



Presentation skills

Presenting to your peers



Communicating your Product Ideas

Introduction

The ability to communicate well is an important skill for any Product Manager. This means, among other things, that you should be able to present your solution fluently and to different stakeholders, who will require a different level of information.

Product Managers often present complex content, presenting a Product Plan at a peer review with a 50-slide deck full of 10-point writing. How do you think your audience would respond?

A persuasive presentation not only requires thorough preparation of content, but also good style. It takes considerable skill to come across coherently for any particular audience and to stay in control of the situation. For this purpose, the following tips may offer some guidance to help you on the way to delivering a memorable presentation.



Presentation tips

1. Show your Passion and Connect with your Audience

But time and again, the great presenters say that the most important thing is to connect with your audience, and the best way to do this is to let passion for your solution shine through.

Be enthusiastic and honest, and the audience will respond.

2. Focus on your Stakeholders Needs

As you prepare the presentation, you always need to bear in mind what your stakeholders need and what they want to know, not what you can tell them.

Don't show your homework, just because it makes you feel good.

3. Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core Message

You should be able to communicate that key message very succinctly. Demonstrate that you understand your own core message with the ability to simplify it to its absolute fundamentals. You'll get chance to go through the detail, but only if the core message has been understood by your peers and stakeholders.

Always have in mind, what are the core three points I want to get across?



4. Start Strongly you have 3 minutes to impress

The first three minutes, as when you first meet someone, is so important to a presentation. Smile, make eye contact and make sure the first 3 minutes of the presentation holds the stakeholders attention. Make them laugh!

Think of a story that is relevant at the start of the presentation which will hold the audience

5. Don't use the presentation as a script

Don't bore the audience to 'Death by PowerPoint'. By all means use the presentation as a reminder but do this in as few words as possible and use images if you can.

Remember you want your stakeholders to listen to you, not be deciphering what the slides are saying

6. Tell stories

The best presenters are raconteurs, who can tell a story about the subject and keep an audience's attention. We all relate to stories, we also remember things better through stories.

Make your story about you, funny and relevant.



7. Relax and enjoy

Many people find it hard to relax and enjoy a presentation, but your body language and the speed you speak will have a major effect on the stakeholder's perception if you know your subject and also if you can get a message across. Breathe, and slow your delivery of the presentation down.

Remember you know more about your solution than your stakeholders

8. Know your audience

Your presentation may have to take a different shape depending on those you are presenting to. To know your audience is to understand their needs and interests, what does their role require from them and how does that affect the information that they will be most interested in hearing from you?

Don't forget who is in the room, what can you present that is going to be the most relevant and useful to your audience?



9. Be transparent from the start

Let your audience know why they are there in order to start strong. There are three things that should be included from the start of a presentation, tell your audience:

- 1) Why are they here?
- 2) How long will this last?
- 3) What decisions will I need to make?

Take control from the onset by laying down this information, it will fill your audience with the confidence that you are going to deliver something worthwhile.

10. Take questions but stay in control, it's your presentation

Your presentation is going to take up some time and to each individual their time is all that matters. So, a fifteen-minute presentation to a dozen people still adds up to 3 hours' worth of individual commitment to your presentation. Questions can add a lot of time to this and detract from your presentation, you want the presentation to be the memorable part, an interesting question that could potentially trip you up on the spot.

One option - take questions with a parking lot board and offer to answer all of the questions asked in a follow up email for all attendees to see and review. This achieves two things;

- You maintain control of time and focus.
- You are able to answer all the questions asked accurately and reliably.



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Conclusion

It's better to adopt a "less is more" approach. Less slides, less text, less nerves. Show confidence and capture your audience by talking to them, not reading to them. A presentation has to offer something that an email cannot, so be engaging and emotive in order to generate the response you are looking for. Whether that is; investment, approval, team alignment.

Not matter of the topic, tell them what decision you're looking for. Give some data insights to demonstrate your highlights and your ask. Great presentations always have a point and purpose, not an hour of rambling through some numbers until your audience lose the will to live.

