

The ten minute presentation

In ten minutes, you can say a lot. What you say depends on

- the purpose of the presentation and the need to meet the remit of the invitation; however, there is still time and scope to include the things you want to say
- the audience – their knowledge of, and interest in, the subject; are they your target market or fellow networker?

In order to be interesting, the talk has to be original, rather than structured according to what a training course tells you. However, there are some basic elements which must be there.

Purpose and approach

As usual, if your purpose is to sell to the audience, it will be immediately detected and resented. Even people who have *asked* to be sold to shouldn't be sold to (how do you know what to sell them?). Even a series of illustrations of how good you are, dressed up as case histories of actual clients, will be perceived as selling, if that is your *intention*. People subconsciously pick up other people's intentions, even if communicated subconsciously. Just because you're unaware of it doesn't mean it isn't happening.

Referring back to the section on purpose and outcomes, a more useful *purpose* would be to give the audience an entertaining and informative talk such that the *outcome* is that they are more willing to talk you up with people they know.

Stories

The most important components of a ten minute presentation are stories. People need stories to allow them to empathise with people other than you – ie, people like themselves. Empathy is a feeling process and you want the audience to be in their feelings because people in their feelings are much more receptive. The spoken component of this training course is full of stories! People learn when they have an experience, and, for want of anything better, a good story is an experience.

Talk about yourself

A (small) bit about your background, yes. But crucially:

- why you do what you do
- what you get from it
- what gives you a buzz about it.

Don't forget a story (eg, how you came to work for/set up the company).

Talk about how your business helps its clients, not about the services it provides

Include a statement of how the business helps its clients, tailored to the needs of the audience (see the section 'Talking about what your business does'). But make sure this statement, and the stories, are positioned so they are talking about how the business helps the client resolve its problem, not about what services the business provides.

People do not buy benefits. They buy solutions to their problems. I have a problem in that, if I attempt to do my tax return, it will be inaccurate and take a lot of time. Potential trouble with

HMRC is on the cards. So I pay an accountant to do it. I'm not buying accountancy services, for the sake of having them, I'm buying the solution to my problem.

People are often recommended to say why their business is 'unique'. I'm not sure this is really necessary but, if you want to say it, it would be good to say that, at least, the business is unusual in that it understands the point about businesses solve problems, not sell benefits..

Here stories are easy – and essential. Talk about clients. If you don't have any, talk about other people's clients ("I know a coach who had a client who..."). Show how real clients' issues were resolved by your business's intervention (preserve anonymity, of course).

Structure

The simplest structure is

- Introduction
- Content
- Conclusion.

The Introduction should have something surprising, thought-provoking, funny, or otherwise attention grabbing. Preferably this should be relevant to the rest of the presentation.

The Content can be divided into a number of sections – different aspects of the business, or just different stories.

Conclusion. You can try for a 'call to action' if you think the audience will do something, but I would avoid it unless you're confident they will. Better to simply recapitulate – briefly – the main points you've made in the Content.

One to one meetings

A 'one-to-one meeting' is simply a meeting in which one person meets one other. They are essential to building a network, because the networking event itself does not give time or the opportunity to get to know people well.

A network isn't just a bunch of people you know. It's a set of relationships with people you know. Each relationship needs time to be developed and the most useful of them (or just the ones you enjoy most) need regular attention.

Networking relationships are developed through one to one meetings.

Putting aside the pleasantries at the beginning and end of a one to one meeting, the content of such a meeting consists of

- 1 Person A talks about their business for half the time, and Person B probably asks some questions – it's a conversation, not a lecture.
- 2 Person B then talks about their business for the other half, Person A probably asking questions.

At the end it is useful for both parties to know if it is worth having a further meeting (though the invitation to that can come days, or weeks after, if it is felt a further meeting would be valuable).

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