

Back of the Net:

How to Succeed Presenting to the Management Team

For many people, getting their 15 minutes of fame presenting to the Management team is a real milestone in their career. Finally they have their time to shine, to be heard and to make a big impact in their organisation with the key movers and shakers. But how do you nail it and make it the successful experience you dream of?

All too often when given the opportunity to present to a senior group, the experience is not what you expect and you come away deflated or wishing you had done it differently. Management teams often have a lot of influence, access to resources and key decision making rights. They feel the pressure just like the rest of us. So it's not hard to see why key meetings with managers often end up being substandard or even confrontational at their worst! Well that doesn't have to be the case.



By following the 6Ps of Powerful Presenting, you can give yourself every opportunity to shine:

1. **Purpose:** When planning your session focus on why you have been given this time, or what you really want to achieve. If you don't know, your audience certainly won't help you! Be clear and up front on this and ground it in an outcome or picture of what 'good looks like'. This way everybody involved has some common ground they understand and can work for.
2. **Point:** If you are presenting key material, a case study, research, a pilot programme, be sure to focus on the key point(s). It's easy to get sucked into simply sharing as much information as you can without really saying anything at all. Being clear on your key point(s) will act as 'breadcrumbs' for the audience and signpost what they should focus on and why. Without this, people can easily get distracted and confused.

3. **Perspectives:** Know your audience! As you are preparing find out who is in the room; what are they like? How do they generally run the meeting? What else is on their agenda? Have they just been in a crisis meeting or are they about to announce a profit rise? By tapping into the mood of the group, and understanding the dynamic, you are less likely to get a surprise and you will be better prepared. This will help you identify key sponsorship and resistance to what you are proposing. Anticipate questions and consider your responses.
4. **Presentation:** Follow the basics. Get the timing right, don't have too much content on your slides, and tell a story so that the messages flow. If this is your first time presenting, ask an experienced presenter to help you get ready. You might be the subject matter expert but an experienced presenter can help you make all that knowledge count!
5. **Part:** Give the group a role or a part to play in the interaction. If you simply present 'at them' you will have no idea what they are thinking. If you ask for their support in achieving the desired outcome they know what's expected and can play along or say they want something different at the start of the session.
6. **Power:** Remember to get nice and comfortable and present from your own unique place of power. It might be what you wear, how you stand, having your lucky mascot, but do what works for you to help you be at your most powerful and confident. As the presenter, you can set some ground rules if that helps, e.g. asking for questions at the end, switching off phones. Don't be shy and ask for what you need.

If you care enough to accept the meeting, why not go full out and make a success of it. Remember the saying, failing to plan is planning to fail. Be prepared and then shine!

By Steve Bernard