his speech and then keep to it. If the presentation lasts more than 20 minutes, it is recommended to have a break to refresh.

Timing is also important for the structure of the presentation. At the beginning of the speech, the audience is curious and full of tension whereas at the end they can be tired and lose concentration. (Hospodářová 1997, 11)

It is advised that the talk should be given in the morning, about 9 o'clock – this is the best time, people are full of energy. In companies, people can't make speeches only in the morning but throughout the day, according to need. The talk should conform to the audience. In the afternoon, people are usually exhausted and look forward to going home. The given speech should be shorter and not scientific. If the speaker chooses the day of the presentation, better is at the beginning rather than at the end of the week. The speaker can also take advantage of the time of year. If the speaker is also the organizer, he mustn't forget to send invitations in advance. (Plamínek 2008, 148)

2.4 Finding materials

Today, presenters have a range of places where they can find appropriate materials for their speech. They can be libraries, the Internet, their own experience or videos. Many speakers don't know they can find information in calendars, files and they can also use proverbs and quotations.

The speaker must take the given time for the presentation into account. According to the time he chooses the quantity of information. A bad situation arises when the speaker gives a talk containing too many facts and figures. People aren't able to remember all the information. They can get bored and confused. Professional speakers are used to cutting information and then cutting it again. The speaker must consider his own objectives, the knowledge of the audience, when children are in the audience or adults who are interested in a certain topic, the materials are the same but the chosen information is different. (Mikuláščík 2003, 150)

All the process is hard work. It requires plenty of time so the presenter must start researching early before the speech. The time needed to find materials differs according to the experience of the presenter and the seriousness of his presentation. It is recommended to attract the audience with the latest, newest and most up-to-date information.

2.4.1 Own experiences and observation

This source is one of the most valuable. It is recommended to use one's own experiences which are connected with the given topic. If possible, the speaker should give his own experiences rather than learn the whole presentation by heart. If the audience recognizes that the speaker doesn't know much about the topic, they will not ask questions. They realize that the speaker doesn't know the answers and for this reason, a discussion is useless. People don't go away with new knowledge.

The presenter always chooses a topic which he is familiar with. Every speech is intriguing when the speaker says something more, not only accurate facts. A presenter with experience in the field of his speech looks more reliable. (Mikuláščík 2003, 151)

2.4.2 Asking participants

The speaker can find people who are connected with his topic. Usually, they are very pleasant and tell the presenter more than he could find in books. Stories are more interesting than bare and boring facts. Many speakers think they can only ask participants of some event but relations, friends or family can also give useful information.

2.4.3 Books, magazines and newspapers

Libraries offer a huge number of books, magazines and newspapers which are connected with the speaker's topic. It is also possible to find books in another town's library and have the chosen book sent to the local library. This is valuable if the speaker doesn't want to buy the book or magazine and he can't travel across the whole country.

What is an advantage for one person can be a disadvantage for others. A huge amount of materials causes confusion and the presenter can panic. To avoid this situation, speakers should read the book quickly, select useful information and make notes. (Mikuláščík 2003, 152)

2.4.4 Internet

Today, the Internet is the most popular way to find information. The advantage is ease and the wide range of information which the Internet offers. The presenter can save or print out chosen facts. He must be aware of the unreliability of this information. The Internet is for everyone but not everyone knows things properly, they cannot be specialists in certain fields. Therefore, not every article will be suitable for public speaking because of the difficulty of verifying them.

On the other hand, people can find special facts and figures on the Internet. If the presenter decides to use the Internet he should enter the most specific key words.

2.5 Structuring materials

The speaker knows the purpose of his presentation, the audience, goals and venue. He has appropriate materials. Now is the best time to think about basic structuring. The audience's behaviour and decisions depend on the speaker's performance. This is the reason why the right order is essential. The first step is choosing 3 or 4 main points. Then the points should be divided up. There are many way to do it but three of them are the most used.

1. The speaker gives a formal talk and the audience makes notes. In this case, the presenter should separate 3 or 4 main points, every point should have a short introduction and short summary. Points are lined up chronologically or according to importance. It is obvious that the first point is the most important one.
2. In the second case, the speaker chooses one point that is crucial for his speech. He wants to gain most of the audience's attention. The next 2 or 3 points support the first one. The structure is usually used in companies when they discuss problems.
3. The last structure is used for informal speeches, such as meetings. The audience is usually a small group of people (e.g. *colleagues*). Every point of the presentation introduces the next one. At the end of the speech there usually follows a discussion. (Hindle 2007, 22-23)

2.5.1 An outline

When the speaker decides on the right order of points, he moves on to preparing the outline. Many beginners omit this step but in the end, their presentation is a catastrophe. In the outline the presenter writes down 3 or 4 main points (which he has chosen) and makes them point A, B, C and D. Then he prepares a subheading and numbers them 1, 2, 3 and 4. If the speaker has some secondary subheadings, he makes them i, ii, iii and iv. (Hindle 2007, 24)

2.5.2 Attention of the audience

It is said that an audience is able to pay attention only for a short time. If the presentation lasts 45 minutes, people pay attention at the beginning (the first 10 minutes). Then, their attention decreases (about 25 minutes). Towards the end of the speech their attention increases again (the last 10 minutes). This is normal for every presentation.

According to the presenter's attraction, the attention of an audience can change. I focus on the two most frequent examples.

Figure 2.5. Attention of the audience 1

If the presenter doesn't attract the audience at the beginning but the end will be interesting, their attention is stable for the first 35 minutes. For the last 10 minutes, the audience's attention is increasing.

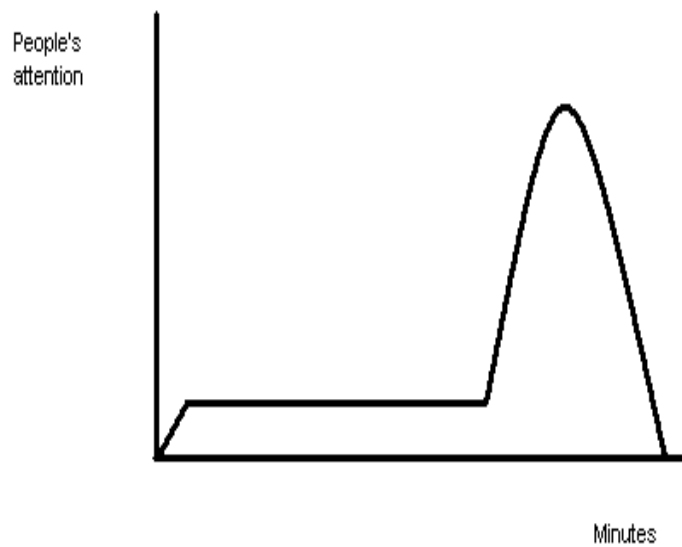
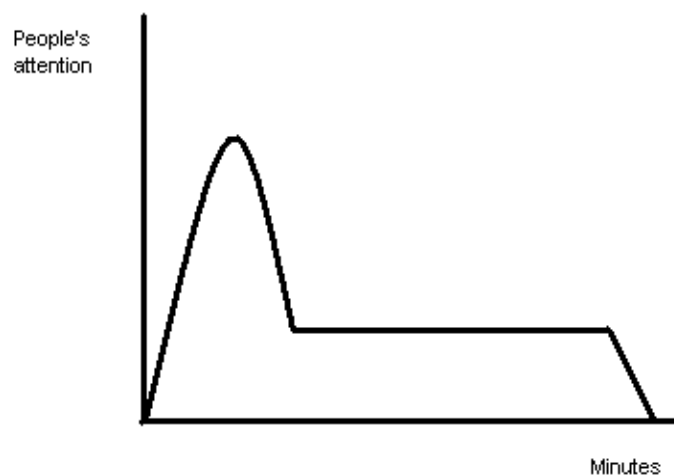


Figure 2.6. Attention of the audience 2

In this case, the beginning of the speech is interesting but the presenter doesn't point out the end of the presentation.



2.6 Writing a presentation

It is essential to consider that the written and spoken form of the same topic are different and also for the listener they sound different. In the written form, people should maintain grammar rules whereas in the spoken form grammar is not so emphasized. The speech must be direct and simple. Speakers usually use pronouns like I, you or we and active verbs. An important thing is given at the beginning of the sentence.

When the presenter has found materials, sorted out them and created an outline he can start writing the presentation. Firstly, he should think about his topic and then write everything he was in mind. Later he will re-read it and co-ordinate his thoughts. Everything is considered from the audience's point of view. As I wrote above, the whole presentation must conform to the audience. If the speaker reads his speech again, he checks how accurate the facts and figures are, prioritizes them and adds some extra information or examples.

It is necessary to believe in one's own speech. For the speaker it is easy to use simple sentence construction rather than long complex ones. The speaker should omit jargon, vulgarism but also too much additional information. The audience must not be flooded with information. The presenter should sound natural and confident. Professional speakers record their speeches and learn from it. (Hindle 2007, 26-27)

It is recommended to learn by heart the beginning and the end of the speech. It includes a few sentences which must sound reliable to attract the audience. The body of the talk shouldn't be learnt because the speech will sound mechanically and also the audience needs to know that the speaker is part of the presentation as well as them.

Another disadvantage of learning by heart a whole speech is forgetting words. When the speaker forgets one word he usually gets completely confused and starts being nervous.

To avoid the previous problems the speaker should make notes or a written script. This is recommended especially for long complicated speech or when it includes graphs, diagrams or pictures. Either way should contain instructions like when the lights should be switched on/off or when the speaker should give handouts. It is recommended not to staple individual pages or cards. More effective is to put cards which the speaker doesn't need on the table. When the speaker is too nervous, the cards or papers can fall and the speaker's nervousness will increase. It is obvious that pages must be numbered. (Nöllke 2004, 38-43)

2.6.1 Making notes

Writing and using notes has its roots in psychology. It is said that the speaker is more confident and relaxed when he holds the notes in his hands. It is his security for moments when he forgets something from his speech.

Before the speaker starts making notes it is necessary to have prepared a draft. The draft includes the main points and examples from which the speaker chooses the key words and phrases. He writes them on cards. One card shouldn't contain too many words but the right choice and the number of words depends on the speaker. Everybody prefers something else. Someone writes full sentences, others words only. Personally, I prefer writing words, not sentences because the presenter should maintain eye contact with the people in the audience and cooperate with them.

If the speaker decides on using cards it is essential to have the same order of pages as slides in PowerPoint when the speaker decides to present with a computer. It is said that cards should be made from thick paper, usually A5, the letters must be big enough and visible. The speaker can highlight words which he can omit (because of the time of the speech). The key words shouldn't be general. More helpful is clear basic terms or phrases. The presenter must not be addicted to his cards, it is only help for him and he should maintain eye contact with the audience. Glancing at notes must be enough. (Hindle 2007, 29)

2.6.2 Written script

Some people prefer a written script. For this way of presenting it is necessary to write down everything the speaker should do and also when he wants to do it. It is recommended to make 3-second pauses between the main points or when the speaker moves to another section.

For easy reading, letters must be big, the text visible and double line-spaced. Main points, headlines or sub-headlines can be highlighted. It is said that sections or paragraphs should have gaps between them. Pages must be numbered and the paper thick as well as for notes. It is recommended to make and bring with you an extra copy. (Hindle 2007, 28)

If someone decides to use this way of presenting, he should have a good voice. It is obvious that before the speech the speaker must practice reading. In this case, recording is essential. I think that today written scripts are not used much and I personally prefer making notes.

3 AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS (AV AIDS)

According to the University of Minnesota, using audio-visual aids increases the impact on the audience by about 43 %. It is said that people perceive information around them mostly through the eyes. AV aids help and support the presenter but if used in the wrong way, the results can be disastrous. He must be aware of using it. AV aids should improve the speech but not replace it! It usually helps to explain and illustrate difficult parts of the presentation.

There are some rules on how AV aids are used and presenter should remember them. Before the speech he should check and recognize how they actually work. There is no more embarrassing a situation than when the presenter who doesn't know how they are used. If the speaker decides to use audio-visual aids he must choose the right ones. In some cases, he can mix them but the rule is: don't use more than is necessary. (Mikuláščík 2003, 164)

3.1 Options

“If you have the ideas, you can do a lot without machinery. Once you have those ideas, the machinery starts working for you.... Most ideas you can do pretty darn well with a stick in the sand.”

Alan Kay

(Interview in Electronic Learning, April 1994)

(Reynolds 2008, 49)

Many AV aids require a source of electricity and when it fails, the speaker must know how give a talk without them. Their use also depends on the size of the audience. Some AV aids must be prepared in advance (e.g. video, computers or laptops, overhead projector); on the other hand, the speaker can choose from those which can be prepared quickly (e.g. writing boards, flip-charts). For presenters who don't have enough time or are not creative, they can ask a design agency to make them a presentation in PowerPoint or make acetates.

If the speaker isn't a professional presenter he can hire AV aids for the presentation. It is not necessary to buy expensive equipment for one speech. A presenter who use AV aids looks well-prepared and more credible.

Professional speakers don't forget to bring tools, such as a laser pointer, two sets of chalk or special marker pens, a spare flip-chart and cable for multimedia presentations, copies of videos or adapters. (Hindle 2007, 33)

The most common mistake is reading texts from AV aids or conversely, no description of information. Every title should be simple but accurately describe the problem (topic). The speaker mustn't forget not to turn his back to the audience.

The most useful AV aids:

1. Video
2. An acetate
3. An overhead projector
4. Flip-chart
5. A white board
6. Props
7. A handout
8. Computer presentation package (PowerPoint)

The first AV aid is a video, which helps the speaker to make his speech more interesting. It is very helpful, especially in cases when the presenter wants to discuss with the audience. After watching the video, people give their opinions and perceptions. The disadvantage is a lengthier presentation and also losing people's attention. (Nöllke 2004, 65)

For acetates, the important rule is not to use more than 10 in one hour. The speaker can write on them by himself. Everything must be visible for the audience (especially for people in the back row). This means that the presenter must use big, bold and simple lettering. Before the presentation the speaker must correct mistakes if necessary. (Hindle 2007, 30-31)

An overhead projector is helpful when the speaker wants to show people some pages from a book or magazine. Sometimes it is used for projecting acetates. Many speakers use it for presenting charts and tables, usually for large audiences (about 150 participants).

A flip-chart looks like a chart with many pages. The speaker can write down opinions, main points, ideas... The advantage lies in its mobility and simplicity. It doesn't need electricity to work. It is also easy to find and buy. Flip-charts are not expensive. Some

speakers like flip-charts because they are quick to use. This type of AV aid is suitable for smaller audiences.

Other AV aids are boards. The presenter can choose from white or black. Blackboards were used more in the past. The disadvantage lies in producing dust from using chalk. For whiteboards it is necessary to have special marker pens. For both types of board, clear and visible writing is necessary. The advantages are the possibility to use colours for highlighting main points, their flexibility, simplicity and independence of electricity. As well as flip-charts, boards don't require extra time during the presentation. They are suitable for informal presentations. (Hospodářová 1997, 43)

When the speaker wants to show the audience things he is speaking about, he uses props. They attract the audience and they can picture the discussed problem. The advantage lies in the possibility to hold them in the hand. On the other hand, they disturb the audience.

Very often professional speakers use handouts. They know that the audience can't remember everything so handouts containing summary are reasonable and helpful. In other cases, handouts contain more detailed information for those people who are interested in the topic, or add information (e.g. contacts). It is obvious that handouts mustn't include mistakes - spelling, grammar. They must contain correct facts and figures. The advantage lies in the possibility to prepare them in advance. (Hindle 2007, 30-31)

3.2 Computer presentation package – PowerPoint

PowerPoint is the most used Audio-visual aid. Therefore, I decided to give PowerPoint a separate chapter. It is said that people consider it a natural thing for presenting. If they know how it works it is a very useful aid.

The majority of beginners want to give an excellent presentation but the problem is in finding and writing a lot of information, many slides, they create complicated diagrams and visuals. (Weismann 2008, 1-2) In presentations, simplicity is the most important rule. This rule works for every AV aid.

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

Leonardo da Vinci
(Reynolds 2008, 2)

It is recommended to use a 24pt font for bullet points, for added detail 18pt and a clear, non-serif font (Arial). Capitals shouldn't be used very often because it is difficult to read them. The presenter should correct mistakes and the logical order of slides.

The rule for creating presentations in PowerPoint is: write no more than 6 lines per slide and 7 words per line of text. It is good to use colours for highlighting points. The presenter must be aware of using dark colours on light backgrounds for printed slides whereas for projected slides use light colours on a dark background.

The structure of the presentation is also crucial. The beginning should contain a short introduction. The ending includes a summing up of the main points of the presentation. For every slide the presenter should give the audience 5 seconds to read it and get familiar with it. (Mikuláščík 2003, 164)

For the majority of presenters it is unthinkable to present something without PowerPoint. According to Professor John Sweller, PowerPoint presentations are a disaster and they should be ditched. Professor Sweller means the way it is used. He says that PowerPoint is a tool and therefore people who decide to use it should know how it works effectively. (Reynolds 2008, 12)

3.3 Design visuals

The right choice for what the speaker should use for the content of his speech depends on the kind of information that it expresses. If the speaker chooses the wrong one he can damage a whole presentation and also influence the audience's view of the topic of the presentation and himself too. Among visuals there are graphs, diagrams, symbols, maps, cartoons, photographs, graphics and many others. I will mention only the most used. The presenter should not use too many of them because the audience will get lost.

3.3.1 Texts and charts

“Our lives are frittered away by detail; simplify, simplify.”

Henry David Thoreau

(Reynolds 2008, 100)

Today the majority of presentations are done on a computer, usually in PowerPoint. It is easy to prepare but there are some risks. The most common mistakes are writing full

sentences, too much information, small letters, using too few colours and many lines and columns. Text on the slide is not for reading but for the listener's understanding of the topic.

It is recommended to remember the number 44. The number includes 5 sub-points per 7 words ($5 \cdot 7 = 35$) and 9 words for the heading. It is necessary not to use full sentences. Anything that is not in the slides, the speaker adds orally. To make the presentation more attractive, speakers use colours. They can highlight the main points or cross out something wrong but colours must not be excessive. The order of slides and points in one slide must be maintained. (Hierhold 2005, 136)

The advantage of making charts is their well-arranged structure. The audience can read information according to the columns (from left to right) or lines (from top to bottom). It is said that the presenter should not use whole numbers but round them. Also, each number does not have its own measure unit. The audience appreciates simplicity. Highlighted lines help them to orient in the chart. The most important line, number or result can be emphasized.

3.3.2 Graphs

If the speaker needs to express his thoughts in numbers, he must transform them into a visual form. Therefore, people use graphs. They can choose from different kinds. It helps listeners to better understand the discussed topic. The disadvantage of using graphs is their ability to manipulate. Every graph highlights one thing but other things are put in the background.

According to Emil Hierhold before using graphs, the speaker should ask himself:

1. Why am I going to use a graph?
2. Who are my audience?
3. What is the main point of the graph? What do I want to say through the graph?

The answer to the first question can be that the speaker wants to persuade, inform... The second question is focused on the audience. Are they used to working with graphs and reading information from them? The last question is connected with the first one. The presenter should again consider the main reason for his speech. He can persuade,

inform or manipulate, there are many options. According to his answers he will choose the right figures for his graph.

The graphs should be simple but must be introduced with intriguing titles. The axis is described on the bottom line and horizontal, never vertical. If the graph contains an important point which the speaker wants to emphasize, he can mark it with an arrow.

For many presenters, especially for beginners, it is crucial to distinguish between charts and graphs. Graphs never contain as many numbers as charts.

As I mentioned above, it is recommended to know that graphs are the king of manipulation. People are aware of it. When the audience realizes that the presenter wants to manipulate them, they will not trust him anymore and the whole presentation will be lost. The most used graphs are line graphs, bar or column graphs and pie charts.

3.3.3 Symbols

If the symbols stay alone, they usually don't express a clear idea. People in an audience see a symbol but don't know the circumstances and therefore they don't know what they should think about it. Symbols must be used along with an abstract solution. If the speaker uses them in the right way, they can support his arguments, introduce new topics or attract the audience.

It is said that symbols add text or speech. The speaker should always take into account its use. Symbols can help but on the other hand, they can be ambiguous. Every symbol requires a description (in words or figures) to be complete. There is no exact rule according to which the presenter should choose the right one. Generally, the choice depends on the kind of presentation, on the topic and also the speaker should consider his own character. Very often the presenter doesn't know which one is best. In this case, he can ask his colleagues or friends to help him choose the right one.

Many presenters think that if they can't draw they would rather not use symbols in their presentation. They are wrong. Often symbols look better if they are drawn spontaneously. The design of the symbol isn't as important as how the presenter describes it and expresses the meaning of the symbol. It is recommended not to use symbols with negative meanings very often. Even if the speaker decides to use negative symbols, he should add one positive because the human brain remembers the negative view and then influences the audience's opinions. Positive symbols return a positive mood to the audience. (Hierhold 2005, 167-181)

Today it is considered modern to make presentations in PowerPoint. Symbols which are there cannot be very helpful. First, the presenter must know what he wants to say and then look for the right one.

4 PREPARING YOURSELF

The speaker is familiar with the topic of his speech, he has clarified his objectives, analyzed the audience and venue, made cards and chosen AV aids. It is necessary to prepare not only the speech but also the speaker himself. The important things are positive thinking and highlighting the speaker's strengths. If the speaker is enthusiastic in the speech, the audience is too. The speaker should visualize his presentation positively. He can image how the audience is interested in his topic, how they make notes, ask questions and applaud at the end. It is recommended to rehearse the speech in front of friends. The speaker should wear clothes which he will have on for the speech and also he can try to use eye contact and gestures.

According to American psychologist Albert Mehrabian, of the whole performance only 7% belong to words whereas non-verbal communication makes up 55% and the remaining 3% belongs to the voice. (Bradbury 2006, 5) This proves that the speaker's appearance and non-verbal signals are crucial in delivering a successful presentation.

4.1 Appearance

The first 30 seconds are crucial for every speaker. When he enters the room the audience looks at him and realizes if he is competent to make a speech. First impressions are the strongest and therefore should be positive. It is said that the speaker should be dressed the same as the audience and a bit better than they are.

For those who are not sure about their looks, they can ask friends or colleagues to help with the choice of appropriate clothes. Professional speakers know that they shouldn't wear clothes in colours like the walls of the room are. It is better to be quite different but not too colourful.

According to Tim Hindle, the presenter should be aware of his hair. It shouldn't fall across the face. Hindle's second piece of useful advice is wearing comfortable shoes.

4.2 Nervousness

It is natural to be nervous. Nervousness causes stage-fright and uncertainty. Stage-fright is irrational fear of something whereas uncertainty is anxiety about whether everything is in good order. If the speaker is nervous he can make many mistakes.

Good preparation has an impact on the speaker's mental aspect. If he knows he did his best in delivering a great presentation, his uncertainty is not as high as if he didn't prepare.

Nervousness is a problem for everyone who sometimes speaks in front of an audience. Someone can freeze and be unable to move, other plays with the pointer. Symptoms are different but all are considered the speaker's mistake.

There are 10 mistakes which the audience dislike:

1. No eye contact
2. Staring out the window
3. Pacing up and down
4. Stiff posture in one place
5. Speech which is too fast or monotonous
6. Reading the whole presentation from notes or slides
7. Jingling coins in pockets
8. Playing with a pen, pointer ...
9. Arranging jewellery, clothes ...
10. Speaker's lack of interest in the audience (Hierhold 2005, 300)

Everything can be overcome. The more experience the speaker has, the more confident he is and the fewer mistakes he makes.

4.3 Eye contact

Using notes during the speech means that the speaker can't maintain eye contact with people in the audience. The audience starts thinking that the speaker is shy and looks unreliable when he doesn't maintain eye contact.

It is recommended to look at one person for 3 – 5 seconds. Speakers who are too nervous should prepare a plan and practice it in advance. They can focus on one person in the first row and then move to the back. It helps to keep the audience's attention. It is said that eye contact should last approximately 80 – 90% of the time of the whole speech. (Mikuláščík 2003, 161-162)

Eye contact mustn't be aggressive. It is supposed that the speaker is giving the talk because he wants to and the audience because they want to gain some extra knowledge.

4.4 Movements and gestures

Nervousness requires energy and therefore people play with pens or pointers, arrange jewellery and do many other things. To avoid this bad habit, the speaker must use energy for conscious activities like movements or gestures. The second reason is their attraction for the audience. As I mentioned earlier, every change in the speaker's behaviour is interesting for members of the audience. Even if moving is recommended, it mustn't be exaggerated. Speakers who start with public speaking should think about it in advance and make a plan. It is the same as for eye contact.

The speaker can move towards the audience, especially at the beginning of the presentation. If he uses a flip-chart, a white or black board it is a good reason for natural movements and he shows people what he is speaking about. The pace and frequency depend on the speaker's character. (Hindle 2007, 42)

The basic posture of the presenter is upright, face to the audience and with a pleasant demeanour. When the topic is not too serious the speaker can smile. It causes a better and friendlier atmosphere among the speaker and the audience.

Gestures also require a huge amount of energy. The most effective is when the speaker has his hands above the waist and they can slightly touch. To have your hands in your pockets is not recommended. In the Czech Republic people consider this bad habit as poor etiquette.

Professionals use recordings to get feedback from their performance. This is a very important part of preparing the presentation because only in this case can the presenter see how he should change his posture and gestures. No one or only a few people in the audience are able to tell the presenter about face-play. Everything can be changed but people must make an effort.

4.5 Verbal skills

Many presenters underestimate the part of the preparation which is connected with the voice. The tone and volume of the speaker's voice is one of the most important things when delivering a presentation. It is also recommended to breathe slowly and deeply because oxygen influences the flow of blood to the brain. Breathing slowly brings the presenter many advantages. Firstly, it helps the presenter organize his thoughts during the whole speech. The second advantage is being less nervous.

Every speaker should know that sound is produced by the vocal chords vibrating. This knowledge is required for delivering a great speech. Tim Hindle recommends doing a yoga exercise to improve the depth of breathing. Intonation is also essential. In some cases, just intonation tells an audience if the speaker is making a statement or asking a question. (Hindle 2007, 42-43)

The speaker can practice all these abilities. Especially volume is very important. If the speaker spends time preparing it will be a pity to be unsuccessful because of speaking quietly. At the beginning of the speech, the presenter can ask people in the audience in the back row if they can hear him. If the speaker decides to use a microphone he should know how it works before the speech.

Every professional speaker exercises his verbal speech. Everybody is able to speak but not everybody is able to deliver his thoughts effectively in front of an audience. The first rule is to be emphatic. It is better when the speaker uses the pronoun you rather than I. When he decides to use I, it should be in cases when the presenter speaks about his experiences or opinions. Another rule says that the speaker should use short, active and positive sentences. If the speaker wants an audience to remember something important, he should repeat it. Naturally, he should speak clearly and loudly.

Many speakers are convinced that a short pause indicates to an audience their insufficiency and inability. They are wrong. Short but conscious pauses are advised. Very often, silence helps the speaker gain the audience's attention again. Sometimes presenters wonder if they should change the pace of their speech when they are using pictures or graphs. It is recommended to comment on everything as I have already mentioned. If the speaker uses more than one audio-visual aid, he must be aware of the pause which happens when he changes them. In this case, the speaker can ask a question. When he manipulates AV aids, the audience thinks about an answer.

It is recommended not to express one's own opinions about pictures or graphs immediately; firstly, the speaker should describe the picture or graph then involve the audience. During the discussion the speaker can give his own attitudes. The second mistake in verbal speech is the speaker apologising that he is not sure about something or stating that something in the presentation is not important for the audience. Each of them went to the presentation to learn something new, therefore this statement is not reasonable. The last mistake is connected with the passive structure in verbal communication.

The speaker should use *I realized that ...* rather than *It was realized that...* The presenter should omit words and phrase which make him look unreliable and unprofessional. (Hierhold 2005, 313-317)

4.6 Rehearsing

Rehearsing is one of the most important steps in delivering a successful presentation but very often speakers omit this part. It is a pity because it reflects on their performance. In this case, an audience can notice the speaker's nervousness, slips or illogical order of slides if the presenter uses PowerPoint.

Many professional speakers know that proper rehearsing helps them to succeed, build confidence and memorize materials. During the rehearsing, the speaker realizes if he can manage to present the topic of his speech. If not, he can improve his speech. (Mikuláščík 2003, 154)

Before rehearsing it is recommended to take a break. The break can last a few minutes or few days, it depends on the time which the speaker has for preparing. After the break the speaker usually notices the illogical structure of his speech and mistakes which he corrects.

Some speakers practice their speech in front of their pets then move to the mirror. The next step is speaking in front of family members or friends. When the speaker keeps this order he builds his confidence. His family and friends give him feedback, tell him what impression he makes on them and give criticism or advice. During the rehearsing the speaker can make notes and then improve himself.

Professional speakers advise to learn the introduction and conclusion by heart. Especially the introduction is vital because the presenter makes an impression on the audience within the first 30 seconds. It also helps him not to be stressed. Professionals also say that memorizing gives the speaker confidence. If he feels comfortable he adds examples or own experiences and his speech becomes more attractive for the audience.

It is essential to consider the whole time of the presentation. When the speaker practices his speech in front of his friends he should not omit AV aids and time for questions. His friends tell him what interested them and the presenter should prepare answers. Usually the real audience has the same or nearly the same questions. During

the whole rehearsing, the speaker must practise his speech aloud as he will then realize which pace is the best and most effective. (Hospodářová 1997, 49)

If the presenter doesn't underestimate this step of preparing the presentation, in the end he will be confident enough to deliver a great presentation. His effort reflects on a satisfied audience.

5 DELIVERING A PRESENTATION

The speaker has made the effort to create a great presentation. He is aware of his objectives, knows the audience and the location of the speech. He has spent time finding suitable materials. He has chosen which AV aids will be the most helpful. After that he has focused on himself. All these processes mean that his nervousness is low, he has worked on improving verbal and non-verbal communication. Now, he approaches the goal of his efforts. He should think about the beginning and ending of his speech. Questions and evaluation are the last steps which the presenter shouldn't omit.

5.1 Beginning

As I mentioned earlier, the first 30 seconds are crucial. When the speaker enters the room, members of the audience start judging him. Questions the audience thinks about are how he looks, who he is, what the reason for his presentation is and if it will be useful for them. First impressions can't be the last ones but it is difficult to change them. It is recommended to build a positive atmosphere between the speaker and the audience.

There are a few things which the speaker should omit. The first one is forced humour. Humour breaks tension between people but it is better to use it later, after the welcome and a short introduction. The second thing is connected with over-flattering. Not everybody likes it. Negative statements are the third group which the speaker should avoid. As I will mention later (in the Questions part), an apology is not a good way to begin the speech. The last thing which is not recommended is a long boring beginning. It is the nightmare of almost every member of an audience.

On the contrary, there are some issues which cannot be forgotten. They include testing audio-visual aids, a short pause before the beginning of the speech and breathing. (Hierhold 2005, 322)

It is advised to look for a person in the audience who looks friendly and focus on him/her for the first few seconds. Then the speaker gains self-confidence. The beginning of each presentation should be lively without (or with minimum) stress. Useful advice is using cards with notes which help the speaker feel relaxed.

5.2 Ending

Preparation of the ending of a presentation is very often omitted. Either speakers think that they can cope with the end during the presentation (they manage it somehow) or they didn't

have enough time so they sacrifice this part of their speech. Speakers should gain the most from the ending, they can attract the audience for the last time, can highlight the main points, explain what should happen. An effective ending signals that the speaker is professional. The members of an audience will look for his next presentations because they know it is not a waste of time and they will learn something new.

A statement by Lee Iacocca sums up what the speaker should do at the end of his presentation.

“Tell them, what you are going to tell them; tell them; tell them, what you have told them;
TELL THEM, TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.”

Lee Iacocca
(Hierhold 2005, 333)

7 steps for a successful ending:

1. An announcement
2. Summary
3. Request
4. Announce the discussion
5. Stimulation
6. Sum up the discussion
7. Final

The announcement is not to last more than two minutes, then the presenter moves on to the second step. The summary should be a short summing up of the main points. It is advised that the speaker should not give new arguments. Then follows a request. It is the presenter's goal – the reason for his speech (e.g. *Please, think about problem XY and then contact our department to agree on the next meeting.*) The fourth step asks the audience

to discuss or if it is large audience, before the presentation the speaker distributes paper and pens for the audience to write down questions during the presentation. Now, it is the right time to answer them. In case the audience is silent, the presenter must stimulate them.

A good method is the indirect way (e.g. *Most often people ask if ...*). Lively discussion reflects the audience's interest but the main idea of the presentation can be lost during

the speech. Therefore, the speaker should again sum up the main points. The final is the last step, when the speaker thanks his audience and parts with them. In case the speaker doesn't plan to involve the audience in discussion, he omits steps 3, 4, 5 and 6. (Hierhold 2007, 331-336)

5.3 Positive and negative questions

The presentation is a dialogue. On the one hand, the speaker asks the audience, on the other hand he is questioned. Many speakers are not aware of the importance questions have. Poor discussion can damage a successful presentation. (Hindle 2007, 63) If he spends time on proper preparation and has rehearsed his presentation in front of his friends, they probably asked him some questions. He will not be surprised. It is advised to listen carefully to what people ask. Very often people think about questions more than is necessary and look for hidden meanings. When a member of the audience asks something, the speaker should concentrate only on him. Stay upright and face the audience.

“Be here now. Be someplace else later. Is that so complicated?”

David Bader

(Reynolds 2008, 182)

The speaker expresses his involvement via his posture and non-verbal signals. Only a few seconds should be enough for the presenter to analyze the nature of the question. After being asked, it is recommended to make sure he understands it properly. Repeating the question is the best way. The presenter must not indicate that a misunderstanding is the audience's fault. (Hindle 2007, 63)

The speaker should have a positive approach to both types of question – positive or negative. If the speaker is convinced that questions are stressful and problematic it will reflect on the relationship between him and the audience. Therefore, it is essential the presenter considers all questions as a sign of people's interest. Each question disturbs the speaker's plan but it is also a change and a chance to prove that the speaker is professional. (Hospodářová 1997, 55) The unwritten rule states that each question must be answered in a polite way.

In case the speaker knows the answer, he gives it. If not, he should tell the truth. An excuse or pretending is not reasonable, an audience recognizes insincerity

and the speaker's authority will be damaged. The audience usually pays the most attention when the speaker makes a mistake. Therefore, making up things is not advised. The answers should be clear, simple, supported by facts or examples. Sometimes people ask questions at the beginning of the speech. In case the presenter plans a discussion at the end of his speech, he can leave questions after it or he says that he will focus on the question during his speech.

Figure 5.1. Giving a question back to the audience

Member of the audience:

“What do you think about the new computer program? My superior says that it helps gain acknowledged and educated employees at minimum cost.”

The presenter:

“That is a very interesting question, Mr. Smith. I'm sure that everybody is concerned. Do you think that the program is an investment which doesn't have any advantages?”

Firstly, the presenter praises him and appreciates his interest. Then he tests people's attitude towards the discussed topic. He also recognizes how the audience will react to following issues. Giving a question back to the audience, the speaker gains extra time to consider his next step. (Hospodářová 1997, 56-57)

After each answer, the presenter should assure himself whether the audience understood him correctly. The speaker can also give a short, brief answer and say that the question will be discussed more deeply later.

In discussions irony and sarcasm is forbidden whereas humour and wit are a way of how to get close to the audience. The speaker recognizes the right time for a joke only if he has sufficient experience. Tact and respect is more valuable than humiliating someone. (Hospodářová 1997, 57-58)

5.3.1 Dealing with problems

Even if the speaker is very well prepared, the audience can ask difficult questions. The basic rule states you should look for the same opinions, nearly the same or at least part of the statement. The first problem happens when the speaker cannot answer. The reason is simple, he doesn't know the answer. Many speakers think that it is a failure. They should

not be worried. Nobody knows everything. He can suggest that he will look for information and send it via email or he can give contacts to experts who focus on the problem.

Provocative questions are the second type. Hecklers don't want to know answers. They will disagree with everything. It is possible that they came to the presentation in a bad mood or want to humiliate the presenter. In this case, the speaker must be polite but firm. It is useful to ask what exactly is meant by the question. The heckler usually understands that he is not right and stops his attack. If not, the only way to stop a heckler's useless speech is to ignore him and continue with the presentation. (Hindle 2007, 64; 66)

Other problems appear when a member of the audience ask about something that has been already discusses or asks a long boring question. (Hospodářová 1997, 59) Immediately when the speaker recognizes what he meant, stop him and try to answer. Stopping must be polite. There is an exception when the speaker doesn't ask if the audience is satisfied with the answer. It will mean only another long boring speech about nothing.

Sometimes it happens that after the presentation nobody asks anything. Speakers usually end their speech by asking if the audience has any questions. This method is useful only in case the speaker doesn't want to discuss. An open question is better. He asks the audience directly or he has prepared questions in advance and only now asks. The presenter can answer his own questions. It encourages members of the audience to join the discussion. (Hospodářová 1997, 59-60)

If the topic of the presentation is serious it can cause disagreement between members of the audience. The presenter is not just a speaker but also a mediator, therefore he should defuse the tension. To avoid this problem, the speaker should not allow more than one person to talk at once. He can say that everybody will get the chance to speak. In case the atmosphere in the room is extreme, it is better to bring the presentation to an end. Ask the organizer to help and continue presenting after a break or later. (Hindle 2007, 65)

5.4 Evaluation

Every presenter should know that only if he evaluates his own presentation will he improve himself. It doesn't matter if he has achieved his goals or not. Success is not only the audience's agreement with everything the speaker says but also disagreement. (Mikuláščík 2003, 163) Making mistakes is normal and if the speaker does not repeat it during his next speech, evaluation has a positive impact. The main task of each

evaluation is analyzing the presentation, finding things which worked well and identifying things which were wrong. The speaker evaluates immediately after the presentation. He can make notes or if his friends took part in his speech, the presenter can ask them for feedback. Today, speakers can use recordings. The evaluation is the end of one presentation but the beginning of another.

The most important things which the speaker should focus on:

1. Were the goals achieved?
 2. Were the members of the audience interested in the topic?
 3. What impression did the speaker make?
 4. Was the audience analyzed before the presentation correctly?
 5. How did the speaker attract the audience?
 6. What was important for the audience and what was not?
 7. Did the presentation maintain a logical order?
 8. Was the audience tired? Did they have a break?
 9. What impact did the AV aids have?
 10. How was the atmosphere?
 11. Aspects which influence the speech, like lights, seating order, noise...
- (Hospodářová 1997, 65)

CONCLUSION

The goal of my thesis was “to evaluate whether a presentation is really important for people and to decide whether proper preparation is effective or not.” Today, presentations are used very often. It is obvious that the requirements for delivering them are high and ever increasing. According to the sources which I used when I wrote the thesis, each author emphasizes the importance of making a plan. Therefore, I divided the thesis into five main parts.

At the beginning I focused on types of presentations and added basic rules the speaker should know before preparation. Each presenter should maintain basic principles which are necessary – clarifying the objective, analyzing the audience and venue, finding audio-visual aids, preparing yourself and focusing on delivering. These are the most important points and also crucial for every speaker. The order of individual sub-steps which I described in my thesis can't be maintained exactly but the main point is recommended to keep this order. The right order should help the presenter to make the preparation easier.

A presentation is like a puzzle, if one piece is lost the whole picture fails. If the speaker omits some part of the preparation, he can give a speech but his performance will lack something and then it will not be complete. The key to delivering a great and successful presentation is patience, resolution and adequate preparation. It is said that the preparation depends on the topic of the speech and also on circumstances. The most common mistake people make is that the preparation of a great presentation takes a long time. Mostly, it is influenced by the speaker's practical experience and his knowledge.

There is no more pleasant a feeling than when the presenter sees members of the audience who are interested in his speech. They ask suitable questions and leave the room with new, useful knowledge. But to get this feeling the speaker must put in some effort.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E.g. for example

AV aids audio-visual aids