



How to Develop a Great Presentation: *Comfort, Confidence and Success With Every Audience*

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How to Develop a Great Presentation: Comfort, Confidence & Success with Every Audience

Whether you're developing an in-person presentation, a webinar, or a business meeting, the recommended process is the same.

At the Kennedy Group, we're guided by the acronym **ARM**, which stands for **Audience/Result/Message**. It's a tried-and-true process that simplifies the three critical components of any presentation. Regardless of your public speaking experience or your organizational role, the **ARM** formula will help you streamline and deliver effective presentations, meetings, even voicemails.

Here's how it works.

Audience Put them front and center. Audience research must be your first priority. Find out everything you can about your particular audience. In some cases, you can even survey your audience ahead of time. What are their pain points? What do they hope to gain from your presentation? How sophisticated is their knowledge of your topic? Audience research helps you during your preparation, and it should continue up to and including giving your talk. It will inform your verbiage. Key phrases and common concerns might surface during your research, which you can then incorporate into your content. The more you know about an audience, the more likely you will make your presentation about them.

Result What exactly do you want your audience to do after your presentation – and why? You need to identify the specific “call to action” you want audience members to take because of your talk. We mean this literally, not rhetorically. In business, there is no such thing as “informational.”

Message What do you want the audience to remember? At the end of your presentation, if you were to say, “The important thing for you to remember is _____,” what would that be? Incidentally, this conclusion also figures into your introduction. Reinforcement is a valuable tool. Tell them up front what they’re going to learn from you; give the “meat” of your presentation; and conclude by telling them (again) what you just taught them. You can also think of it this way: imagine that someone who missed your event asks an audience member what you said. In a sentence or two, what would you want that attendee to relate about your speech? And always remember to make it about them.

Preparation Worksheet

Having these three components guide your preparation will make your work more efficient and focused. At the Kennedy Group, we’ve developed a preparation worksheet for this process. It’s available on [our website](#).

This helpful tool will walk you through ARM, but you can also do this on your own. It’s very simple to follow and will ensure that you target your audience – with the bonus of saving you an immense amount of time and effort. Without such a tool, many people are at a loss where to begin and how to focus their presentation. Use this tool, and in just a few minutes, you’ll jot down your initial thoughts on ARM: Audience, Result, and your Message.

This launches what we call the incubation period: that precious time when the best parts of your presentation will begin to develop and mature. You’ll start to select slides you’ve used in the past, or can modify for this presentation. You’ll identify photos, charts, graphics, maybe even video and other types of effective visual aids, to enhance your presentation.

Identify Your Theme/s

Now you’re ready to think about your main themes. Divide your presentation into two or three main parts or themes – no more. As an example, you might divide it according to 1) Where we’ve been, 2) Where we are, and 3) Where we’re going. Another example would be 1) the initiative, 2) the implementation, and 3) the benefit. Remember to apply **ARM** to your main themes. With each theme, identify why this is important to this audience. What do you want them to remember? Treat each main theme as a mini presentation with an introduction, body, and conclusion.

Use Presentation Tools

Only now are you ready to think in terms of “tools” for your presentation. These are the advanced techniques that all good speakers use. They are as follows:

Good visual aids: Pictures, charts, graphs, etc., even video clips, are visual aids.

Stories: Anyone can become a good business presentation storyteller. It’s the hook that grabs your audience’s attention and draws them in. A good story is often a brief problem, solution, and benefit. Think of it in terms of, “The problem/concern/challenge that we had was _____” “What we did was _____” “And this resulted in _____” (benefit). This is also a subtle way to

talk about your business (or team or company) in a way that's now *meaningful* to your audience. Stories can also become the presentation, like Steve Jobs at Stanford, who came to "Tell you three stories."

Quotations: These are very useful in a presentation, but they're all too often overlooked. You may have quotations you like to use, and/or you can typically find a quote that's perfect for the situation. Go to a quotation website and search on specific terms, themes, or phrases that you'll be using in your talk. Third-party quotations, especially by respected and known individuals, also give you increased credibility. (It's not just you who's sharing a particular piece of advice or knowledge, but someone with great credibility said much the same.) For example, in a Kennedy Group presentation, we might insert the following quotations:

"It takes at least three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." (Will Rogers)

"Communication is the most important skill any leader can possess." (Richard Branson)

Communication tools will make your presentation memorable in a visual way. Used well, they're often what your audience will remember.

Bottom line? Incorporate the **ARM** process when developing your presentation. It will help you organize your thoughts and articulate your message for a specific audience. In the end, you'll find you spend your time productively crafting your speech...and not spinning your wheels.

Now, only if you dare – video a full presentation and review for strengths and weaknesses. But this is not for the faint of heart. As they say, don't watch alone, that's where we come in.

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