



Presentations

Help:

Need to practice a presentation? Book a [Mock Presentation appointment](#).

As daunting as interviews alone can feel, more and more employers are asking for candidates to deliver a presentation as part of the recruitment process too. As part of the compete phase, presentations give employers the opportunity to assess your presentation skills live, alongside giving you the chance to showcase your ability to thrive under pressure; demonstrate your communication and research skills; and deliver an engaging, well-prepared presentation.

It is important to consider what the employer is looking for in the presentation and prepare for how you can successfully fulfil, and exceed, their expectations.

You should be told what visual aids will be available, who your audience is and the time limit for your presentation.

The panel are usually assessing:

- The quality of your ideas
- The clarity of your thinking: are you able to take a strategic perspective?
- Your verbal communication skills, especially your ability to influence and engage your audience
- Your organisation skills: how well you prepare beforehand and manage your time within the presentation
- Your formal presentation skills, especially if this is a key part of the job
- Other key competencies – if appropriate to the brief – and commercial awareness.

Topics

Whether you have been given the topic in advance or asked to prepare it on the day, the key to success lies in anticipating your audience's needs, delivering within the specified time-frame and communicating clearly and concisely.

The topic you are given may appear to vary in the apparent relevance to the role, for example, you could be asked 'Where do you see yourself in five years' time?' or 'What is your greatest achievement?'. However, your presentation should highlight your aptitude for presenting ideas clearly, demonstrate your fit within and understanding of the company and reflect any key skills required for the role, if appropriate. Take a look at our [presentation topic ideas](#) to get some ideas for commonly used topics – you can practise delivering these in a Mock Presentation appointment.

If you are able to choose your own subject, pick a topic which interests you, you can talk confidently about, and answer questions on – your passion will shine through when you are presenting.

If you are given the presentation topic on the day, consider the different skills they may be aiming to assess.

Presentation Skills

Verbal – Projecting confidence and enthusiasm through your voice is sometimes easier said than done and it is not uncommon for us to stumble over our words or lose our train of thought. Practising your presentation and knowing what you are going to say is one way to combat this and will help you avoid overuse of fillers or colloquialisms. Make sure you project your voice so that the audience can easily hear you and keep a measured pace – don't forget to pause and take a breath before starting a new sentence, they are never as long as they feel. Vary your sentences if appropriate too, use short sentences to punctuate key points or ideas.

Non-Verbal – As with the interview itself, open body language is the key to appearing confident. If you are standing to present, make sure you stand where you can be seen, but are not blinded by a projector. Stand with your body facing your audience and make sure you are talking to them, rather than constantly turning round to refer to your presentation. Do use your arms and hands to aid your deliver, but try not to move around too much – it could be distracting. Use eye contact with all members of the panel when delivering your presentation, this not only helps engage your audience, but also adds conviction to your argument.

Structure – Ensuring your audience can easily follow your presentation is vital. Construct the presentation with a logical flow; a strong opening and sound conclusion are as important as the content in between. Simplicity will help here. If you are given limited time to prepare a presentation, think of the 'rule of three'. For example, you could highlight three main points that address the topic, or you could consider a 'past, present and future' approach, if appropriate.

Technology – Using technology is a great way of making your presentation memorable and engaging, however, it does have risks you need to consider. Make sure that you have an alternative method of delivering your presentation, and that you have access to it via multiple media. As a last resort, consider printing a number of copies of the slides in case you have to ditch the use of technology all together. Don't create slides unnecessarily; your argument should not be hiding behind visual effects. Finally, don't crowd your slides with information; use bullet points to convey key points, and make sure you use a professional looking template.

Preparation

- Before you start your presentation, consider the purpose of the presentation: are you selling, persuading, teaching, informing, etc?
- Consider your audience: what will they get out of your presentation; how can you target their company specifically; are you considering their level of expertise?
- Re-read the brief a number of times to gain an understanding of the central subject, before considering sub-topics and how they address the central subject. Within that central subject consider: what is the key message I am trying to convey?
- Research the topic and prioritise your selected key points – don't try and cover too much in the short time you have.

Practice

- Make sure that you keep to time in your practice runs – try timing yourself using the stopwatch feature on your smartphone.
- Practise using a recording device, a mirror, or friends and family to practice and gain honest feedback.
- Prepare for the questions they may ask about your presentation. Don't be afraid to ask the interviewers for a clarification if you're unsure.
- Book in for a [Mock Presentation appointment](#) with one of our trained advisers to practise in front of an audience in a safe environment.

Example Presentation Topics

If you have been asked to deliver a short presentation at an interview or assessment centre, but you are not sure what to present on, please see the list below for suggestion:

1. Presenting on your background

“Present on a topic you are passionate about”

“Tell us about an achievement that you are particularly proud of”

“Present a story about yourself and how it has led you to this point”

“Why do you want to apply to us? Why should we hire you?”

2. Presenting on, and suggesting, areas for development or company focused topics

“How and why would you improve our business strategy for the next 5 years?”

“What do you think are the main challenges you may face in this role?”

“Deliver a presentation relating to the business decision making process you might operate as a (E.g. financial analyst)”

3. Presenting with a skill-focus

“Sell a holiday destination as part of a pitch for a travel consultancy”

“Bring a new product to market: What is your strategy?”

“Tell us about a successful research project you have been involved in or led”

For more information contact the Career Development Service:

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