

## UNIT V

### ETIQUETTE



### *INTRODUCTION*

- The term etiquette was first introduced in 1750 from the French word etiquette meaning ticket. Etiquette is the ticket to the proper way of doing things. It is the conventional rule of personal behaviour in a polite society. It is the customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group.
- Synonym: civility, code, convention, courtesy, custom, decorum, formalities, good or proper behaviour, politeness, protocol.

# *WHAT IS ETIQUETTE?*

- Etiquette is simpler word is define as good behaviour which distinguishes human beings from animals.
  - Human being is a social animal and it is really important for him/her to behave in an appropriate way . etiquette refers to behaving in a socially responsible way.
  - Etiquette refers to guidelines with control the way a responsible individual should behave in the society.
- 

## *Definition of Etiquette*

- "The conduct or procedure required by good breeding or prescribed by authority to be observed in social or official life"
  - TYPES OF ETIQUETTE
  - Social etiquette
  - Bathroom etiquette
  - Corporate etiquette
  - Wedding etiquette
  - Meeting etiquette
  - Telephone etiquette
  - Eating etiquette
  - Business etiquette .. etc
-

## *NEED FOR ETIQUETTE*

- Etiquette makes you a culture individual who leaves his mark wherever he goes
  - Etiquette teaches you the way to talk, walk and most importantly behave in the society.
  - Etiquette is essential for an everlasting first impression . the way you interact with your superiors, parents ,fellow workers, friends speak a lot about your personality and up-bringing
  - Etiquette enables the individuals to earn respect and appreciation in the society. No one would feel like talking to a person who does not know how to speak or behave in the society. Etiquette inculcates a feeling to trust and loyalty in the individuals. One becomes more responsible and mature. Etiquette helps individuals to value relationships.
- 

## *Types of Etiquette*

- **Social etiquette-** social etiquette is important for an individual as it teaches him how to behave in the society.
  - **Bathroom etiquette-** Bathroom etiquette refers to the set of rules which an individual need to follow while using public restroom or office toilets . make sure you leave the restroom clean and tidy for the other person.
  - **Corporate etiquette-** corporate etiquette refers to how an individual should behave while he is at work. Each one needs to maintain the decorum of the organization .don't loiter around unnecessary or peep into other's cubicles.
-

**Wedding etiquette-** is special event in every one's life. Individuals should ensure they behave sensibly at weddings. Never be late to weddings or drink uncontrollably.

**Telephone etiquette-**it is essential to learn how one should interact with the other person over the phone . Telephone etiquette refers to the way an individual should speak on the phone. Never put the other person on long holds. Make sure you greet the other person. Take care of your pitch and tone.

**Meeting etiquette-** meeting etiquette refers to the style one need to adopt when he is attending any meeting, seminar, presentation and so on. Listen to what the other person has to say. Never enter meeting room without a notepad and pen.it is important to jot down important points for future reference.

---

- **Eating etiquette-**Individuals must follow certain decorum while eating in public .don't make noise while eating. One should not leave the table unless and until everyone has finished eating
  - **Business etiquette-** business etiquette includes ways to conduct a certain business . Don't ever cheat customers.it is simply unethical.
  - **To conclude , etiquette transforms a man into gentlemen.**
-

## LETTERS AND EMAILS

One aspect of English you possibly haven't thought about yet is how to communicate appropriately in formal written situations, such as letters. This is a skill you'll almost certainly need if you're in the process of applying to UK schools or universities, so we thought we'd give you a handy guide on how to write formal letters and emails in English.

Even if you're a native speaker, this is still an essential skill to acquire if you haven't already, both for university applications and in life beyond your student years, when you'll almost certainly need to write covering letters for job applications, letters to the bank, emails to customer service departments of companies, and so on. So, if you're not quite sure how to go about writing a formal letter or email, take heed of the advice in this article and you'll soon be writing professional-sounding communications.

### The right way to write a letter

When it comes to writing a formal letter, there are very clear right and wrong ways of going about it. To show you the right way of doing it, let's make up a situation and pretend that you're writing a letter to a university you've applied to, enquiring about the possibility of deferring your course for a year.

We've written out the letter in full below, so that you can refer to it as you read through the following points.

- Your address: the first thing to write is your own address. This goes at the top right-hand side of the letter.
- Date: Beneath your address, you write the date of the letter. Note how we've formatted the date here, and left a space between the bottom of the address and the date.
- Their address: Next, you write the recipient's address. This is left-aligned and placed below the text of your own address and the date.
- Salutation: we've written about these in more detail beneath our example letter, but for the purposes of this example we are addressing the recipient using "Mr" and his surname.
- Subject line: a bit like an email, a formal letter has a one-line summary after the salutation, which summarises what the letter is about.
- Body text: the main content of the letter. Use spaces to indicate a new paragraph and keep

sentences clear and to the point. Make sure it's clear exactly what you want the person to do as an outcome of your letter. In this example, we've put the direct question on its own separate line to make sure it stands out.

- Sign-off: again, we'll give you more guidance on how to sign off your letter later in this article. In this example we've used "Yours sincerely", for reasons that will become clear later.
- Signature: we've left a gap here, where you would handwrite your signature once you've printed off your letter ready to send.
- Print name: beneath your signature is your name printed in full.

### Salutations in more detail

Always begin a formal letter with "Dear", rather than "hi" or any other more informal greeting. First names are best avoided if you want to be very formal, but may be acceptable in some situations, such as when you're writing to someone you've met in person and who has encouraged you to address them by their first name. In terms of more formal greetings, you have the following options:

- Sir/Madam – you start your letter with "Dear Sir or Madam" when you don't know to whom your letter should be addressed; for example, if you're writing to the general university admissions department and don't know exactly who would be responsible for the handling of your enquiry.
- Mr/Mrs/Dr etc – when you know the name of the person to whom you are writing, address them using their surname and title. For men, this should be Mr Smith (unless you know that he has another title, e.g. Dr Smith or Captain Smith) and for women, this should be Ms Smith unless you know for sure that she has another title or prefers to use Mrs or Miss.

### **Signing off a letter**

There are several ways of signing off a formal letter.

These are:

- Yours faithfully, – this is used when you've started your letter with "Dear Sir or Madam".
- Yours sincerely, – this is used when you've addressed a named individual in your letter.

– Yours truly, – this can be used when you’re writing to someone you know slightly. This is more common in America. These should all have a comma at the end, as in the examples above.

Emails are easy to write, easier to send, and a still easier place to make a minor blunder- make sure you know what to avoid!

## **Email**

Email is generally considered less formal than a letter, but that’s not to say that you can descend into over-familiarity or slang when you’re writing to someone important, such as a university admissions tutor (who will not be impressed if you’re not able to communicate professionally). You must remain respectful and professional at all times, even in this more informal medium. You don’t need to lay out your email in the style of the letter in the example above, but there are a few special considerations and things that are done differently in emails as opposed to letters.

### **The email address you use**

For the purposes of emailing important people – such as university tutors or potential employers – it’s best to have a professional-looking email address. Low-quality free email providers such as Hotmail and Yahoo are best avoided (Gmail is still considered acceptable), and although we probably all have childish email addresses with silly handles like “shopgirl1990” that we set up years ago, they won’t give a very good impression to the person you’re emailing. As a general rule, `firstname.lastname@emailprovider.com` is a good format for your email address.

### **To/from field**

The email equivalent of putting your address and your recipient’s address is the To/From field of your email. This may not seem important, but there are a few things to bear in mind:

- Ensure that the “From” field is properly configured. It should simply be your first and last names, appropriately capitalised and spelt correctly, with no extra bits like hearts or exclamation marks.
- Put your recipient’s email address in the “To” field if you’re emailing one person.

- If there's someone else you think should see the email for their information, but you're not directly addressing it to them, put their email in the "CC" field. This stands for "Carbon Copy", and it means that they will see the email but will also see that it's not directly addressed to them. Don't use it unless there is a real need for this person to see the communication.
- If you're emailing several people, it's bad form to include all their email addresses in the "To" field. In this instance, you should put your own email address in the "To" field and put those of your recipients into the "BCC" field. This stands for "Blind Carbon Copy", and it means they'll all see the email but won't see who else you've sent it to.

### **Subject line**

Write something descriptive in the subject line that summarises what the email is about. Don't make it too long. If you were emailing about the query covered in our example letter earlier, for instance, the subject line could simply be "Deferring course entry". A descriptive subject line makes it easier for people to find an email among a mass of others, and will also ensure that they do bother to read it. Don't forget, people receive dozens of emails every day, so yours could easily get lost in their inbox if you put a generic subject line such as "Enquiry". Another word of caution: avoid words like "Urgent" unless it's a genuine emergency (for instance, you could miss a deadline if they don't respond quickly). Marking something as urgent when it isn't will only annoy the recipient, who has many other demands on their time. For the same reason, avoid marking the email as "important" if your email provider has a dedicated button for this.

### **Salutation**

Email greetings are generally more relaxed than letters, though if you want to be formal then it's still fine to start your email with "Dear Mr Smith" if you're emailing a named individual or "Dear Sir or Madam" if you're emailing a generic email address such as [admissions@pretenduniversity.com](mailto:admissions@pretenduniversity.com).

If you've met the person before, or they've emailed you before, first names are acceptable if this is how they have signed their emails to you previously. In such a situation, it's also acceptable to use a slightly less formal greeting, such as "Hello" or even "Hi".



However, go by how they address you; if their emails to you start “Dear”, you reply with “Dear”; if they start “Hi”, you can reply with “Hi”.

An alternative email greeting that lies somewhere between formal and informal is “Good morning” or “Good afternoon”. This is perhaps a little friendlier and more personal than “Dear”, so if your style is not naturally very formal then this is an acceptable form of email greeting.

### **Signing off an email**

Again, with email being more informal than a letter, a very formal sign-off such as “Yours sincerely” can sound a little odd in an email. If you have started your email in the formal style of a letter then it makes sense to finish it in this way, but if you’ve adopted one of the less formal salutations outlined just now, you have a few different options for how you could sign off. These common conventions include:

- Best wishes,
- Kind regards,
- Best regards,
- All the best,
- Thanks,
- Thanks in advance,
- Many thanks,

The latter three can be used when you’ve asked for something or asked a question. With all of these, make sure you have a comma at the end of the line, as in the examples above.

If you have a standard email signature that’s included automatically in all your emails, make sure that its contents are completely appropriate for the person to whom you are sending the email. Jokes, funny images and such like are not appropriate for a formal email.

### **Other tips for writing formally**

There are a few more general pointers for writing formally to ensure that you maintain that professional image with which to impress your recipient.

– Never use slang

– avoid slang and colloquialisms when you're writing formally. It goes without saying that you should never swear, either.

– Don't waffle

– explain what you're trying to say as clearly and concisely as possible if you expect them to read it in full. Keep your communication short and to the point.

– Always proofread

– good spelling and grammar are absolutely essential, so check your communication thoroughly before it gets sent off (the spell check will do for an initial check, but you'll still need to read through it to correct anything that it might not have picked up on). Any errors will completely shatter your professional image!

– In emails, avoid unnecessary attachments, emoticons and so on.

You will undoubtedly have occasion to write a formal letter at some point, and sending emails has become a daily occurrence for most of us. Taking on board the tips in this article will ensure that you convey a professional demeanour in your written communications, and this will stand you in good stead in any number of situations in which you find yourself in the future.

## **PRESENTATIONS**

The formal presentation of information is divided into two broad categories: Presentation Skills and Personal Presentation.

These two aspects are interwoven and can be described as the preparation, presentation and practice of verbal and non-verbal communication.

This article describes what a presentation is and defines some of the key terms associated with presentation skills.

Many people feel terrified when asked to make their first public talk. Some of these initial fears can be reduced by good preparation that also lays the groundwork for making an effective presentation.

### **A Presentation Is...**

A presentation is a means of communication that can be adapted to various speaking situations, such as talking to a group, addressing a meeting or briefing a team.

A presentation can also be used as a broad term that encompasses other 'speaking engagements' such as making a speech at a wedding, or getting a point across in a video conference.

To be effective, step-by-step preparation and the method and means of presenting the information should be carefully considered.

A presentation requires you to get a message across to the listeners and will often contain a '*persuasive*' element. It may, for example, be a talk about the positive work of your organisation, what you could offer an employer, or why you should receive additional funding for a project.

### **The Key Elements of a Presentation**

Making a presentation is a way of communicating your thoughts and ideas to an audience and many of our articles on communication are also relevant here, see: What is Communication? for more.

**Consider the following key components of a presentation:**

**Context**

Ask yourself the following questions to develop a full understanding of the context of the presentation.

- **When and where will you deliver your presentation?**

*There is a world of difference between a small room with natural light and an informal setting, and a huge lecture room, lit with stage lights. The two require quite different presentations, and different techniques.*

- **Will it be in a setting you are familiar with, or somewhere new?**

*If somewhere new, it would be worth trying to visit it in advance, or at least arriving early, to familiarise yourself with the room.*

- **Will the presentation be within a formal or less formal setting?**

*A work setting will, more or less by definition, be more formal, but there are also various degrees of formality within that.*

- **Will the presentation be to a small group or a large crowd?**

- **Are you already familiar with the audience?**

*With a new audience, you will have to build rapport quickly and effectively, to get them on your side.*

- **What equipment and technology will be available to you, and what will you be expected to use?**

*In particular, you will need to ask about microphones and whether you will be expected to stand in one place, or move around.*

- **What is the audience expecting to learn from you and your presentation?**

*Check how you will be 'billed' to give you clues as to what information needs to be included in your presentation.*

All these aspects will change the presentation. For more on this, see our page on [Deciding the Presentation Method](#).

### **Presenter**

The role of the presenter is to communicate with the audience and control the presentation.

Remember, though, that this may also include handing over the control to your audience, especially if you want some kind of interaction.

You may wish to have a look at our page on [Facilitation Skills](#) for more.

### **Audience**

The audience receives the presenter's message(s).

However, this reception will be filtered through and affected by such things as the listener's own experience, knowledge and personal sense of values.

See our page: [Barriers to Effective Communication](#) to learn why communication can fail.

### **Message**

The message or messages are delivered by the presenter to the audience.

The message is delivered not just by the spoken word (verbal communication) but can be augmented by techniques such as voice projection, body language, gestures, eye contact (non-verbal communication), and visual aids.

The message will also be affected by the audience's expectations. For example, if you have been billed as speaking on one particular topic, and you choose to speak on another, the audience is unlikely to take your message on board *even if you present very well*. They will judge your presentation a failure, because you have not met their expectations.

### **Reaction**

The audience's reaction and therefore the success of the presentation will largely depend upon whether you, as presenter, effectively communicated your message, and whether it met their expectations.

As a presenter, you don't control the audience's expectations. What you can do is find out what they have been told about you by the conference organisers, and what they are expecting to hear. Only if you know that can you be confident of delivering something that will meet expectations.

## **Method**

### **How will the presentation be delivered?**

Presentations are usually delivered direct to an audience. However, there may be occasions where they are delivered from a distance over the Internet using video conferencing systems, such as Skype.

It is also important to remember that if your talk is recorded and posted on the internet, then people may be able to access it for several years. This will mean that your contemporaneous references should be kept to a minimum.

## **Impediments**

Many factors can influence the effectiveness of how your message is communicated to the audience.

For example background noise or other distractions, an overly warm or cool room, or the time of day and state of audience alertness can all influence your audience's level of concentration.

As presenter, you have to be prepared to cope with any such problems and try to keep your audience focussed on your message.

## **Frame Your Story**

There's no way you can give a good talk unless you have something worth talking about. Conceptualizing and framing what you want to say is the most vital part of preparation.

### *Find the Perfect Mix of Data and Narrative*

by Nancy Duarte Most presentations lie somewhere on the continuum between a report and a story. A report is data-rich, exhaustive, and informative—but not very engaging. Stories help a

...

We all know that humans are wired to listen to stories, and metaphors abound for the narrative structures that work best to engage people. When I think about compelling presentations, I think about taking an audience on a journey. A successful talk is a little miracle—people see the world differently afterward.

If you frame the talk as a journey, the biggest decisions are figuring out where to start and where to end. To find the right place to start, consider what people in the audience already know about your subject—and how much they care about it. If you assume they have more knowledge or interest than they do, or if you start using jargon or get too technical, you'll lose them. The most engaging speakers do a superb job of very quickly introducing the topic, explaining why they care so deeply about it, and convincing the audience members that they should, too.

The biggest problem I see in first drafts of presentations is that they try to cover too much ground. You can't summarize an entire career in a single talk. If you try to cram in everything you know, you won't have time to include key details, and your talk will disappear into abstract language that may make sense if your listeners are familiar with the subject matter but will be completely opaque if they're new to it. You need specific examples to flesh out your ideas. So limit the scope of your talk to that which can be explained, and brought to life with examples, in the available time. Much of the early feedback we give aims to correct the impulse to sweep too broadly. Instead, go deeper. Give more detail. Don't tell us about your entire field of study—tell us about your unique contribution.

*A successful talk is a little miracle—people see the world differently afterward.*

Of course, it can be just as damaging to overexplain or painstakingly draw out the implications of a talk. And there the remedy is different: Remember that the people in the audience are intelligent. Let them figure some things out for themselves. Let them draw their own conclusions.

Many of the best talks have a narrative structure that loosely follows a detective story. The speaker starts out by presenting a problem and then describes the search for a solution. There's an "aha" moment, and the audience's perspective shifts in a meaningful way.

If a talk fails, it's almost always because the speaker didn't frame it correctly, misjudged the audience's level of interest, or neglected to tell a story. Even if the topic is important, random

pontification without narrative is always deeply unsatisfying. There's no progression, and you don't feel that you're learning.

### **Plan Your Delivery**

Once you've got the framing down, it's time to focus on your delivery. There are three main ways to deliver a talk. You can read it directly off a script or a teleprompter. You can develop a set of bullet points that map out what you're going to say in each section rather than scripting the whole thing word for word. Or you can memorize your talk, which entails rehearsing it to the point where you internalize every word—verbatim.

Don't read it, and don't use a teleprompter. It's usually just too distancing—people will know you're reading. And as soon as they sense it, the way they receive your talk will shift. Suddenly your intimate connection evaporates, and everything feels a lot more formal.

If you're giving an important talk and you have the time to do this, it's the best way to go. But don't underestimate the work involved. One of our most memorable speakers was Jill Bolte Taylor, a brain researcher who had suffered a stroke. She talked about what she learned during the eight years it took her to recover. After crafting her story and undertaking many hours of solo practice, she rehearsed her talk dozens of times in front of an audience to be sure she had it down.

### **Show Reading List**

Obviously, not every presentation is worth that kind of investment of time. But if you do decide to memorize your talk, be aware that there's a predictable arc to the learning curve. Most people go through what is called the “valley of awkwardness,” where they haven't quite memorized the talk. If they give the talk while stuck in that valley, the audience will sense it. Their words will sound recited, or there will be painful moments where they stare into the middle distance, or cast their eyes upward, as they struggle to remember their lines. This creates distance between the speaker and the audience.

Getting past this point is simple, fortunately. It's just a matter of rehearsing enough times that the flow of words becomes second nature. Then you can focus on delivering the talk with meaning and authenticity. Don't worry—you'll get there.



But if you don't have time to learn a speech thoroughly and get past that awkward valley, don't try. Go with bullet points on note cards. As long as you know what you want to say for each one, you'll be fine. Focus on remembering the transitions from one bullet point to the next.

Also pay attention to your tone. Some speakers may want to come across as authoritative or wise or powerful or passionate, but it's usually much better to just sound conversational. Don't force it. Don't orate. Just be you.

If a successful talk is a journey, make sure you don't start to annoy your travel companions along the way. Some speakers project too much ego. They sound condescending or full of themselves, and the audience shuts down. Don't let that happen.

### **Develop Stage Presence**

For inexperienced speakers, the physical act of being onstage can be the most difficult part of giving a presentation—but people tend to overestimate its importance. Getting the words, story, and substance right is a much bigger determinant of success or failure than how you stand or whether you're visibly nervous. And when it comes to stage presence, a little coaching can go a long way.

The biggest mistake we see in early rehearsals is that people move their bodies too much. They sway from side to side, or shift their weight from one leg to the other. People do this naturally when they're nervous, but it's distracting and makes the speaker seem weak. Simply getting a person to keep his or her lower body motionless can dramatically improve stage presence. There are some people who are able to walk around a stage during a presentation, and that's fine if it comes naturally. But the vast majority are better off standing still and relying on hand gestures for emphasis.

Perhaps the most important physical act onstage is making eye contact. Find five or six friendly-looking people in different parts of the audience and look them in the eye as you speak. Think of them as friends you haven't seen in a year, whom you're bringing up to date on your work. That eye contact is incredibly powerful, and it will do more than anything else to help your talk land. Even if you don't have time to prepare fully and have to read from a script, looking up and making eye contact will make a huge difference.

Another big hurdle for inexperienced speakers is nervousness—both in advance of the talk and while they're onstage. People deal with this in different ways. Many speakers stay out in the audience until the moment they go on; this can work well, because keeping your mind engaged in the earlier speakers can distract you and limit nervousness. Amy Cuddy, a Harvard Business School professor who studies how certain body poses can affect power, utilized one of the more unusual preparation techniques I've seen. She recommends that people spend time before a talk striding around, standing tall, and extending their bodies; these poses make you feel more powerful. It's what she did before going onstage, and she delivered a phenomenal talk. But I think the single best advice is simply to breathe deeply before you go onstage. It works.

In general, people worry too much about nervousness. Nerves are not a disaster. The audience expects you to be nervous. It's a natural body response that can actually improve your performance: It gives you energy to perform and keeps your mind sharp. Just keep breathing, and you'll be fine.

*Nerves are not a disaster. The audience expects you to be nervous.*

Acknowledging nervousness can also create engagement. Showing your vulnerability, whether through nerves or tone of voice, is one of the most powerful ways to win over an audience, provided it is authentic. Susan Cain, who wrote a book about introverts and spoke at our 2012 conference, was terrified about giving her talk. You could feel her fragility onstage, and it created this dynamic where the audience was rooting for her—everybody wanted to hug her afterward. The fact that we knew she was fighting to keep herself up there made it beautiful, and it was the most popular talk that year.

## **Plan the Multimedia**

With so much technology at our disposal, it may feel almost mandatory to use, at a minimum, presentation slides. By now most people have heard the advice about PowerPoint: Keep it simple; don't use a slide deck as a substitute for notes (by, say, listing the bullet points you'll discuss—those are best put on note cards); and don't repeat out loud words that are on the slide. Not only is reciting slides a variation of the teleprompter problem—"Oh, no, she's reading to us, too!"—

but information is interesting only once, and hearing and seeing the same words feels repetitive. That advice may seem universal by now, but go into any company and you'll see presenters violating it every day.

Many of the best TED speakers don't use slides at all, and many talks don't require them. If you have photographs or illustrations that make the topic come alive, then yes, show them. If not, consider doing without, at least for some parts of the presentation. And if you're going to use slides, it's worth exploring alternatives to PowerPoint. For instance, TED has invested in the company Prezi, which makes presentation software that offers a camera's-eye view of a two-dimensional landscape. Instead of a flat sequence of images, you can move around the landscape and zoom in to it if need be. Used properly, such techniques can dramatically boost the visual punch of a talk and enhance its meaning.

Artists, architects, photographers, and designers have the best opportunity to use visuals. Slides can help frame and pace a talk and help speakers avoid getting lost in jargon or overly intellectual language. (Art can be hard to talk about—better to experience it visually.) I've seen great presentations in which the artist or designer put slides on an automatic timer so that the image changed every 15 seconds. I've also seen presenters give a talk accompanied by video, speaking along to it. That can help sustain momentum. The industrial designer Ross Lovegrove's highly visual TED Talk, for instance, used this technique to bring the audience along on a remarkable creative journey.

Another approach creative types might consider is to build silence into their talks, and just let the work speak for itself. The kinetic sculptor Reuben Margolin used that approach to powerful effect. The idea is not to think "I'm giving a talk." Instead, think "I want to give this audience a powerful experience of my work." The single worst thing artists and architects can do is to retreat into abstract or conceptual language.

Video has obvious uses for many speakers. In a TED Talk about the intelligence of crows, for instance, the scientist showed a clip of a crow bending a hook to fish a piece of food out of a tube—essentially creating a tool. It illustrated his point far better than anything he could have said.

Used well, video can be very effective, but there are common mistakes that should be avoided. A clip needs to be short—if it's more than 60 seconds, you risk losing people. Don't use videos—

particularly corporate ones—that sound self-promotional or like infomercials; people are conditioned to tune those out. Anything with a soundtrack can be dangerously off-putting. And whatever you do, don't show a clip of yourself being interviewed on, say, CNN. I've seen speakers do this, and it's a really bad idea—no one wants to go along with you on your ego trip. The people in your audience are already listening to you live; why would they want to simultaneously watch your talking-head clip on a screen?

## **Putting It Together**

We start helping speakers prepare their talks six months (or more) in advance so that they'll have plenty of time to practice. We want people's talks to be in final form at least a month before the event. The more practice they can do in the final weeks, the better off they'll be. Ideally, they'll practice the talk on their own and in front of an audience.

The tricky part about rehearsing a presentation in front of other people is that they will feel obligated to offer feedback and constructive criticism. Often the feedback from different people will vary or directly conflict. This can be confusing or even paralyzing, which is why it's important to be choosy about the people you use as a test audience, and whom you invite to offer feedback. In general, the more experience a person has as a presenter, the better the criticism he or she can offer.

## **10 Ways to Ruin a Presentation**

As hard as it may be to give a great talk, it's really easy to blow it. Here are some common mistakes that TED advises its speakers to avoid.

1. Take a really long time to explain what your talk is about.
2. Speak ...

What our speakers have been discovering for three decades:

- ✓ Presentations rise or fall on the quality of the idea, the narrative, and the passion of the speaker. It's about substance, not speaking style or multimedia pyrotechnics.
- ✓ It's fairly easy to “coach out” the problems in a talk, but there's no way to “coach in” the basic story—the presenter has to have the raw material.

- ✓ If you have something to say, you can build a great talk. But if the central theme isn't there, you're better off not speaking.
- ✓ Decline the invitation.
- ✓ Go back to work, and wait until you have a compelling idea that's really worth sharing.

The single most important thing to remember is that there is no one good way to do a talk. The most memorable talks offer something fresh, something no one has seen before. The worst ones are those that feel formulaic. So do not on any account try to emulate every piece of advice I've offered here. Take the bulk of it on board, sure. But make the talk your own. You know what's distinctive about you and your idea. Play to your strengths and give a talk that is truly authentic to you.

\*\*\*\*\*