

Structuring your presentation

The following structure is useful for organizing your thoughts. Many speakers battle with clarity versus detail versus time. Often clarity or time loses out. Be strict with yourself - cut down on detail. Using the 5-box talk is a good way to do this.

THE 5-BOX TALK

INTRODUCTION

- 'Shake hands' with your audience—use an anecdote, quote, strong statement or question.
- Tell your audience why they will benefit from listening.
- Give an outline of your presentation.
- Use a linking phrase e.g. '**Let me turn to my first point...**'

BODY SECTION 1 HEADING

Organize your information within the 3 boxes of the body of your talk to

- make a **Point**
- give a **Reason** for making that point
- back this up with an **Example**

Then, restate the point (which could become part of your linking phrase). Use a linking phrase. Remember to do something different here—pause, turn off visual aids, move to another part of the room etc.

BODY SECTION 2 HEADING

Use snappy headings for each section of your talk e.g. past, present, future; problem, research, solution. Use a linking phrase.

BODY SECTION 3 HEADING

Use a linking phrase.

CONCLUSION

- Summarize your talk.
- Remind your audience of the relevance of the talk to them.
- Use a strong exit line.

Research shows that:

- most people will forget 90% of what you say within 24 hours
- we speak at about 150 words a minute but think at 600-700 words a minute (if we were to translate our thoughts into words)
- people rarely remember more than five things from a presentation, and are more likely to remember only three

This means you need to distil your content to key points you want to get across. Be disciplined and cut the details out - people can always refer later to something you've written.