Preparation for a 15 Minute Oral Presentation - Additional Notes

Slide 1 - an introduction to the workshop. I have always found an old book (circa 1989) by Ed Wohlmuthe “The Overnight Guide to Public Speaking” (Millennium Books) extremely useful. Remember – it is not about the “NAIL!”

Slide 2 – It’s all about perception. Your message may be exciting but your audience is not a blank page, and pre-existing states (mental, emotional and situational) can impose meaning on sensory perceptions. Note to SELF - Sliced bread is a great idea, but it still needs someone to pick it up.

Slide 3: The Steps. Slide numbers and possible/probable content - Discussion should be centred on time and transition issues between and around slides.

Start with a Roadmap: Critical to tell participants where you are going and why (if you are choosing not to raise other points). You can assume you will have to interrupt your audience and keep interrupting them in order to stay on message, and be heard. This will mean occasionally waking them up – e.g. telling them to tune in because you are about to say something significant.

Slide 4: Building Relevance. It makes no sense to talk about the details of public speaking until we first examine the nature of the audience. Everything in public speaking revolves -or should - revolve-around this body of listeners. Yet the nature of audiences is widely misunderstood-by speakers, by audience members, and even by some professional performers. (The ones who make it to the top and stay there know audiences better than anyone on the planet.)

1. The Majority Rules – The first common trait of all audiences is simple: the majority rules!
Do you laugh in a near empty theatre? Cough when the QSO plays? Audiences feed on themselves..... the behavior and attitude of the majority will rule the entire room. Laughter reinforces laughter; silence reinforces silence.  
- It's why getting someone to ask that first question- if you want the audience to ask questions- is so difficult – PLAN FOR IT.

2. The Outside always comes in ... People don’t exist in a vacuum and +tive & -tive outside influences always come inside the auditorium.  
- There's an increasing tendency for audiences to 'tune out' and daydream – info overload is another aspect of modern life that people bring in from outside.  
- the rule is simple: an audience will daydream at the slightest opportunity and will not return to reality without a strong incentive.

3. Great Expectations .... You don’t like to think it but you are in competition here.

4. Ears have no memory .... Auditory memory is limited, and the brain processes at about 4/5 times faster than speech. An audience is a group of people with over-taxed memories and undertaxed thinking abilities. Your task is to stuff words and ideas into uncooperative thinking systems. Now you see why daydreaming is so tempting; it’s far easier to let the imagination play with that excess brain power.

5. Every audience has an ego .... Every audience has a collective ego that sets the standard for what the group believes it’s entitled to and what it, in turn, is required to give the speaker. Audience typologies:  
(1) Professional (Occupational Density).  
(2) Sales  
(3) Invitation Only  
(4) Come-one-come-all.  
Where does your topic sit?

6. 30 second wonder – The thirty-second television commercial is really a little playlet - it has an introduction, a plot exposition, and a finale.  
- It has shortened everyone's attention span and made us very impatient with inefficient forms of communication.  
- Advertising attacks the senses on two levels – visual & auditory, is high impact, addresses a perceived need for safety, comfort, acceptability, recreation, status, creates an emotional response on conscious & unconscious levels.  
- There is a shortened attention span – increased impatience with other forms of communication.  
- You have 15 minutes – the equivalent of 30 commercials for your pitch

Slide 5: All audiences want to hear the six signals. They want to hear them regardless of the length of your talk. Signals don’t have to be given directly they can be implied by your words. Knowing the nature of your audience is crucial to connecting to them through your message.

1. I will not waste your time. Time is our new currency. Information > Time, so most of your audience are impatient from the outset. Audiences get angry when they sense their time is being wasted. The speaker needs to validate this = mutual
appreciation. You must give the “I will not waste your time signal” in the first 10 seconds of your intro.

- A good technique is to talk to either the presentation before you, ones to come (that you have researched) or to the theme of your SYMPOSIA segment.
- Your audience will be listening for a concluding statement long before you’re ready to give one
- Avoid saying – in the few minutes I have here – suggests you are going to hold back on them. Jokes – avoid, but true anecdotes are illustrative
- I will not waste your time is code for I will be relevant – stick to the plan.

2. I know who you are.

- Zero in on the audience needs. People are selfish – they care about themselves and they will put their ears on.
- Tell them so early – EG In Medical Education we have many service issues (signal) and like you (reinforcing signal) we are constantly trying to do more with less.
- But you think the audience may too general for your message – try “you might to like to know why we have more accredited Junior Doctor places than ever before and how this might create opportunities for your service”.
- Audiences also want you to acknowledge how much they already know (reinforcing signal) – this can be professional (status) recognition or knowledge based (ego).

3. I am well organised

- Consider the difference between a book and a presentation – you can browse back through a book. An audience gets one bite at the apple – instant or no understanding. NB: You are working without a memory net.
- Message needs to be organised as a clear, easily understood unit. You need to tell them this and how you have done it.
- E.G. There are two aspects to a compulsory education program for Junior Doctors. (1) It is necessary for the hospital to meet accreditation standards and, (2) It can help improve the clinical decision-making and practices of our junior doctors. I want to discuss both of these with you before turning to a possible solution for more of our clinical education needs”.
- NB – the audience now expects two discussions of problems, followed by a single proposed solution.

4. I know my subject

- You need to establish a match between you as speaker and your topic.
- You need to tell people. E.G On our side of the Medical education requirement we have governance – it is our responsibility to ensure that CH hospital units are accredited for education and training under current legislation. This is the role and responsibility (signal) of my department. This means that we must be constantly on guard to ensure (reinforcing signal) that our educational programs and capabilities are properly matched to the needs of Junior Doctors, Medical Clinicians, Allied Health Providers and the patients they service.
- Note what hasn’t been said – there is no magic solution, but what you have said is that you will pick up the responsibility to deal with the problem you have identified – EG: How medical education can identify and integrate clinical teaching and training efforts across hospital departments.
- EG: I have 3 points I’d like to raise with you this morning (organisation signal) and each will take about 5 minutes (time signal). But first let me borrow a few seconds (reinforced time signal) to tell you about a phone call I received last week from Dr Thomas about offering a pre-operative cardiology teaching session as part of the FEP. Colin she said, I was hoping you could book me in for a session in August. Great I said, “I’ll put you on the term 3 agenda”. OK said Dr Thomas, but that’s not really
why I am calling. I really would like to know more about the Medical Education Unit and the Facility Education Program you run”.

- OUTCOME – this is a device, it never happened. But it lets me explain my function without casting the audiences knowledge in a negative light – there are people in this room who do not know what you do.
- TECHNIQUE: The work in progress. Let them know it is early stages, but their feedback, input, reflective comment would be helpful.

5. Here is my most important point
- The news – I don’t watch TV, but I sometimes need to know the weather. So I tune out to the ‘bad news’ in the hope of getting the weather, but the station is on to me, it always runs the weather after a commercial. So I tune out and I miss it. Ring a bell?
- Onus on you to tune the audience to your most important point.
- “If you don’t take anything else away from my talk today, I hope you’ll remember this one point (signal). It is the key message I came here to deliver (reinforcing point).
- “There is an important message here that I hope you will bear in mind for the future (S). Here it is .... (RS).
- What I am building up to (S) is that only one conclusion (S) can be reached from the evidence – and perhaps you have reached the same conclusion yourself (RS).
- The signal is always delivered in 2 parts – it takes a second or two to step out of the reverie, it is a courtesy prompt. The pressure is then to define your key message in one short sentence..... Australian Constitution (These are the Rules); Facebook (Agree to the terms).
- Only one point, but Multi-action Points (MAPS) – actions you want your audience to take to reach a goal (review your term teaching plan, and contact the PMEU to see what overlap or complementarity there are between the FEP and your program).

6. I am Finished
- Birth, childhood, marriage, taxes & death. A sequence and a rhythm to everything. The band last Saturday night – old Cold Chisel Cover they got into but couldn’t get out of but for the Dum. Dee-dee Dum Dum. DUM! DUM!
- We all go through life waiting for the final DUM. When it appears we know it, we are reassured. So you need a solid finish, one that you “Can Signal”.
- The most abused word in public speaking – FINALLY! When the speaker is nowhere near the end.
- TRY: “I want to leave you with one last thought.... Before I take my exit I would like to leave you with my thought for the day (share a relevant story)
- Keep it upbeat and positive .... Avoid “I see I’m out of time” as it suggest you have more up your sleeve that you haven’t shared. Hand the audience a bouquet! A bouquet is something beyond your main point ... repeating your main point simply implies that you are unsure you have managed to get it across; thanking the audience is a bouquet they will appreciate.

Slide 6: Chunking & Debunking.
The Polemic (circular structure). Start at the top north of the circle, tell them about the terrain on the way (body) and tell them when they are over each bit (looking down from the plane) and tell them to buckle their seat belts, you are about to land. Thank-them for flying and tell them where they are now.....
What is it you want to do today, and how do you want the audience to shift – from ignorance to certainty?
Where to Place Important Information

Slide 7: The beginning and the end - Where to place key information so it is caught in the net.

Slide 8: It should be like a MAP. The Body - this is a combination of pre-flagged signals and information bytes rolled out to the audience as rewards for tuning in. This builds connection, understanding, cohesion, and confidence. The Conclusion - 2 or 3 main points and a take home message.

Slide 9: The Compulsory Q & A. Handling Q & A. As this is a compulsory 5 minute requirement, take control of Q time. Have some questions “emailed in” by folk who can’t attend. Use a question plant in the audience. Give the audience roles (appoint a summariser, and an assistant summariser and ask the questions).

Slide 10: Visual Aids: Don’t let them take over. Your use of aids should correspond to your purpose grid – how do you want knowledge and awareness to interact? Do you propose:

1. An experiment (point to connections) Low awareness + Low Knowledge = Experiment
2. AnExpose (tell about definite connections) High Knowledge + Low Awareness = Expose
3. An Exploration (tell them why it is so) Low Knowledge + High Awareness = Caution
4. Expository (confirm why it is so) High Knowledge + High Awareness = Certainty