Taylor Billingsley was hired as a sales representative in the Apex Communications Corporation in 1972. With training and hard work, she advanced through the levels of the corporation, finally landing the position of senior vice president in charge of personnel. Though she had anticipated that this position would require some adjustments, she was surprised at the kinds of changes she faced during her first few weeks on the job. Taylor had a lot of ideas about how to make the personnel division work more efficiently, but she realized almost immediately that she had to convince others to adopt them. In addition, she had to establish her own credibility—to make her employees and interested outsiders understand and appreciate her personal commitments and management style.

In the first few days on the job, Taylor had several opportunities to communicate her philosophy and expectations during a number of meetings with the departments in her division. Some of these meetings were formal, such as when she first accepted the position; others were more informal, including lunch meetings with the division heads. Immediately following the announcement of her appointment, she also wrote a memo to her division heads and their employees outlining some of her ideas for moving the department forward. In separate memos she addressed the personnel development and financial benefits departments, introducing a new project and encouraging them to move ahead full speed to develop a new policy on research teams.

Then Taylor began a round of visits with people who worked in her division. She talked individually with several workers and responded to the questions posed by informal groups. She was asked to write up her evaluation of morale among workers in her division and forward it to the corporate chief executive officer. The latest financial reports released by the company's controller's office revealed that quarterly figures were down unexpectedly; it seemed that certain costs had risen dramatically. Taylor was concerned and adjusted a report she had written for a scheduled meeting with the region's top executives to reflect these new developments. Later, she spoke to an assembled employee group in the cafeteria in an effort to calm their fears about job cuts. At another facility located in a tough urban environment, the task proved more difficult. Workers were outspokenly critical of the company and challenged much of the information she presented. Following these meetings, Taylor was the featured dinner speaker at a regional Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Taylor Billingsley experienced the challenges of management in her new position. During her first two weeks, she addressed dozens of groups on a broad range of subjects; she wrote even more reports and memos. In most of this communication, Taylor was not simply presenting facts. Instead, she was conveying support, pointing a new direction, generating enthusiasm, communicating a sense of caring, building good will, and underscoring the value of teamwork. Some situations called for polite, ceremonial messages; others were confrontational. Some covered familiar material; others stretched her ability to find the right words to convey her ideas. At the end of her first two weeks, Taylor began to appreciate the importance of communication skills.

Managers have to master the basic elements of public communication and be flexible enough to adapt them to varying situations (Barrett, 1977; Mambert, 1976; Peoples, 1988; Sanford & Yeager, 1963; Wilcox, 1967). Like Taylor Billingsley, you may find yourself addressing many different audiences through speeches and in writing. Like Taylor Billingsley, you will probably discover very quickly that your effectiveness as a manager depends in large part upon your ability to communicate with your coworkers and customers. Unfortunately, these skills are often lacking in new managers. According to a recent survey of major business recruiters, the biggest deficiencies in today's college graduates were the lack of good oral communication and writing skills (Endicott Report, 1992). Considering that speaking and writing skills are central to good management and that they are also relatively weak in many new employees, we should turn our attention to how managers can develop these two critical skills. Let's focus first on the core ingredients of good communication and then examine the specific requirements of speaking and writing.
How can one person meet all of the communication demands confronting a good manager? There are five basic steps to making effective presentations—we’ll label them the Five S’s. These five S’s are sequential in the sense that each step builds upon the preceding steps. Good communication depends heavily on adequate forethought and preparation. As shown in Figure 1, the first three steps involve preparation, the fourth and fifth focus on the spoken or written presentation itself. Adequate preparation is the cornerstone of effective communication (Collins and Devanna, 1990; Wells, 1989; Gelles-Cole, 1985).

1. Formulate a strategy for the specific audience and occasion. This is the phase in which you develop your purposes in relationship to the audience and situation.

2. Develop a clear structure. This step translates your broad strategy into specific content.

3. Support your ideas with examples, illustrations, and other material adapted to your audience. This will reinforce your ideas.

4. Prepare your material to create a presentation style that will enhance your ideas. How you present your ideas is often as important as what you present.

5. Supplement your presentation with confident, informed responses to questions and challenges. Your performance in a spontaneous, free-flowing discussion or exchange of memos should be as impressive and informative as your prepared presentation.

We have maintained throughout this book that effective personal performance is a function of skill, knowledge, and practice. This is especially the case with communication. The key to gaining confidence in making oral and written presentations is preparation and practice. If you follow the basic five steps, you should be on your way to delivering effective messages. Specific guidelines for implementing these five steps will be presented in the following sections.

**FORMULATE A SPECIFIC STRATEGY**

**Identify Your Purpose**

Before collecting information or writing notes, you should clarify your general purpose for speaking or writing. Are you trying to motivate, inform, persuade, demonstrate, or teach? Your general purpose is to inform if you are providing information, demonstrating a technique, or delivering a report. When your purpose is to inform, you are concerned with the transmission and retention of ideas and facts. On the other hand, if you are motivating workers for higher production, convincing others to adopt your ideas, or stimulating pride in the company, your general purpose is to persuade. Persuasion requires the use of motivational language, convincing argument, and audience adaptation. Your general purpose may affect how you structure your message and how you supplement your ideas as well as your style of presentation. That is why it is important to identify your general purpose first.

Your specific purpose should be easier to determine once you have identified your general purpose (see Figure 2). You can discover your specific purpose by asking, “What do I want my listeners to learn?” or “What behaviors or attitudes do I want my listeners to adopt?” You may answer, “I want my listeners or readers to learn the six steps in our new accounting procedure” or “I want them to spend more time with customers.” Each of these is a specific purpose. It determines how you will tailor the remainder of your preparation to your audience and the demands of the situation.

**Tailor Your Message to Your Specific Audience**

The success of your communication is partially dependent on your audience’s understanding and receptivity.
The key to developing an audience-appropriate message is to understand their knowledge of the topic, attitude toward your message, and expectations of your presentation. If they already know what you are trying to teach them, they'll become bored and possibly hostile. Start with what they already know, then expand on it. If you are teaching a new accounting procedure, begin with the one your listeners currently use, then add the new steps. Remember that audiences retain more information if the material is associated with something they already know, rephrased and repeated, reinforced with visual aids, and limited to three to five new ideas. Motivated listeners retain more, so explain how they can use the information early in your message.

Your audience's attitudes toward your message are also critical to consider. Hostile receivers don't learn as readily as eager receivers. If your audience is hostile, start by setting realistic goals. If you try to do too much, you might trigger a boomerang effect in which your audience becomes even more hostile. Emphasize common ground by sharing similar values or parallel goals. For example, you might point out that increased profits are good for everyone in the company or that everyone has a stake in improving plant conditions.

For hostile or uncommitted listeners it is important to develop a two-sided message (see Table 1). Present both sides of the issue. Use strong arguments built on logic and extensive evidence (Sprague & Stuart, 1996). Choose neutral language as you develop your ideas. In these situations, it is also important to build your credibility. Show yourself to be calm, fair, reasonable, and well informed. Use humor directed at yourself to ease tension (Sprague & Stuart, 1996).

### Meet the Demands of the Situation

Your receivers' expectations of your presentation are also important. The situation frequently determines expectations, such as the level of formality. Some situations clearly demand more formal presentations. If you are expected to address a board meeting, you should prepare carefully. On the other hand, if you are asked for your off-the-cuff comments, a prepared speech is not appropriate or practical. In this case, it is permissible to present more spontaneous remarks. Written communication also involves certain expectations. Invitations to a company picnic can be posted on bulletin boards, but invitations to a board of directors meeting are sent individually. Some situations are tricky. For example, television often appears informal, however, you should carefully think out your comments. Banquets and ceremonies may encourage an informal, friendly atmosphere, but don't be fooled. These aren't the same settings as one-on-one or small group events.

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### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Sided Versus Two-Sided Messages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You should use a one-sided message when:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Your audience already favors your position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Your audience is not well educated in general or on the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ You require a public commitment from your audience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| You should use a two-sided message when: |
| □ Your audience initially disagrees with your position. |
| □ Your audience is well educated in general or on the topic. |
| □ Your audience will experience counter-persuasion on the topic. |

Research suggests that the best way to present a two-sided message is to first give the arguments that support your position. Organize those arguments beginning with the weakest and ending with the strongest. Then, present the argument of your opposition. Organize the opposition arguments beginning with the strongest and ending with the weakest. In this way, you take advantage of your listeners' tendency to remember the most recent thing they hear: your strong argument and your opponent's weak argument.

The settings of business presentations can create a number of constraints that you must anticipate. (Remember that forethought and preparation are keys to effective communication.) Consider these common occurrences. A meeting schedule runs over so that your 20-minute presentation must be condensed to 5 minutes. Be prepared with a short version that highlights information that will serve your strategy. After presenting your committee’s proposal for changing customer service procedures, which the committee has studied for three months, an influential nonmember distributes an outline of a competing proposal. Be prepared to answer specific criticisms of your proposal while maintaining a tone of cordial professionalism.

Language is also affected by the situation. More formal language choices and more correct sentence structure are demanded by formal situations. Slang, colloquialisms, contractions, and less rigid grammar can add to the ease of informal settings. Determine your audience’s expectations and adapt your language to them. Most experts agree that your language should be one step more intense than your audience’s.

DEVELOP A CLEAR STRUCTURE

Begin with a Forecast

In general, an effective introduction does three things. First, it catches the listeners’ attention and sets a tone for the message. Second, it provides your listeners with a reason for listening or reading. Finally, it gives them a road map or quick sketch of the message.

At a supervisor’s meeting, you might start out your talk on a new plan for production changes this way: “Do you realize that we have not changed our basic production process in four years? In that time, seven new competitors have entered the market, and we’ve lost nine percent of market share. But with three changes, we can get more production, which will generate three percent more profits and pay raises in the next fiscal year. First, we reorganize Bay 2; second, we install a track between the parts room and the assembly line; and, third, we set up a phone connection between the parts room and the assembly line. Let me spend a few minutes filling out the details of each change and explaining why these changes will save us money.”

This introduction gets your audience’s attention because it portrays the immediacy of the problem and shows why your listeners have an important stake in what you have to say. By setting the larger context of increased competition, you intensify their reason for listening and counter possible resistance to change, which is common in organizations.

Choose an Appropriate Organizational Pattern

Organization is critical because it affects comprehension of the message. Learners retain more when messages are organized. Organization also affects your credibility as a speaker or writer. A person who is organized is viewed more positively than one who is not—and organization affects attitude change. Your receivers are more likely to be influenced by your viewpoint if it is organized. Finally, an organized message is more likely to be retained, and thus to influence the listener.

There are many patterns of organization to choose from (see Table 2). In general, you should order your thoughts using continua like time, direction, causal process, problem-solving sequence, complexity, space, or familiarity. A related technique is to organize your material as a series of answers to typical questions. Another common technique is called sandwiching. This involves three steps. First, you emphasize the advantages of the plan. Second, you realistically assess the risks or concerns associated with it. Third, you reinforce the benefits by showing how they outweigh the costs, demonstrate how risks can be minimized with proposed safeguards, or show how resistance to change can be overcome.

As you plan your message consider your listeners’ orientation. The main question to ask is “What does my audience already know or think?” Start from that point, then move closer to the desired knowledge or point of view.

Written and spoken communication vary in the amount of detailed information that can be conveyed in a single effort. Because a memo or report can be reread, the receiver doesn’t have to remember all the information. However, speeches can’t be reheard. It’s more important to limit the amount of information presented orally. How many points can you make in a speech? Three main points are preferred by most speakers, but many listeners can remember up to five main points. Seven chunks of information is about the limit of a person’s immediate short-term memory at any one time. Since people must remember what you have said if they are to act on it, dividing your speech into no more than five major chunks should make your ideas easier to remember (Miller, 1967). If your
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chronological</td>
<td>Traces the order of events in a time sequence (such as past, present, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>future or first step, second step, and third step).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial</td>
<td>Arranges major points in terms of physical distance (such as north, central,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and south) or direction from each other (such as internal and external).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal</td>
<td>Develops ideas from cause (such as diagnosing a disease from its causes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to effect or results to cause (such as from its symptoms to the disease).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topical</td>
<td>Enumerates aspects of the topic (such as size, color, shape, or texture).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe’s Motivated Sequence</td>
<td>Follows a five-step process:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Gaining attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Showing a need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Presenting a solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Visualizing the results when the solution is implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Calling for action to implement the solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity–acceptance order</td>
<td>Begins with what the listener knows or believes and moves on to new ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry order</td>
<td>Develops the topic in steps the same way you acquire the information or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>solve a problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question–answer</td>
<td>Raises and answers a series of listeners’ questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem–solution</td>
<td>First establishes that a problem exists then develops a plan to solve the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination order</td>
<td>Surveys all the available solutions and systematically eliminates each</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>possibility until one remains.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation is long, consider using visual aids, such as overhead transparencies or handouts, to reinforce the message.

**Use Transitions or Signposts to Signal Your Progress**

It is important to give your audience a “road map” at the beginning of your message. Don’t stop there. Continue to help them follow you through it. To do this, signal when you’re moving from one idea to another by summarizing the first idea, then forecasting the new idea. This is especially important in oral communication, since listeners will only hear your message once; it is critical that you provide signposts during your speech. You should indicate major transitions between ideas, such as: “We’ve just seen how the two standard types of data storage operate, now let’s look at the advantages and disadvantages of each storage system.” In written form, you can signal transitions by indenting, numbering, or using bullets to highlight information. You can call your reader’s attention to key words with italicized or bold print.

**Conclude on a High Note**

Two important psychological concepts are at work in communication—primacy and recency. Primacy is the first impression received and recency is the last. People tend to remember the first and last things they read or hear in messages. It’s easy to understand why the most important parts of any presentation are the first and last impressions it creates. You establish an initial feeling in your introduction that colors the rest of the presentation, and the impression created during the conclusion influences the audience’s overall evaluation of your message. Since these are the most important segments of your presentation, they warrant the most preparation. You should plan your message with the beginning and end in mind, that is, consider your specific purpose statement as you develop your introduction and conclusion. Some people write the conclusion first because this allows them to organize the rest of their material so it naturally flows into the conclusion.

Reach closure at the end of your speech or written message by summarizing your ideas for a final time. Research shows that this kind of reinforcement helps
listeners retain information. Normally, people remember less than 20 percent of what they hear or read. If you preview the information in your introduction, reinforce it in internal summaries, and then summarize in the conclusion, you will increase the odds that your audience will remember your ideas.

The last statements you make after your summary should create a sense of closure and add to the memorability of your message. These statements can take a variety of forms. You can call for action, reinforce your audience’s commitment to action, or establish feelings of good will (see Table 3 for further suggestions). For example, you might emphasize legitimacy by highlighting several authoritative quotes, emphasize the “I’m here to help” theme, predict conditions in the future, underscore the utility of your proposal by emphasizing its impact on the bottom line, or use an emotional appeal to increase commitment and loyalty.

**SUPPORT YOUR POINTS**

**Choose a Variety of Support**

There are many reasons to use supporting materials, or evidence, as you develop your message. Most research concludes that supporting material makes a great difference in the impact of ideas. This is true even if you are not well known to your receivers or if they find your credibility moderate to low. What kind of support should you choose? Table 4 illustrates some of the many kinds of supporting materials available. Messages are strongest when they are built upon a variety of supporting materials. For example, reinforce statistics on profit sharing with a specific instance, such as how those numbers will affect a person on the assembly line.

**Consider Your Listeners When Choosing Your Support**

The kind of supporting materials you choose partially depends on your audience. If the evidence is new to them, it will have more impact on them. Live videotapes, recordings, or actual photos also have greater impact. People who are highly dogmatic are more affected by evidence than are persons who are not so dogmatic. People are likely to believe evidence that agrees with their own position more than evidence that does not. So their initial position determines the extent to which they will find evidence believable. If your receivers find the source or types of evidence to be believable or credible, it will be more effective (see Table 5).

---

### Table 3: Types of Introductions and Conclusions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you select an introduction or conclusion, ask yourself if it orients your audience to your purposes and clearly signals the beginning or ending of your speech.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Refer to the subject or occasion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use a personal reference or greeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask a rhetorical question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Make a startling statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Use a quotation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tell a humorous story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use an illustration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Issue a challenge or appeal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Use suspense.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Appeal to the listener’s self-interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Employ a visual aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Refer to a recent incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Compliment the audience or a member of the audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Refer to the preceding speaker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Request a specific action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4: Types of Supporting Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Specific instances that illustrate the point or clarify the idea: For example, “Our plants in Detroit and Sacramento use Quality Circles.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistics</td>
<td>Numbers that express relationships of magnitude, segments, or trends: for example, “Currently, a full 32% of our workforce is involved in Quality Circle decision-making, and that is up 17% over the past two years.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimony</td>
<td>The opinions or conclusions of others, particularly experts: For example, “After studying our plants, professor Henry Wilson of the Harvard School of Business observed that American workers are not group motivated. He concluded that ‘American workers cannot be expected to respond well to Quality Circles for that reason.’”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5  Using Supporting Materials

There is a great deal of research on the use of supporting materials or evidence in oral presentations. The following patterns seem to emerge:

1. If you have low to moderate credibility, evidence will probably increase your persuasive effectiveness.
2. There seems to be minimal difference between emotional and logical evidence.
3. Using evidence is usually better than not using it.
4. There seems to be little difference between biased sources and objective sources in their final impact on audiences.
5. Good speech delivery may improve the potency of evidence when sources of the evidence are unknown or have low credibility.
6. Evidence can reinforce the long-term effectiveness of persuasion.
7. Evidence is most effective when listeners are not familiar with it.
8. People are more likely to believe evidence that agrees with their own position.
9. Highly dogmatic people are more affected by evidence than are less-dogmatic people.
10. Evidence produces more attitude change when the course and source qualifications are provided.
11. Speakers with low credibility are seen as more credible when they cite evidence.
12. Using irrelevant evidence or poorly qualified sources may produce an effect opposite to what the speaker intends.


Use Visual Aids as Support

There are as many reasons to use visual aids as there are types of visual aids (see Table 6). Visual aids help people process and retain data (Seiler, 1971). In addition to enhancing comprehension and memory, visual aids can heighten the persuasive impact of your ideas if they engage receivers actively in the communicative exchange. Your credibility and your persuasiveness are enhanced by good visual aids. With these functions in mind, remember that visual aids should be simple, clear, and professional (see Table 7). The purpose of a visual aid is to augment your presentation, not replace it or distract from it. Unfortunately, this last point is lost by many professionals who treat presentations as slide shows in which screen displays and even sound effects—not the presenter—become the center of attention.

Computer-aided graphics make it easier than ever to supplement your main ideas with visual materials. They also make it easier to create cluttered, excessive visual and sound images that distract the audience from your strategic message. Select and design visual aids to reinforce your strategy and ideas, and to make them clearer. Keep in mind that each type of visual aid communicates information in a different way. In general, visual aids such as slides, photographs, and posters can help an audience feel the way you do. They enhance the emotional dimension of a presentation. On the other hand, descriptive or written materials help an audience think the way you do. Numbers and charts reinforce cognitive processes; photographs reinforce affective processes. Use tables and graphs to highlight relationships and patterns, not to convey comprehensive data. If necessary, use supplemental handouts of comprehensive tables and charts.

Table 6  Functions of Visual Aids

According to research, using effective visual aids in an oral presentations:

- Makes your presentation up to 50% more memorable.
- Significantly clarifies complex or detailed information.
- Portrays you as more professional and better prepared.
- Speeds up group decision making.
- Shortens meeting time by up to 28%.
- Makes your message 43% more persuasive.

Table 7 Checklist for Using Visual Aids

As you prepare your visual aids, ask yourself the following questions:

☐ Can I avoid making the visual aid the most important aspect of my speech? Will it be more than just an ornament?
☐ Can I translate complex numbers into bar or line graphs for easier comprehension?
☐ Am I comfortable with using the visual aid? Have I practiced with it so using it is natural, and it does not break the flow of ideas in my speech?
☐ Is it large enough to be seen by everyone without straining?
☐ Is all the printing short and neat?
☐ Is the visual aid colorful and involving? Studies show color highlights aid recall of information.
☐ Are my visual aids professional: neat, attractive, and accurate?
☐ Have I made the necessary arrangements for special visual aids in advance?
☐ Can I use the visual aid without blocking my audience’s view of it? Will I be able to maintain good eye contact with my listeners while using the visual aid?
☐ Can I avoid reaching across my body or waving the visual aid in front of my face?
☐ Can I avoid distracting my listeners by keeping the visual aid covered or out of sight before and after I use it?
☐ What will I do if the visual aid fails to work? Am I prepared for unexpected contingencies such as a burned-out projector bulb or a room that cannot be darkened?
☐ Have I planned for assistance or volunteers in advance if they are needed?
☐ Will a pointer be needed?
☐ Will all charts be secured so I don’t have to hunt for them on the floor in the middle of my speech?
☐ Am I using a variety of visual aids to increase my listeners’ interest?
☐ If I’m using handouts, can I adjust to the distraction caused by passing them around? Can I compete with listeners who will read the handout rather than listen to me?
☐ Can I speak over the noise of a projector or other machine?

USE AN ENHANCING STYLE

Up to this point, the preparation of oral and written messages is very similar. Whether you intend to deliver a speech or write a memo, you need to develop your strategy by identifying your purposes, structuring your message, and supporting your ideas with evidence. The fourth step requires separate treatment of oral and written messages because they are stylistically very different forms of communication. We’ll first focus on oral presentations.

STYLE IN ORAL COMMUNICATION

Prepare Your Notes

The mark of effective presenters is the appearance of effortlessness. Some speakers have such command of their material it appears they are ad libbing. Most of us prefer such a conversational style (see Table 8), but don’t be fooled by appearances. Hours of preparation and practice preceded the actual performance. You’ve already been introduced to the three steps of preparation, but how do you develop the fourth stage of your preparation for oral communication?

After you have carefully considered your strategy, structure, and support, you should prepare your speaking notes. To do this, simply write your key points in a rough outline following the organizational pattern you have chosen. What you do next depends on your method of presentation. Most often, you will speak in a conversational manner that is not memorized or read; this is referred to as extemporaneous speaking. Extemporaneous presentation is desirable because it is natural and flexible; it applies to most situations. To prepare, copy key words on note cards to stimulate your memory; standard pages are often distracting. Write out quotations, statistics, or anything that requires exact wording. Highlight places where you intend to use visual aids, pause for questions, or present an exhibit. To rehearse, go through the speech,
Table 8 Differences Between Public Speaking and Conversation

Folk wisdom holds that giving a speech is just like talking to another person. While it is true that most people prefer a conversational style of public speaking, there are at least three noteworthy differences between giving speeches and holding conversations:

1. Public speaking is more highly structured. It requires more detailed planning and development. Specific time limits may be imposed, and the speaker does not have the advantage of being able to respond individually to listeners.

2. Public speaking requires more formal language. Slang, jargon, and poor grammar all lower speaker credibility, even in informal speech situations. Listeners usually react negatively to poor language choices. In fact, many studies show that some kinds of language, such as obscene language, dramatically lower a speaker’s credibility.

3. Public speaking requires a different method of delivery. The speaker’s voice must be adjusted in volume and projection, posture is more correct, and distracting mannerisms and verbal habits are avoided.


Phrasing your ideas in language that seems natural. You may find yourself phrasing ideas with different words each time. That is okay. It will increase the conversational quality of your speech because your words will be typical of oral style and natural expression. It will help you develop flexibility, allowing you to adjust to different wording and flow of ideas.

If the occasion is formal and demands precise wording or exquisite prose, you should prepare a word-for-word manuscript to memorize or read. Then you should rehearse with the manuscript, trying to achieve as much natural flow in the dialogue as possible. This form of presentation is rare, but it may be required for discussing legal and financial issues, making announcements to the press, or conducting special ceremonies. Otherwise, avoid using written scripts and memorization for presentations because they disrupt the natural flow of conversational style and break eye contact with your listeners. Because manuscripts are prepared in written form first, they usually take on the style of written language. Unless you are a practiced speech writer, your manuscript will sound like written rather than oral speech (see Table 9).

Practice Your Presentation

It is a good idea to rehearse your presentation under simulated conditions—in a similar room, with listeners who can give you suggestions for improvement. Time your presentation so you know if it is necessary to cut or expand your ideas. Research shows that practicing a speech for short periods of time over the course of several days is more successful in reducing anxiety and improving memory than concentrated practice. So give the speech to yourself during breakfast, at your morning coffee break, as you walk to a mid-afternoon meeting, and before bed. Distributed practice is more efficient and yields better results than massed practice.

Practice Using Your Visual Aids

This will help you get used to managing them and give you some idea of how long your speech will take with the visual aids. Prepare for the totally unexpected. What if the roar of an overhead plane drowns out your voice? What if the microphone goes dead, a window blows open, or the room becomes extremely hot? Compensate for minor disruptions by slowing your rate, raising your volume a little, and continuing. You will encourage listeners to listen to your message rather than be temporarily distracted. For other disruptions, a good rule of thumb is to respond the same way you would if you were in the audience. Take off your jacket if it is too hot, close the window, raise your voice if listeners can’t hear you, or pause to allow a complex idea to sink in.

As you practice, think about how you will channel your anxiety. Most speakers report feeling anxious before they speak; it’s normal. To manage your anxiety, channel it into positive energy. Prepare well in advance for the speech—develop your ideas, support them, and practice your delivery. Even if you are anxious, you will have something important to say. It may help to visualize the speaking situation. Close your eyes, relax, and think about how it’s going to feel and what your audience will look like as they watch you. Expect to feel a little momentary panic as you get up to
Table 9 Differences Between Oral and Written Styles

Why do we instantly recognize a memorized speech? Why does a meeting transcript sound funny? The answer to both questions is that oral style differs from written style. Memorized speeches from manuscripts reveal their written style, and conversations that are read reveal their oral style. Oral style differs from written style in the following ways:

1. The average sentence length is shorter (about 16 words) in conversations.
2. Vocabulary is more limited in speaking than in writing. "I" and "you" make up almost 8% of the words used in speaking; fewer than 50 words make up almost half of the total vocabulary we use when we speak.
3. Spoken vocabulary consists of more short words.
4. Speakers use more words referring to themselves such as "I," "me," and "we"; listeners rate this as more interesting.
5. More qualifying terms (such as "much," "many," and "a lot") and allness terms (such as "none," "never," and "always") are used in speaking.
6. More phrases and terms indicating hesitation are apparent in speaking, such as "it seems to me," "apparently," "in my opinion," and "maybe."
7. Fewer precise numbers are used in speaking.
8. Speakers use more contractions and colloquial expressions such as "can't," "wouldn't," "wow," and "chill out."

One final note on language: There is some evidence that we use lexical diversity as a cue to a speaker's socioeconomic status, competence, and perceived similarity.


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speak, it will evaporate as you progress into the speech. Remember to think about your ideas rather than how nervous you feel. Focus on your message. Also remember that anxiety about speaking never really goes away. Most experienced speakers still get podium panic. The advantage of experience is that you learn how to cope by converting your anxiety into energy and enthusiasm. That gives you an extra sparkle as you speak. Above all, don’t tell your listeners that you are nervous. This will divert their attention from your ideas to your anxiety. Usually, listeners can’t tell that a speaker is nervous—only speakers know, and they should keep that secret.

Convey Controlled Enthusiasm for Your Subject

When a survey was given to 1,200 people asking them to identify the characteristics of effective presentations (Peoples, 1968), the results contained adjectives such as flexible, cooperative, audience-oriented, pleasant, and interesting. What was striking about these results is that only the last item on the list of 12 outstanding characteristics was specifically related to the content of the presentations. This suggests that the preceding discussion of effective format, while necessary, is not sufficient to guarantee your success. Put another way, a rambling, poorly organized presentation will surely produce an overall negative evaluation. On the other hand, a well-organized, highly logical, and easy-to-follow presentation that is poorly delivered will also be viewed negatively. This study suggests that style is extremely important in oral communication.

Years of research on student evaluations of classroom teaching performance have consistently shown that enthusiasm is the hallmark of a good teacher. Students will forgive other deficiencies if the teacher obviously loves the subject and is genuinely interested in conveying that appreciation to the students. The same holds true for presenters. Your posture, tone of voice, and facial expressions are all critical indicators of your attitude. Speak standing if you can, move occasionally, and use gestures to convey an attitude of earnestness. Remember, your audience will become infected with your enthusiasm.

Although enthusiasm is important, it must be controlled. Do not confuse enthusiasm with loudness. A good rule is to use vigorous but conversational tones of voice and inflections. Avoid bellowing or preaching at your listeners. Be sure you can be easily heard and that your tone is sufficiently emphatic to convey meaning.
effectively. In general, your speech should resemble an animated or lively conversation.

Use Delivery to Enhance Your Message

Another key to maintaining audience attention is effective delivery. Eye contact is the most important tool for establishing audience involvement. It makes listeners feel as if they are involved in a one-on-one, semiprivate discussion with you. In this culture, we value directness and honesty. One of the expressions of these values is direct eye contact. Effective eye contact means looking directly at members of the audience, one at a time, on a random, rotating basis. Generally, the smaller the group, the longer you can look at each person. Maintaining eye contact is also your primary source of audience feedback as you are presenting. If your audience appears puzzled, you may need to pause and review your key ideas.

It is important to use physical space and body movement to enhance your message. Remember that presentations are like movies, not snapshots. Alternate moving and standing still, speaking and listening, doing and thinking. Intersperse your lecture with chalkboard use, demonstration, audience participation, and audiovisual aids so that no single activity occupies a large portion of the presentation. Add some spice to your presentation by including personal anecdotes, references to members of the group, unusual facts, vital information, and vibrant images. Whenever appropriate, arrange the podium area to accommodate physical movement. Physical movement can be used to punctuate important points, signal transitions, build rapport with a person who asks a question, heighten the interest of particular segments of the audience, and help your listeners stay alert by refocusing their attention.

Other aspects of physical space affect the quality of your presentation. If possible, arrange the podium area and seating in the room to remove distractions. In more intimate settings, group participants so that there is less space between them. Eliminate unnecessary or distracting materials from the podium, such as unused equipment, signs, and displays. Keep your visual aids covered until they are used and keep the chalkboard clean. Focus your listeners’ attention on you and your message.

You can use space to convey intimacy or distance. Position yourself roughly in the middle of your audience from left to right and in a spot where you can comfortably maintain eye contact. With this in mind, you can deliberately alter your presentation style to build rapport with members of the audience. Move closer if you intend to build intimacy or tension; move to a comfortable distance when your ideas are neutral.

Gestures can also add to a presentation. They should appear to be spontaneous and natural in order to enhance, rather than distract from, your message. They should be relaxed, not rigid. Use them to accentuate your normal mode of expression. To some extent, when you concentrate on your message, not your movements, the appropriate gestures will come naturally. Remember that your gestures should be smooth, relatively slow, and not too low (below your waist), too high (above your shoulders), or too wide (more than two feet from your body). If you are using a podium, step slightly behind or to the side of the podium so it does not block your listeners’ view of your movement. The general rules for gestures change as your audience becomes larger. You must adapt to large groups by making larger, more dramatic gestures.

Avoid any gestures or movement that distracts from your message. Irrelevant movement such as jingling change in a pocket, toying with notes, shifting from foot to foot, twisting hair, or adjusting eyeglasses are annoying. In fact, any movement repeated too often creates a distraction. Practice using a variety of body movements to illustrate or describe, enumerate, add emphasis, or direct attention. For variety, some gestures should involve the entire upper body, not just your dominant hand.

STYLE IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Like oral communication, written communication is a skill; it can be learned. Written communication follows the same three preparation steps as oral communication. The writer determines strategies, structure, and support before actually putting pen to paper. As with effective presentations, good writing draws on careful analysis of the audience and situation. In a business setting, “every document is a response to a problem or opportunity requiring that some consensus be achieved or action taken” (Poon, 1992, p. 38).

There are significant differences between oral and written communication style. Although it lacks the interpersonal dimension of immediacy, written communication offers one tremendous advantage over oral communication—it lasts. Written docu-
ments can be retained, studied, duplicated, and filed for the future. This means that they are essentially capable of conveying much more detailed information. While written communication offers these advantages, it also makes different demands on the communicator; written communication demands precision.

**Develop Mechanical Precision in Your Writing**

Your professional image is judged by the appearance of your written communication. Cross outs, erasures, typographical errors, or other sloppiness detract from your written message, just as awkward mannerisms can distract from your oral message. Grammatical precision is also required—misspellings, punctuation errors, and poor grammar are marks of uneducated writers. This is certainly not an image you want to convey. You may expect a secretary or clerical worker to catch and correct all these things, and many times that happens. However, when you sign or otherwise endorse the final product, you alone are accountable for any errors it contains. It is essential to develop the habit of proofreading final drafts before you sign them.

Violations of the rules of grammar and punctuation can affect more than just your credibility. They can also disrupt your reader. If the reader is distracted by typos, confusing grammar, or ambiguous pronouns, your ideas may become lost; such errors can cripple the impact of your message. Some recruiters toss out résumés that contain mechanical errors. Their reasoning is that if job applicants can't take the time to proofread a short résumé, they may be sloppy on the job, too. Some readers are insulted by poor grammar; others automatically consider themselves superior to the writer. While these may not be logical reactions, they occur, and more important, they block your effectiveness. You may argue that correct grammar and punctuation are not vital. Maybe not, but you take a chance every time you present careless work to another reader. Consider the campaign of Charles Day for a seat on local government. His campaign flyers, delivered house to house, carried the banner, “Vote Charles Day for School Bord.” Would you want a man who apparently can't spell making decisions on academic matters for your neighborhood schools? The impression is that if you don't have the time or incentive to check your own writing, you won't pay attention to details in the work of others.

**Practice Factual Precision in Your Writing**

Getting the facts right is important. If you send a memo calling for a meeting but record an incorrect meeting date, you'll suffer the consequences of inconveniencing others. Accuracy is critical but that's just the beginning. It's up to the writer to create sentences so that the meaning is unmistakably clear to the reader. Many times writers know the facts but omit important details in writing. Omission occurs when you have all the facts or circumstances but as you write, you assume the reader knows the facts. Write with your reader in mind. This assumes that you have analyzed who your readers are and understand what information they need and expect. What basic information is important for readers to know in order to understand your message? Instead of starting with the central part of the message, provide the background first, such as: “In response to your memo of February 2, requesting corrections to our policy on grievances, we have taken three actions. First . . . .” If you're not sure what to include, ask someone who doesn't know the details of the situation to read what you have written. Ambiguity is another barrier to clear writing. Many times we write as we speak, throwing in phrases as we would speak them. Unlike speakers, writers can't use nonverbal cues to convey specific meanings or associations. Since readers may not have the advantage of asking questions or getting immediate feedback, they are left to determine associations for themselves. Consider how ambiguity creates a lack of precise factual meaning in this memo:

*The next meeting of the department is scheduled for next week. Matt Olsen has told Leo Robinson to report on the union elections. His report will follow announcements. We will elect new officers at our upcoming meeting.*

This memo doesn't pass the standard test of clear writing. If the memo was sent on Friday and received on Monday, which week contains the meeting? Who is giving the report? The pronoun “his” causes confusion since it could refer to either Matt Olsen or Leo Robinson. Which “upcoming meeting” will result in the election of officers? Will it be the meeting called by the memo or another “upcoming meeting”? Because it can breed confusion, annoyance, and wasted time, such a sloppy memo can have an adverse effect on the relationship between the writer and recipients that can
affect their subsequent communication. Seen in this light, the memos a manager routinely writes are an important factor in managing relationships strategically and productively.

**Construct Written Messages with Verbal Precision**

Achieving verbal precision is different from mechanical or factual precision. Verbal precision is based on the accuracy of the words chosen to express the ideas. In an ideal world, words would provide the exact meaning you intended, but words can’t replicate reality. Rather, words are symbols of objects and ideas. Add to this inexact representation the reader’s own subtle shadings of meaning, and you can see why it’s difficult to achieve verbal precision. Put another way, a word has two levels of meaning: its denotation, or the **meaning agreed upon** by most people who use the word, and its connotation, or the personal dimension of meaning brought to the word by the receiver.

Communication depends on a blend of both denotative and connotative meanings. Consider the noun *Greenpeace*. Its denotative reference is to a specific international environmental organization. The connotative meaning varies widely. For many environmentalists, Greenpeace is leading a worthy crusade. However, for some governments and companies, the organization is, at best, a nuisance. These are the connotative references of a single word. Consider the difficulty in creating the right blend of denotative and connotative meaning in entire documents. You need to be aware of both types of meaning of the words you use. Frequently, you may recognize your own connotative meaning but be unaware of how others may react. While connotation is often a personal matter, you can attempt to judge this meaning by thinking from your receiver’s viewpoint. What is their most likely reaction?

The key to verbal precision in writing is clarity. The fundamental questions you must ask yourself are: “Does the word or phrase convey my meaning without confusion?” or “Could anyone reading this memo for the first time understand the ideas directly and simply?” A secondary question is whether the written message conveys unintentional meanings stimulated by connotative meanings of words or phrases. The impact of connotations once more underlines the importance of knowing your audience and of being aware of what is appropriate for one audience or another.

**Pay Attention to Tone**

The tone of your writing is directly related to your decision, or word choices. For example, compare these two statements: “Our company will purchase the product” and “We’ll buy it.” The second sounds more informal because it uses pronouns and a contraction. In general, longer words and sentences tend to convey a more formal tone.

Using the appropriate level of formality in your writing calls for you to analyze the nature of the writing situation. An invitation to a reception for the company’s board of directors calls for formal language. When you are writing to strangers or up the chain of command, it is safer to be formal. When you are communicating across or down the chain, you often may be informal. However, a letter of reprimand to a subordinate should be formal in tone.

Tone in business writing goes beyond its relative formality. It reflects on the nature of the writer as a person and therefore affects how the reader feels about the writer. Its impact can be significant and often unexpected. For example, a terse letter may be interpreted as sarcastic or angry even if the writer did not intend sarcasm or anger. Consider a customer who writes a long letter expressing problems with a product. What would the customer think if this response were mailed back: “Thank you for your letter of January 12. We always enjoy hearing from our customers.” Although this response has the trappings of courtesy, it seems insincere and perhaps sarcastic. It hardly seems that the respondent read the customer’s letter—there is nothing about its contents—or that the letter was “enjoyed.” Although the response shows factual and mechanical precision, the tone is inappropriate and potentially damaging to the relationship with this customer.

In most cases, even disappointing news can be expressed in a positive way. Consider an employer who responds to a job applicant by writing, “In a company as well respected as ours, we rarely have time to consider applications such as yours.” Not only is the news bad, the arrogant tone also needlessly humiliates the applicant. A response with a more positive tone might be: “We read your application with interest but currently do not have any openings in your specialties. Best wishes with your continued search.” The news is still bad, but the polite tone shows respect for the applicant and promotes a professional image of the company.

Compare the following sentence and its more positive version: “Because of recent heavy demand, we
will be unable to ship the items you ordered until July 15,” and “Although recent demand has been heavy, we will be able to ship the items you ordered July 15.” A slight variation in wording here changes a tone of helpfulness to one of helpfulness.

Under most business writing conditions, you should be cordial. You should express tact and friendliness appropriate to your relationship with the reader. This attitude will have a positive effect on your word choices, which in turn will more likely convey an appropriate tone.

One area of modern business writing where failing to pay attention to tone has cost many bad feelings and lost time is electronic mail, or e-mail. By its nature, e-mail encourages rapid-fire exchanges, especially when busy workers face an inbox filled with messages, many of which are ill considered and unclear. E-mail is not a phone conversation in which tone of voice and other cues can clarify your meaning and in which you can read the listener’s vocal cues. However, many e-mailers seem to forget the difference. They don’t state the context of their message; they don’t give needed background information; they don’t organize their message; they don’t make careful word choices that convey a cordial tone. By not taking the time to consider their message in light of the situation and the receiver, e-mailers can convey inappropriately demanding tones or disapproving tones if their requests aren’t met promptly. The antagonism created by the poor tone of e-mail messages can delay solving the business problem at hand and affect negatively the work relationships of the e-mailers.

**Know the Proper Format**

Like it or not, first impressions count even in written communication. Sloppiness suggests that the writer doesn’t take the message seriously; odd or unconventional formats hint that the writer is ignorant or unprofessional. You should become acquainted with the physical layout of letters, memos, proposals, and other common forms of written business communication. Others expect you to have this basic knowledge; many handbooks and computer software programs are available to guide you in the development of these formats. Some companies have style guides that precisely prescribe the formats for all documents representing the company.

While there are several acceptable formats for written communication such as business letters, the reader should be able to pick up specific information at a glance. In the business letter, this information includes: The intended recipient of the letter, the sender, the sender’s address for return correspondence, any enclosures, and recipients of copies of the letter. All of this information is separate from the body of the letter and should be clearly visible.

Because memos are intended to communicate within an organization, their format is different from that of letters. Instead of business letterhead, memo letterhead is used. Basic information can also be obtained at a glance. The top of the memo should include: To, From, Date, and Subject headings. Usually, salutations and closings are not considered necessary within an organization.

Proposals are much lengthier and require special attention to supporting information such as tables, graphs, and charts. The best ways to represent such data can be found in readily available resources on business writing.

Whatever the final format, there is one objective in all written business communication: Your message should be simple, direct, and clear. Anything that interrupts your reader’s movement through your writing limits its effectiveness. Any imprecision—a mechanical blunder, a factual omission, or a strange word—calls attention to itself and, like an odd gesture in spoken communication, diverts attention away from your ideas. As a writer, you must aim at clear, direct transmission of your message.

**Supplement Your Presentation by Responding to Questions and Challenges**

**Prepare Thoroughly to Handle Questions**

Answering questions and responding to objections is a vital part of the communication process because it allows us to interact directly with our listeners. We can learn about how our listeners are thinking and their responses to our ideas from their questions; it’s a two-way street.

The key to formulating effective responses is the same as the key to developing good speeches—careful preparation. Read broadly and talk with experts in your field. Don’t read just the material that supports your point of view but also read what the opposition is saying. The best defense can be a good offense, and this is no exception. Ask your colleagues to critique your material, discuss their questions and objections with them, and collect supporting documentation or evidence. You can also practice your responses. Begin
by considering what your listeners might ask or find someone opposed to your position who will list questions for you. Then, practice your responses to these questions.

Despite your best efforts, you may get an overwhelmingly hostile response from your listeners. Don’t be afraid to take a stand that disagrees with them. People may not agree with you but they will respect your sincerity. If someone throws you a curve, don’t apologize or bluff your way through with an inadequate response. Be honest and direct, tell them if you don’t have the answer. Invite them to discuss the problem further at a later time and follow up on your invitation. The next time someone asks the same question, you will be prepared.

When Challenged, Answer in a Specific Format

Respond to objections in an orderly manner. In general, answer questions as succinctly as possible. Rambling answers may make it appear as though you are hedging. They also suggest an inability to think concisely. You can answer objections in four steps:

1. **Restate the objection.** This gives you time to think, shows your interest, and makes sure that everyone understands the question. Restatement recognizes the objection and clarifies it for everyone in the audience.

2. **State your position.** Give a concise, direct statement of what you believe to make it clear where you stand.

3. **Offer support for your position.** This is the critical part of the response. Provide evidence that shows your position is the right one.

4. **Indicate the significance of your rebuttal.** Show the impact of adopting your position. Offer reasons for doing so.

Following the four steps we’ve outlined, a good response to an objection might take this form:

1. “Joe has stated that a management-by-objectives system won’t work in our factory because supervisors don’t want input from the cutting floor (restatement of the objection).
2. I think that a management-by-objectives system will work and that it will increase worker satisfaction (statement of your position).
3. I’m basing my position on a group of studies done in our Newark plant last year. Output increased 0.5 percent during the first month, and more importantly, workers reported more job satisfaction. They had fewer sick days too (support for the position).

4. If our plant is similar to the Newark plant—and I think it is—then I believe our supervisors will notice the same gains here. Until Joe can provide us with a reason to stick with the current system, I think we ought to give the new one a try—we stand to get more output and better job satisfaction (significance of rebuttal).”

Practice this format until it becomes automatic. It builds up your own case while responding to the objection. Since this format rationally shores up your position, it increases your credibility as well. And, it increases the chances that others will agree with you.

Maintain Control of the Situation

You need to balance being sensitive to feedback and flexible enough to respond to legitimate concerns with avoiding prolonged, unproductive interchanges. Recognizing everyone’s right to ask questions or offer alternative positions is important because it grants audience members respect. On the other hand, you also have every right to decide what is relevant for consideration. You shouldn’t allow one or two members of your audience to dictate the pace or direction of your presentation. This places you in a position of weakness that undermines your credibility. If you should alter your position, make certain that the majority of your listeners view it as a responsible shift rather than an effort to placate a minority voice.

Keep exchanges on an intellectual level. Arguments and rebuttals can degenerate into name-calling in which little is settled. Effective communication is more likely to occur when the calm voice of reason dominates than when you squabble with your listeners.

You’ll soon learn that people don’t always ask questions just because they want information. Some people crave attention; others may sabotage your position if they perceive your ideas as a threat. Planning for these possibilities will give you more options; foresight enables you to respond appropriately. You might answer hostile questions with further questions, drawing out your interrogator and regaining the offensive. Or you might broaden the discussion. Don’t get trapped into an argument with one person. Involve others to determine if this is an isolated concern or a legitimate issue. Finally, you might express your willingness to dis-
cuss special or detailed issues but defer extensive discussion until the end of your presentation.

**SUMMARY AND BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES**

A key aspect of management is communication, and formal presentations are an essential communication tool. Therefore, effective managers must be able to create effective informative and persuasive messages. You can enhance your speaking and writing with thorough preparation and repeated practice. This chapter has outlined a number of guidelines based on the Five S’s model:

1. Formulate a *strategy* for the specific audience and occasion.
2. Develop a clear *structure*.
3. Support your points with evidence adapted to your audience.
4. Practice presenting your material in a *style* that will enhance your ideas.
5. Supplement your presentation by effectively responding to questions and challenges.

**STRATEGY**

1. Identify your general and specific purposes.
2. Tailor your message to your audience.
   - Understand their needs, desires, knowledge level, and attitude toward your topic.
   - Make sure your approach is audience centered.
   - Present both sides of the issue if your audience is hostile or uncommitted.
3. Meet the demands of the situation.
   - More formal situations demand formal language and sentence structure.
   - Informal situations allow slang and less rigid language use.

**STRUCTURE**

4. Begin with a forecast of your main ideas.
   - Catch your audience’s attention as you begin.
   - Provide them with a reason for listening or reading.
   - Give them an outline of the message so they can follow along.

5. Choose your organizational pattern carefully.
   - Start with what your listeners already know or think.
   - Use organization to increase your credibility.
   - Move from familiar to unfamiliar, simple to complex, old to new, or use another continua for organizing your thoughts.
   - Make no more than three to five main points in oral communication.
6. Use transitions to signal your progress.
7. Conclude on a high note.
   - Take advantage of greater audience attention at the conclusion of your message.
   - Reach closure by reinforcing through a summary of your ideas.
   - Use your last statements to call for action, reinforce the commitment to action, or establish a feeling of goodwill.

**SUPPORT**

8. Choose a variety of support.
   - The most effective support is not well known to your listeners.
   - Support increases your credibility.
   - You may use a wide variety of supporting material.
9. Consider your audience when choosing your support.
   - New evidence and live videotapes have more impact.
   - The audience’s initial position determines the extent to which they find evidence believable.
   - Using evidence is better than not using evidence.
10. Use visual aids as support.
    - Visual aids have a dramatic impact on comprehension and retention.
    - Visual aids also enhance persuasion.
    - Keep visual aids simple and effective.

**STYLE IN ORAL COMMUNICATION**

11. Prepare your notes.
    - Remember, the crucial effect is conversational style.
    - Extemporaneous presentation requires limited notes combined with frequent delivery practice.
12. Practice your presentation.
   - Use distributed practice rather than massed practice.
   - Practice using your visual aids and plan for the unexpected.
   - Plan to channel your speaking anxiety.

13. Convey controlled enthusiasm for your subject.
   - Effective speakers communicate excitement about their topics.
   - Your posture, tone of voice, and facial expressions all indicate your attitude.
   - Your speech should resemble an animated conversation.

14. Engage your audience with effective delivery.
   - Eye contact is the most critical tool.
   - Use physical space and body movement to enliven your message.
   - Use space to convey intimacy or distance.
   - Use gestures to accentuate your normal mode of expression.
   - Avoid any movement that distracts from your message.

18. Pay attention to tone.
   - Tone is directly related to word choice.
   - Adjust the tone of your message to the formality of the situation.
   - Tone affects how readers feel about the writer.
   - Writing should express appropriate cordiality.
   - Positive phrasing is preferable to negativity.

19. Know the proper format.
   - You are responsible for creating an impression of professionalism.
   - Business letters, memos, and proposals all have special formats.

**SUPPLEMENT: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

20. Anticipate questions and thoroughly prepare responses.
   - Rehearse answers to difficult questions.
   - Handle hostile listeners with honesty and directness.

21. Respond to objections in an orderly fashion.
   - Restate the objection.
   - State your position.
   - Offer support for your position.
   - Indicate the significance of your rebuttal.

22. Maintain control of the situation.
   - Balance the demands of specific individuals with the interest of the group.
   - Keep exchanges on an intellectual level.
   - Plan for the questioner who has a personal agenda.

**STYLE IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

15. Develop mechanical precision in your writing.
   - Project a professional image.
   - Errors may distract your readers and disrupt the impact of your message.

16. Practice factual precision in your writing.
   - Accuracy ensures that your meaning will be communicated clearly.
   - Ambiguity prevents factual precision.

17. Construct written messages with verbal precision.
   - Words cannot replicate reality.
   - Consider denotative and connotative meanings of words as you write them.
   - The key to verbal precision is clarity.