

Virtual presenting – the art of persuasion without personal contact

Why fly all the way to London for a simple sales meeting? Why spend a whole day out of the office for a 20-minute presentation? How about meetings with virtual teams? They are expensive, time-consuming and require considerable advance planning. There are software packages such as WebEx or Netmeeting designed for such situations, but few people have the necessary soft skills to use these effectively.

The results are all too often endless monologues, a lack of active participation on the part of the audience, no guidance through the presentation and, most importantly, no positive result at the end of the day. HPS has broken new ground to develop the first professional training seminar specifically designed for virtual presentations – just what you would expect from THE presentations specialist.



Professional preparation – also a must in the virtual world!

91 Even though you are not physically there, you still need to be just as present as if you were sitting at the same table.

1. Define the objective of your virtual presentation – and in particular what the other person should get out of it.
2. Make a note of the names and functions of everyone involved so you can address them personally: “Charlie, I’m sure you have...”, and don’t forget / ignore anyone in the audience just because they are sitting quietly (and invisibly) in the background.
3. Prepare an agenda for the opening and a summary for the close. This way you can be sure, right at the beginning, that the points you are going to cover are approved by everyone there, and you have the chance to hammer home your key message(s) again at the end.

During the seminar we work on the participant’s actual presentations – and we really do this virtually i.e. via WLAN and using a dedicated web server.



Directing the audience’s attention without eye contact – a real challenge!

92 How can you be sure that your audience is looking where you want them to look and not reading the newspaper?

1. Use the pointers provided by the software program – do this occasionally and accurately. Use cursors and highlighting to point out exactly what you are talking about.
2. Let your audience get involved. Ask questions: “Charlie, what do you see on this slide?” And let them use their highlighting tools so they can also point out or mark what interests them.
3. Speak precisely and lead the discussion. Instead of saying: “As you can see on this slide...”, try it with “Top left, in the second point, ...” or “Please circle the word “performance” with your marker”.

These techniques are trained intensively during the seminar with an emphasis both on virtual one-to-one presentations and those involving larger groups.



The (limited) power of the voice

Telephone conversations convey only part of the frequency range actually covered by your voice. That's why telephone voices sound less lively than they really are.

In the highly successful HPS Powertalk seminar, we focus closely on the voice, language and rhetorical skills – three key success factors for all communication scenarios.

1. Imagine you are using your PC, looking at the screen and talking on the phone all at the same time. The risk of your voice sounding monotonous as a result is extremely high. Remember: there is no need to convince your PC of anything – but you do need to convince the person on the other end of the phone.

2. Your voice needs to be full of emotion – especially when you are on the phone. It's relatively simple: If you sound bored, you will be boring. If your voice is full of emotion, you will arouse emotions in others. The person on the other end of the line can even hear your smile!

3. Speak slower, breath calmly, lower the pitch of your voice a little and vary the volume of your voice. This will add more confidence to your voice and other people will respond with more interest.



English Tips

Guide your listeners effectively! Here's some vocabulary and phrases to help your audience look where you want them to on the PC screen when presenting virtually.

Our international English seminars focus on the non-native speaker of English. The goal is to forget the grammar and concentrate on the message, while giving you the tools to make you fluent.

Clearly state where you want the audience to look, then go into detail. Be sure to make a short pause so that they can find the point you wish to talk about. Practice the following sentences and learn the phrases marked in bold to help you guide your audience more effectively.

- Please look at the **upper left-hand / lower right-hand** corner.
- Let's take a look at the **first / second / third / last** bullet point.
- If you look at the **left-hand column, second bullet / line**, you'll notice...
- Let's now **move on to slide / bullet number X**.
- Please **circle / highlight the fourth word in the second bullet point**.
- Let's look at this graph. The curve **represented by the red dotted line shows** our sales...
- On this pie-chart, the **segment** in blue represents...
- The **third bar from the left** on this bar chart shows ...

By using these phrases, you'll increase the understanding and sound more professional.

Questions, Ideas & Tips ...

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