

Delivering a 15-minute presentation in a competitive environment

A 30-minute presentation is easier!

Sometimes you might deliver a short presentation in a competitive environment, for example as
(1) an account manager at a communications agency, where you are competing for a new mandate
(2) or a product manager at say a multinational, where you are competing for internal resources.

Obviously, you must have an excellent and well-substantiated idea, with compelling arguments.

But then the presentation — selling the idea...

This is more about convincing than just explaining — so get into this mindset. You present to a de facto jury. Jury, from JUDGE, from LAW — so build an argument just like in a court case.

1. Do not waste much time telling the recipients what they already know.
2. Practice
also, make sure that everything is rigorous
— and with a clear layout and structure, large enough (for presentation) texts,
no spelling mistakes and no pixelised images
— “near perfection” is a given, as is polish.
3. Practice (aim) for a 14-minute presentation, so that you do not feel under time pressure
— no machine gun delivery (no talking fast for a long period).
4. Like in graphic design: “have white space to give the eyes a rest”
— have gaps or breathers in your presentation to give the ears a rest.
5. Like in graphic design: “remove ink wherever possible within reason”
— remove anything that is not relevant to your central argument
— but you can include background information in your slides, which you do not deliver orally.
6. Engage the entire audience (eye contact)
— irritating when you talk only to the “important person” in the room.
7. If possible, do not read from your smartphone or from a prepared script. Instead, use your slide presentation for prompts.
8. For all factual information (like “22% of Parisians prefer XYZ”) you must always state a reference — i.e. cite the source from which you got this.
9. The presentation material (slide set) should be able to stand alone because it is often left with the customer, so have page titles and, where useful, brief supplementary explanation.
10. IMPORTANT:
— at the start, say what you are going to say
— then say it (the presentation body)
— then, at the end in conclusion, summarise what you did say.