

## Business Skills 360 – Tips for Successful Presentations 1

### Discussion Questions

1. Do you think PowerPoint is used effectively?
2. How long can you keep an audience focused during a presentation?
3. Think about the good presentations you've seen. What qualities did the speaker have?

### Vocabulary

**Gizmo** – any small device or piece of technology; "Apple always releases a new gizmo at the start of every year."

**To get sick of** – to stop liking something seeing or hearing it too much; "Most business professionals get sick of PowerPoint presentations that are neither interesting nor informative."

**To wow** – to impress; "Brian was eager to wow his boss with his sales projections at the quarterly marketing meeting."

**To fall flat** – to receive little or no result; "The biggest reason that job candidates fall flat at an interview is lack of research about the position and the company."

**To tighten up** – to make something shorter, more organized, or more concise; "It is a good rule to tighten up your resume each time you apply for a new position."

**Mnemonic device** – a learning technique or trick that helps us remember something; "A common mnemonic device for remembering goals is SMART – short for Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely."

**To cut out** – to remove or delete; "The best advice from Toastmasters for public speaking is to cut out the "ah's" and "um's" from your speech."

**Fluff** – unimportant or unrelated details; "I find it difficult to read cover letters that are mainly fluff and not about the individual and his skills."

**To frame** – to arrange or adjust for a specific purpose; "My boss framed his question in order to receive the answer he wanted."

**Outline** – a statement or summary of main ideas or points; "Frank gave me the outline for the business plan and I did the necessary research."

**To figure out** – to understand or devise the answer to a problem or situation. “Before we proceed with the plan, we need to figure out the cost.”

**Lingo** – vocabulary related to a specific sector or field unknown to those outside it; “I was completely confused at the product development session because of the lingo they used.”

**Font** – the style or typeface of the text. “Try to use a large font size for your presentations so all the audience can read your slides.”

**Rhetorical questions** – questions to which an answer is not needed or expected;; “Some of the most common rhetorical questions include, “You know what I mean?” and “Are you kidding?””

**Metaphor** – a way to compare two things in order to show how they are alike; “John likes using metaphors to encourage our team, such as calling our department a tightly run ship.”

**To overload** – to give too much information or work; “The CEO overloaded the department by asking for an expense audit from each department within the week.”

**To overwhelm** – to give too much or confusing information; “The three-day training session overwhelmed the new employees.”

**To mix it up** – to vary the content or method; “I always have to remember to mix it up when presenting to new clients.”

**Anecdote** – a short and interesting or funny story; “John began the meeting with a funny anecdote about his fight with his printer.”

## Transcript

Hello, I'm Tim Simmons and you're listening to Business Skills 360. We're going to kick off the New Year with an insanely great show on presentations. But first, I want to wish you all an awesome 2011. Hopefully the coming year is unbelievably wonderful for you. I know it will be for me. Now, let's get to all that awesomeness...

Okay. Forget everything I just said. I'm not Steve Jobs, and I don't have a shiny "new" [gizmo](#) to show you. If I keep using words like "awesome," you're going to [get sick of](#) me really fast. You might have heard that Steve Jobs gives great presentations. Well, he can [wow](#) a crowd of people who already love Apple, but should we really try to copy him? His style and his adjectives don't really work when English is not your first language. And they [fall flat](#) when you are an HR manager presenting a new compensation plan, or an engineer reporting change orders on a big project.

So exactly how can *you* make an impact? How can you [tighten up](#) your presentation so that it connects to your audience?

I'm sure all of you have heard of the [mnemonic device](#) KISS – short for "Keep it Short and Simple". This is excellent advice for all types of business communication, and I completely agree with it. But KISS misses a couple of key points that you also need to consider so I've added these and now like to use KISSER- which stands for "Keep it Short, Simple, Engaging and Real."

Let's look at the first term: "short." Many bad presentations have too much repetition or unnecessary information. People want what is important and relevant, and that's what you should give them. Try this: after you prepare your presentation, go through and [cut out](#) 30%. You should be able to do that without damaging your central message. What remains will have much more impact because it's not surrounded by [fluff](#). This applies to PowerPoint slides, charts, and diagrams as well. As a general rule, try to limit slides to one per minute. And if your boss gives you ten minutes to speak, make sure you can do it in just five.

Next is "simple." Simple means organized and clear. Start with the purpose of your presentation, which you should be able to summarize in one sentence. Something like: "make people understand that expenses are too high." From that purpose, organize your ideas into three or four points. If you want, you can [frame](#) these points as questions, like this: "What expenses can we reduce? What expenses can we eliminate? And what are the long-term savings?" And tell your audience what the [outline](#) is at the start. If your questions are good ones, they'll want to [figure out](#) the answers.

"Simple" also applies to your language and visuals. Don't try to impress people with technical [lingo](#). It won't work. And keep PowerPoint slides simple. No confusing charts or graphs. Only the essential information, in simple form. The text on your slides should not be too hard to see, no smaller than a 30-point [font](#). This will force you to keep the text simple. I promise you, people will appreciate that.

Okay, now we come to "engaging." You need to catch and hold people's attention. You want them to be interested. And how do we do that? In terms of what you *say*,

there are a lot of great techniques that we'll cover in our upcoming podcast series on impact presentations. They include repetition, [rhetorical questions](#), [metaphors](#), and visualizing facts and figures. One thing that is *not* engaging is information [overload](#). Don't [overwhelm](#) your audience. Use pictures and other visual aids to illustrate your points. If you're doing a PowerPoint, don't put two "informational" slides right after each other. [Mix it up](#). Give some information, then use a picture to help people understand what you're saying, then give more information. Being engaging also means being interactive. Ask questions. Look at people. Ask for input. Get people to *do* something besides just listen to you talk.

Lastly, you need to keep it "real." If you start talking about things that nobody can understand, nobody can relate to, or nobody cares about, then you will lose your audience. Guaranteed. Try using an [anecdote](#) or story - a story that everyone can connect with, something that everyone experiences. Tell them why your topic matters. Tell them how it affects them, their jobs, and their lives. Connect yourself with the people and connect the people with the topic. Another part of keeping it real is working within your abilities. If you're not comfortable telling a joke in English, don't tell a joke. If you have to keep the words simple, keep them simple. Presentations are hard enough as it is. Don't try to push yourself too far outside your normal communication style.

Right. Keep it short, simple, engaging, and real. If those words can describe your presentation, you'll do great. You don't need to use the word *awesome*. You can *be* awesome without it.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the [myBEOonline.com](#) website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript. Next week, we'll look at the actual *delivery* of the presentation. We'll talk about what you should be doing when you're in front of all those people. So long and see you again soon.

## Review

1. What does Tim think about Steve Jobs presentation style?
  - A It is perfect for HR and engineering presentations.
  - B It is awesome.
  - C It doesn't work if your first language isn't English.
  - D It relies on Apple software.
2. What does the mnemonic device KISSER stand for?
  - A Keep it Simple, Silly, Easy, and Real
  - B The Key is Short, Sharp, Engaging, and Realistic
  - C Keep it Stern, Simple, Earnest, and Real
  - D Keep it Short, Simple, Engaging, and Real
3. How does Tim suggest keeping your presentation short? (Select all that apply)
  - A use a lot of fluff
  - B cut out 30%
  - C make sure you can do it in half the allotted time
  - D include PowerPoint, charts, and diagrams
  - E use only one slide per minute
  - F use repetition
  - G explain your central message at the beginning
4. Use the following words to fill in the blanks. Make sure to put the verbs in the correct tense.

**figure**

**mix**

**tighten**

**cut**

**John \_\_\_\_\_ out that he could \_\_\_\_\_ up his speech by \_\_\_\_\_ out the unnecessary words. He also decided to \_\_\_\_\_ it up with some jokes.**

5. What techniques does Tim recommend for making your presentation more engaging? (Select all that apply.)
  - A give your audience a lot of information
  - B ask for input
  - C use pictures to explain your ideas
  - D group information slides
  - E avoid PowerPoint
  - F look at people
6. Enter the missing word in the space below:

Tim's last piece of advice is to "keep it \_\_\_\_\_."

## Review Answers

1. What does Tim think about Steve Jobs presentation style?

**C It doesn't work if your first language isn't English.**

2. What does the mnemonic device KISSER stand for?

**D Keep it Short, Simple, Engaging, and Real**

3. How does Tim suggest keeping your presentation short? (Select all that apply.)

**B cut out 30%**

**C make sure you can do it in half the allotted time**

**E use only one slide per minute**

4. Use the following words to fill in the blanks. Make sure to put the verbs in the correct tense.

John **figured** out that he could **tighten** up his speech by **cutting** out the unnecessary words. He also decided to **mix** it up with more jokes.

5. What techniques does Tim recommend for making your presentation more engaging? (Select all that apply.)

**B ask for input**

**C use pictures to explain your ideas**

**F look at people**

6. Enter the missing word in the space below:

Tim's last piece of advice is to "**keep it real.**"

## Online Practice

Click the "Launch" button to open the **online practice:**

