Unit 307

Information Pack

Giving Briefings and Making Presentations

INTRODUCTION

Giving a briefing or speech is something that many leaders and managers are required to do. It can, however, strike fear into the heart of even the most confident and seasoned presenter. Whenever you give a briefing, it is important that your message is clear, your ideas are transparent, your delivery is confident, and the overall impression is professional. Preparing a professional presentation will allow for an effective briefing.
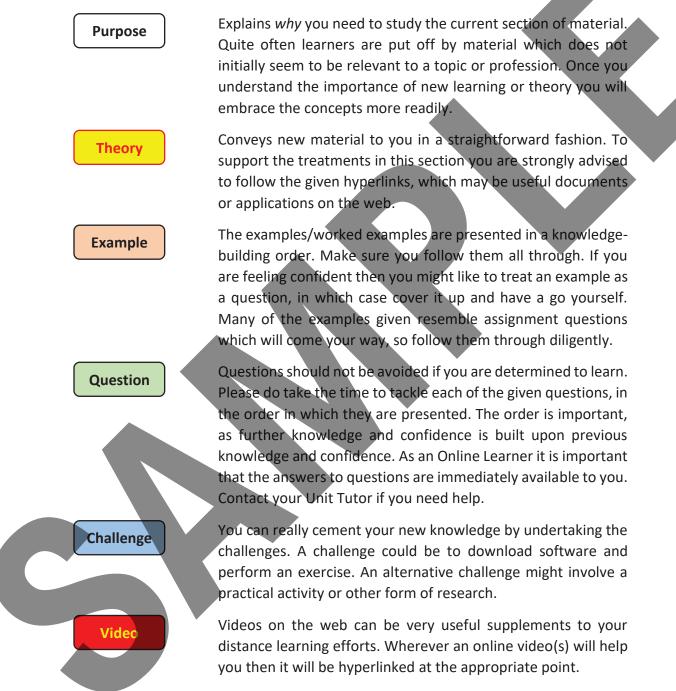
Dale Carneigie in his 1945 work 'Public speaking and Influencing [people] in Business' made the now widely accepted assertion that those looking to impress at work and to accelerate their careers should practise public speaking. The simple rationale is that it is an essential skill and that there is no substitute for practice - i.e. just doing it. And through practice it becomes much easier.

The manager's role will invariably involve making presentations. What is for sure is that in organisations, people that speak and present well, do well!

Much of the success of a presentation is about application of tools and techniques. This information pack will examine the tools and techniques required to construct and deliver a professional presentation.

GUIDANCE

This document is prepared to break the unit material down into bite size chunks. You will see the learning outcomes above treated in their own sections. Therein you will encounter the following structures;

Purpose

Explains *why* you need to study the current section of material. Quite often learners are put off by material which does not initially seem to be relevant to a topic or profession. Once you understand the importance of new learning or theory you will embrace the concepts more readily.

Theory

Conveys new material to you in a straightforward fashion. To support the treatments in this section you are strongly advised to follow the given hyperlinks, which may be useful documents or applications on the web.

Example

The examples/worked examples are presented in a knowledge-building order. Make sure you follow them all through. If you are feeling confident then you might like to treat an example as a question, in which case cover it up and have a go yourself. Many of the examples given resemble assignment questions which will come your way, so follow them through diligently.

Question

Questions should not be avoided if you are determined to learn. Please do take the time to tackle each of the given questions, in the order in which they are presented. The order is important, as further knowledge and confidence is built upon previous knowledge and confidence. As an Online Learner it is important that the answers to questions are immediately available to you. Contact your Unit Tutor if you need help.

Challenge

You can really cement your new knowledge by undertaking the challenges. A challenge could be to download software and perform an exercise. An alternative challenge might involve a practical activity or other form of research.

Video

Videos on the web can be very useful supplements to your distance learning efforts. Wherever an online video(s) will help you then it will be hyperlinked at the appropriate point.

Contents

Briefings

The Cambridge dictionary defines briefings as:

'information that is given to someone just before they do something, or a meeting where this happens for example.

- *They received thorough briefing before they left the country.*
- *We had to attend a briefing once a month.'*

Part of your role as a manager involves keeping your team informed about wider organisational issues which affect them. Your team will look to you to help them make sense of wider organisational communications, and to understand the implications for the team as a whole. Its important to encourage dialogue, build commitment and effectively handle difficult situations or objections that may arise at your team briefings.

Make sure you know why you are running the briefing and what the objectives of the session are. Although many of your team briefing sessions will be about communicating good news, such as the end of year results or the launch of a new product or service, you should also be prepared to communicate bad news to your team. For example, you might need to tell them that the organisation is downsizing or merging, or that your department is being re-organised, with the possibility of job losses.

Give yourself plenty of time to familiarise yourself with the key messages you need to convey during the briefing session. Ensure you can restate each point clearly in your own words. Ideally you should have three to five key messages to deliver.

Platform Skills

Platform skills are presentation behaviours that a trainer uses to transmit content effectively. Not to be confused with skills that guarantee participation (which, in general, only trainers use), both presenters and trainers must demonstrate excellent platform skills to get their messages across.

The success of a platform strategy is determined by three factors:

1. Connection: how easily others can plug into the platform to share and transact
2. Gravity: how well the platform attracts participants, both producers and consumers
3. Flow: how well the platform fosters the exchange and co-creation of value.

Presentation

A presentation can be defined as:

'formal talk in which you describe or explain something to a group of people.'

(Macmillan Dictionary)

Presenting information is part of everyday life in business. In organisational life, there are a wide variety of both formal and informal presentational requirements, including:

- Meetings

- Sales presentations

- Information presentations

- Motivational presentations

- Status and progress reports

- Briefings

- Interviews

- Media and public relations presentations

- Training sessions

- Seminars

- Proposals

- Workshops

- Conference.

Purpose

Getting clear definition around what it is we are trying to achieve - the purpose -is the first stage in formulation of any presentation. In business and in organisations there are essentially three basic purposes for giving presentations:

- To inform (reporting and explaining)

- To persuade; and/or