

Certificate in Applied Small Business Growth & Development

Seminar: Presenting Business Information

Introduction

In Modules 1 and 3 of this programme you are required to present information to an audience. For Assessment 3 of Module 1, you are required to present your analysis of a case study business, and for Assessment 2 of Module 3 you are required to deliver a presentation about one of your Business Implementation Projects that you will have completed throughout the programme.

The purpose of this seminar is therefore twofold: (1) to help you develop and deliver presentations in this programme that meet assessment requirements, and (2) to provide you with information that you can use to develop and deliver presentations in your own business.

There may be a number of occasions for which you need to deliver a presentation (or it would be of benefit for you to do so) in your business. This may include, for example, presenting your business development plans (that you develop in this programme) to members of your staff in a way that will motivate them, give them an opportunity to provide feedback and reduce any concerns they may have, or it may be the presentation of a business proposal to a potential new client. As such, the audiences that you may need to deliver presentations to could be quite varied.

This seminar will focus on how to prepare and present business-related information to an audience in a manner that meets the audience's and your business's purpose. It also discusses the preliminary actions that need to be taken prior to a presentation, provides information relating to writing a business presentation and gives key tips on how to successfully deliver a presentation.

Seminar Contents

This seminar will cover the following topics:

- Part A: Preliminary Considerations
 - Establishing the Business Purpose
 - Meeting the Needs of the Intended Audience
 - Identifying Communication Objectives
 - Potential Constraints for the Presentation of Information
- Part B: Presentation Options
 - Resource Requirements
 - Visual and Written Aids: Advantages and Disadvantages
 - Hints for Getting the Most out of your Presentation Options
- Part C: Preparing and Presenting Information to an Audience
 - Selecting Significant and Relevant Information
 - Preparing a Presentation: Content, Format and Language
 - Additional Information to Include
 - Presenting Information and Data
 - Meeting Organisational Policies and Procedures
- Part D: Presentation Q&A Sessions
 - Responding to Questions and Facilitating Discussion
 - Participating as a Member of the Audience

Part A: Preliminary Considerations

Establishing the Business Purpose

It is important to first establish the purpose of your presentation and to know who your intended audience is. By ascertaining the clear purpose of your presentation, you can ensure that the content, style and delivery of your presentation meet the expectations of your audience. The purpose of most presentations is to influence or inform audiences about a particular subject. A presentation attempts to say something significant about this subject. You must also keep in mind who your audience is so that you can pitch the content at the correct level. If you aim too high, you will lose your audience. The audience will not understand what you are talking about and they will quickly lose interest. If you aim too low, your audience will be bored or even offended that you are insulting their intelligence.

Research your intended audience

- How many people will be in attendance? A presentation prepared for an audience of ten, may not be suitable for an audience of 50 people.
- Who are your audience? If they are your peers, then it is likely that they will be a sympathetic audience who want you to do well. If you are unknown to them, then you will need to establish a rapport with them.
- Are they a mixed group in terms of age, gender and ethnicity?
- Why are they attending? If watching your presentation is not where they want to be right now, then you will need to be creative in finding a way to effectively communicate with them.

- How much do they already know? Do some research into the backgrounds of your audience? If they are already experts in the area of your presentation, then this will have a significant bearing on the content of your talk.

Meeting the Needs of the Intended Audience

Identify relevant people, whom you can consult with, who may be able to assist you to meet the expectations and needs of the audience.

- Firstly, consult with the venue manager to ensure that the physical needs of your audience are met. Basic needs such as comfortable seating, toilet facilities, room access, heating or ventilation and refreshments will ensure the comfort of your audience and make your job of keeping their attention easier.
- Consult with the event organiser to ascertain the presentation programme. If there are several speakers, try to position your talk at a point in the programme that best suits your presentation. The first slot of the day will ensure the audience is fresh. The last slot of the day may ensure your presentation has the biggest impact, but if it is a very long programme, the last slot may mean that members of your audience are tired or people have already started to depart. Make sure that you check with the organiser as to how long you are expected to speak for so you can prepare your speech with the timeframe in mind.
- Also consult with the event organiser about the make-up and expectations of the audience. The organiser will usually have background information on who will be attending the event and what these people want to hear.
- If you actually know members of the audience, consult with them about what they would like to hear or what they would like to gain from your presentation.

Identifying Communication Objectives

What is it that you are trying to achieve from your presentation? Is it to inform your audience on a particular topic? Is it to change the mindset of the audience? Is it to impart some important news? These are all examples of communication objectives.

It is important to identify your communication objective so you know the focus of your presentation and what information you are actually trying to share with your audience, and then you can design your presentation with this in mind. Many presenters make what appears to be a successful presentation, yet fail to meet their communication objectives. The audience may enjoy the presentation and provide good feedback, but may leave without having realised what the key objective of the presentation actually was.

For example, a senior manager may decide that the annual company conference is a good opportunity to warn employees that the economy is still in recession and that, in the future, there may be redundancies within the company. The communication objective is to plant the idea in the employees' minds that their future in the organisation is uncertain. However, if the manager focuses on a presentation about the overall economy and the company's performance without spelling out how this may affect the individual staff members, the audience could well leave without having grasped the potential implications for them. It is important to identify your communication objective and then ensure that your presentation is written and delivered to achieve this objective.

Potential Constraints for the Presentation of Information

Some of the common constraints and potential conflicts that obstruct the successful delivery of a presentation are outlined below:

- Nervousness. For some people, public speaking is the most frightening thing they can imagine. Even people who are confident in every other aspect of their lives, go weak at the knees when asked to make a speech or presentation to a group of people. Award winning producer, Steven Spielberg once declared "My greatest fear is speaking in public. Fear of insects takes second place" (Godefroy & Barrat, 1990, p.25). The key to overcoming nervousness is to be prepared and to practise.
- Associated with nervousness may be going blank in the middle of a presentation. If this happens to you, simply pause, take a deep breath and refer to your notes to get back on track. Chances are the audience will not even notice. Have a glass of water on hand so you can pause for a drink and recover your thought process. Shaky hands are also another symptom of nervousness. Place your notes on a table or lectern as shaking is more obvious if your notes are in your hand. Place your hands on the lectern to steady yourself if necessary.
- Unexpected disasters cannot be prevented, but you can be prepared to better deal with them should they arise. Equipment or power failure is the most common issue. Either take backup equipment, or ensure your presentation is still effective without the enhancement provided by the equipment.
- Hostility from the audience. Your audience is a group of individuals with their own thoughts and motivations, so there is no way to control how they will react to your presentation. Researching who your audience is allows you to be aware of topics that may cause offence or controversy. Some individuals may be threatened by your presentation if they are competing with you for

recognition or reward, so they may be motivated to derail your presentation. In Part D, we look more closely at the etiquette involved in participating in a presentation discussion.

- Presenting to international audiences. If your audience contains foreign guests, use short sentences, avoid jargon and slang and, above all, speak slowly to assist in their understanding. Use jokes and gestures sparingly as what may be acceptable in New Zealand society may be interpreted differently in other cultures.

If you are aware of constraints that may affect you, you might be able to design your presentation in such a way as to minimise the effects. For example, if you know that you get particularly nervous when standing still, you could design a presentation that would require you to move around, perhaps writing notes on a whiteboard, demonstrating a particular product or possibly even giving items to the audience (e.g. notes or example products for them to examine).

Part (A): Discussion Questions / Activity
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1. Do you get nervous when public speaking? Share any techniques that you use to help overcome your anxiety.
2. Identify 10 things that could go wrong with your presentation. Suggest 10 possible solutions to the potential problems.

Potential Problem	Suggested Solution
<i>Example: No power point near to laptop</i>	<i>Example: Bring an extension cord</i>

Potential Problem	Suggested Solution
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

3. Do a short analysis of your seminar group assuming that they are your next audience. Consider:
 - i. The size of the group
 - ii. Gender, age and ethnicity of the group
 - iii. What are their backgrounds?
 - iv. What are their areas of expertise?
 - v. What is their current mood?
 - vi. Are they familiar with your business or the industry in which your business operates?

How could you use this information to assist you in preparing a presentation to this particular group?

Part B: Presentation Options

Resource Requirements

There are a variety of resources that can be utilised when making a presentation. These range from the visual and audio aids which may be used to compliment your presentation, through to the location of the presentation itself. It is important to ensure that the resources you have selected to assist your presentation are appropriate to the intended audience. The size of the venue and seating must be appropriate to the audience size. An informal presentation to a small group may not warrant a full projected PowerPoint presentation, nor would it be appropriate to use the outdated overhead projector to make a presentation to a group of IT experts. Consider the size and makeup of your audience and choose resources which will be appropriate and add value to your presentation.

The Venue

The venue for your presentation can have an important effect on the success of your talk. It is useful to familiarise yourself with the venue in advance. This allows you to be better prepared and make good use of the space and facilities available, and will alert you to any unexpected difficulties associated with the venue. If you do not have access to the venue, contact the venue manager and ask relevant questions or even ask for a floor plan. The types of things that are useful for you to know in advance are:

- How to find the venue.
- Where to park.

- Whether there is lift access (if you need it).
- How long before the presentation can you gain access to the venue.
- How much space you have to actually deliver the presentation – this is relevant if you require room to give demonstrations or to use particular items of equipment during your presentation.
- The arrangement of the seating.
- The availability of a lectern or table to place your notes or equipment on.
- The audio quality. Will you require a microphone or speakers?
- The set up for your visual aids. Are the visual aids such as a computer and data projector already provided? Are there power plugs positioned in close proximity? Do you need extension cords? Is there a screen, or blank wall, available to project images on?
- What the air conditioning / heating levels are.
- The availability of toilet facilities.

Seating

The best way to ensure that the audience is seated in a way that suits your presentation is to arrange the seating in advance. This can be done by either arriving early, and moving the chairs into position yourself, or, by providing the venue manager with a seating chart to follow. Your presentation will be more dynamic if the audience is not seated in a room filled with empty chairs. Remove extra chairs in advance or put 'reserved' signs on the back rows to ensure that the front seats are filled up first. The size of your audience will dictate the final layout, but for a smaller presentation to twenty-five people or fewer, u-shapes or semi circles allow you to maintain eye contact with everyone in the audience and hence retain their interest better. The u-shape also encourages audience participation and gives a more inclusive feel to the presentation.

Using a Microphone

Many people feel shy about using a microphone, however, sometimes factors such as the size of the venue, the hearing abilities of the audience and the way your voice projects around a particular room, necessitates the use of one. The four main types of microphone are: fixed (usually wired into the lectern); handheld (with or without a stand); lapel (a small microphone that is usually clipped onto your clothing); and headset.

Tips for using a microphone:

- As with all resources, try to test the microphone before the presentation. Do not test it by tapping or blowing. This is very irritating to the audience. Simply ask 'Can you hear me clearly?'
- If the microphone is a handheld or podium-fixed device, leave about 15-20 centimetres between your head and the microphone.
- If you are moving about during your presentation, you will likely require a lapel, handheld, or a headset style microphone.
- Microphones do not just amplify your voice – they amplify every sound that you make. So ensure you turn off the microphone or hold it away if you have to cough or sneeze.
- If using a handheld or fixed microphone, do not speak directly into it. Hold it under your chin and speak above it.
- Headset microphones are good for providing freedom of movement, but they obscure part of the face (which is the most important part of the speaker for the audience to see).

- If you are wearing a lapel microphone or headset, do not forget to turn it off when you leave the stage or the audience will still be able to hear your every word along with every other sound you make.

Other Resources

Visual and written presentation aids include any supplementary materials that a speaker might use to increase the clarity and effectiveness of their presentation. However, it is important for the speaker to realise that visual or written aids are certainly no substitute for a well-written presentation.

Visual aids

Advantages:

- May help make you feel more relaxed as they provide you with something to do / something to show during the presentation. They also provide familiar points of reference during the presentation, which will offer reassurance and help you to remember what you are meant to be saying.
- Can assist the audience to remember a key piece of information.
- Can be used to better explain a difficult concept or add credibility to a claim. For example, the audience will know that you are not exaggerating if you can show a photo of the actual event that you are alluding to.
- Are a more effective way of conveying numbers such as statistics.
- Bring variety to a presentation and break up the monotony of a long presentation.

- Allow for consistency if the presentation is repeated (i.e. if you have to deliver the same presentation at a later time).

Disadvantages:

- The audience may be distracted if their attention is focused on reading a handout or screen.
- Visual aids can lengthen the duration of the presentation if time is needed to set up or distribute the resources.
- They may not be visible to everyone in the audience.
- If a presentation is built solely around its aids, the presentation can be derailed if there is a technical problem or if the aids are lost or damaged.

The Presenter as a Visual Aid

The presenter cannot avoid being considered as a visual aid by the audience. The appearance, clothing, demeanour, gestures and body language of the presenter all influence the audience's perception of the speaker and affect how they interpret the speaker's message.

Clothing:

- Clothing that is appropriate to the audience should be selected.
- Even if the presentation is informal, business clothes are still appropriate as the audience will take your message more seriously.
- The speaker should wear smart but comfortable clothes which permit freedom of movement. The anticipation of the presentation is likely to make the speaker hot, so dress lightly or wear layers that can be removed.

- Purchasing a new outfit for the occasion is sometimes a risky practice as the clothing is not tested. For example, you may find that a skirt clings to you in an unusual way due to static electricity or you may accidentally leave a label attached to the item (and showing!).

Body Language:

'Body language' refers to the messages that you send to the audience through your expressions, posture and movement. Good posture and eye contact give the impression of a confident and knowledgeable speaker. A smile immediately builds rapport with the audience. Gestures can help keep the audience's attention, as long as they are not over-exaggerated or used excessively (this will distract, or even annoy, the audience). Be aware of any habits that you have which may also distract the audience. These could include fidgeting, moving your notes around or scratching.

Eye Contact:

The key to keeping your audience attentive is to maintain eye contact. Eye contact is an important part of communication as it helps build rapport with your audience and implies honesty and approachability. The best practice is to sweep the room with your eyes, settling on three or four people in different areas of the room for a short time. Do not select one person in the audience and deliver your entire presentation to them.

Visual and Written Aids: Advantages and Disadvantages

Research shows that audiences retain considerably more information if they see and hear, rather than just hear, presentation content. Therefore, combining presentation aids with a verbal presentation greatly reinforces the message that the presenter is trying to impart. This section outlines some of the resources available to the presenter and some helpful hints for using each type of resource.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Presentation Options

Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
White Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Useful for a step by step demonstration▪ Flexible: words or names can be spelt out; impromptu diagrams can be drawn so as to clarify a point▪ Brings the speaker out from behind the lectern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Writing or drawing may appear untidy or amateur▪ Presenter may have their back to the audience while writing on the board▪ Usually relies on the speaker writing as they present so flow of presentation may be interrupted or it may be difficult to hear with the presenter's back to the audience▪ Cannot store information once the board is full (unless it is a board that has a printer connected to it)

Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
Flip Chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Flexible: Blank pages can be used like a white board to clarify points as they occur ▪ Portable and inexpensive ▪ Material may be prepared in advance ▪ Information may be stored or removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May be difficult for some of the audience to see ▪ Large charts may be unsteady and fall over easily ▪ Small charts may not give sufficient space ▪ May not be any suitable way to secure the chart
DVD / Podcast / YouTube or Video Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adds variety to a presentation and grabs the attention of the audience ▪ Gives the presenter a break and time to regroup ▪ Good for illustrating an important concept or for showing how things work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possible technical problems ▪ The presentation may lose its flow or impetus ▪ Needs to be a good fit with the presentation - not just as audience entertainment ▪ Permission may be required to play the clips in public ▪ May need to use other technology to enlarge the clip so that all of the audience can view it

Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
Audio Aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be used to create a particular atmosphere in the room – e.g. to relax or hype an audience ▪ Professional actors or presenters can be used to emphasise a point or for humour ▪ Maintains energy levels during a break or activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Difficult to talk over pre-recorded music or commentary ▪ Some audience members may not find the choice of music appropriate ▪ Permission may be required to play the audio clip in a public domain
Audience Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides the audience with a permanent record of your presentation ▪ Can contain more in-depth information that can be read later ▪ Audience may value a resource they can take away and use ▪ Useful for introducing new or technical vocabulary or presenting graphics ▪ Audience can make notes on it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audience may not pay attention if they believe they can read the notes later ▪ Distributing the notes can be disruptive ▪ Audience may be distracted reading the notes rather than listening to the presentation ▪ The impact of your talk will be reduced if the audience reads the points before you deliver them

Option	Advantage	Disadvantage
Multimedia presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appears very professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Permission may be required to use video and audio clips ▪ Focus may be taken from the verbal presentation to the presentation aids ▪ Possibility of technical failure ▪ Time consuming to prepare
PowerPoint presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can appear very professional if well prepared ▪ Large screen will ensure it is visible to the entire audience ▪ Consistency if the presentation is to be repeated ▪ The software includes lots of tools to help you deliver an effective presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presenters might talk to the screen and not to the audience ▪ Using common templates will not inspire the audience ▪ Possibility of technology failure ▪ Badly designed slides with too much text distract from the speaker

Hints for Getting the Most out of your Presentation Options

White Boards

- If the board is already covered in writing, ensure that this can be removed before you commence.
- Check you have a selection of marker pens (and that these are white board markers – NOT permanent markers) and an eraser.
- Practise your diagrams and writing in advance to ensure they can be seen by the entire audience and to ensure they are coherent.
- A whiteboard is a useful resource to have available, even if you are using another form of presentation format.

Flipcharts

- Do not include too much information or text on one page.
- To build anticipation, put important new points on separate pages so the audience cannot read what you are about to refer to. Also, a blank page between pre-prepared pages stops the colours from showing through to the top page (which can be distracting).
- You may find working from the back to the front of the chart is easier for turning pages over.
- Mark the corners of the pages to make them easier to turn over.

DVD / Podcasts / YouTube / Video Clips

- Always test the technology beforehand and make sure you have the technology ready to play at the correct starting position. Do not make the

audience wait while you search through your computer files for the correct clip.

- Just play enough to illustrate your point. The audience are there to hear you, not see a movie.
- Recorded testimonials from clients or colleagues can be a powerful promotional tool to assist a presentation.
- Check the sound quality in advance – preferably in the room in which the presentation will be given. It is possible for the sound quality to seem good at home, yet not project around a particular room very well.
- If projecting the clip (instead of showing it on a television), ensure there is a suitable wall or a screen to project it onto before using this type of aid.
- Ensure the lighting in the room will enable the presentation to be seen (or that it can be adjusted so that it can be seen).

Audio Aids

- Use music to create a mood or atmosphere as the audience arrives.
- If you are using multiple recordings, ensure that they are in order or clearly labelled.
- Check the sound quality in advance – preferably in the room in which the presentation will be given.

Audience Handouts

- Do not distribute the handouts during the presentation. If the audience needs to refer to them during the talk, distribute them before you start, otherwise hand them out at the conclusion of your presentation. Depending on the way

in which you have designed your presentation, it is usually best to hand them out in advance so that the audience can make their own notes on the handout (i.e. they can expand on your notes so that they will be able to better understand and remember content when they refer back to the handout at a later time).

- Handouts with only very key points or diagrams on them can be used by the audience to add their own notes.
- More detailed information than is shown on other presentation aids can be included – e.g. references, contact details and / or a biography of the speaker.
- PowerPoint slides can be printed six to a page to make professional looking and effective handouts (and reduce paper wastage). Another option is to print three to a page. If you select this option, the three slides are printed down the left side of the page and lines for the audience to make notes are printed down the right side of the page.
- Always proofread the handouts for spelling and other errors. Remember that the handouts represent you and your business.

PowerPoint Presentations

- Use the Slide Master option to ensure consistency of font, bullets, indents, etc.
- Only include one idea / topic per slide. The fewer words you have, the more eye contact you will be able to gain with your audience.
- Less is more. Try not to use more than five bullet points or 30 words per slide. Bullets or key words are more effective than sentences.

- Do not read the slide. Instead, talk to the audience and use the content of the slide to reinforce what you are saying.
- At times when you want the audience to focus on you and what you are saying, 'blank' the screen. You can do this by pressing 'B' and then pressing 'B' again when you want the content of the screen to reappear.
- Choose four colours and stick to them. Use colours which are in contrast, such as a dark background with light lettering or vice versa. White backgrounds are best replaced by a light colour that is easier on the eyes.
- Headline fonts should be around 40 point in size and regular text should not be less than 20 point.
- Layout of slides is important. Make them easy to follow, with the title at the top, words reading left to right, top to bottom. Information should be kept near the middle to top of the slide so it can be read from the back rows.
- Slide transitions can add interest to your presentation, but the audience can quickly tire of flashy transitions. Apply the 'less is more' rule.
- Try to limit the number of slides in the presentation. One slide per minute is a good indicator.
- Use a clearly legible font such as Arial, Tahoma or Calibri.
- Use the 'pen' tool to 'write' on a slide as you are presenting it. You can change the mouse pointer into a pen during a presentation by either left clicking on the mouse and selecting 'pointer options' (you will be given the option of changing your mouse from a pointer to a pen or a highlighter), or by simply pressing Ctrl P.
- Use the built-in rehearsal feature to tell you the amount of time you are spending on each slide and the total presentation length.

- Ensure there is a suitable wall or a screen to project the information onto before using this type of aid.
- Ensure the lighting in the room will enable the presentation to be seen (or that it can be adjusted so that it can be seen).

Multimedia Aids

- Do not let the combination of video, text, graphics and sound remove the focus from your actual presentation.
- Include up-to-the-minute clips or images to 'wow' your audience.
- Ensure the equipment available at the venue is capable of displaying a multimedia presentation.
- If the clip or image is online, download it first to your laptop (or other device) in case the internet connection at the venue is poor.

Part (B): Discussion / Activity Questions
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1. Select the three presentation aids that you are most likely to use in a presentation to 25 people. Give three reasons why you have selected each aid.
2. Assuming that you will be using the three presentation aids identified for Question 1, prepare a list of things you need to check prior to an important presentation.
3. Prepare 12 PowerPoint slides on the template provided in Appendix 2 to make a presentation for the following scenario. Or, if you have access to

PowerPoint software and a computer, use this to make the presentation. You may make any assumptions that you wish (i.e. make up any information that you choose). Include details of colours and fonts you would use. Refer to the guide to PowerPoint presentations given in Appendix 1 to assist you.

The Scenario:

Your business develops educational toys for children. You are looking to develop an interactive computer software program, but as this is an area in which you do not have experience and expertise, this will require significant financial investment. You have always had a passion for helping save endangered and threatened wildlife, and would therefore like to incorporate this into the product.

The software program will aim to raise awareness amongst children of a select range of animals, such as the kakapo and Hector's dolphins. A percentage of all sales will be donated to specific projects to help protect these animals, and progress updates on these projects will be posted on your business website and incorporated into program updates downloadable from the internet (which purchasers can pay to subscribe to). You hope to have this product ready for the market by Christmas 2015, as market research has shown a very high demand for this type of product, particularly as a Christmas gift.

You are very fortunate that an angel investor, who also has a passion for helping protect wildlife, has expressed an interest in investing in your project. They have asked you to make a presentation that convinces them that this will be a worthwhile and financially viable project to invest in.

4. Present your PowerPoint presentation to other members of your class or group and request their feedback on the following points:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Slide layout | g. Relevance of slide content |
| b. Colour used | h. Use of graphics |
| c. Fonts used | i. Other feedback |
| d. Headings | |
| e. Use of bullet points or numbering | |
| f. Slide transition | |

Part C: Preparing and Presenting Information to an Audience

Selecting Significant and Relevant Information

Selecting a Topic

In Part A, the concepts of business purpose and communication objectives were introduced. It is important that you are clear in what you are trying to achieve with your presentation so that the topic is relevant and helps you to accomplish your objectives.

Sometimes, a speaker is assigned a topic to talk on and other times they have free reign in choosing their own subject. If you are given a topic to speak on, there are many different angles you can take in presenting the topic. For example, the organiser of a business seminar might ask a speaker to talk for ten minutes on 'Organisation Change in Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs)'. If the speaker has been given no guidelines, then they can interpret the topic in a number of ways: how to effectively manage organisational change; how New Zealand businesses have a poor track record in change management; how change management in SMEs differs from that in large enterprises; or one business could be selected and the presentation could focus on their experience of change management.

For Assessment 2 of Module 3, you are required to present one of your Business Implementation Projects. In deciding which one you present, you will need to give consideration to factors such as:

- Are you willing to share the particular information involved? Are there any confidentiality issues, and could these be overcome?

- Which project would be of most interest to the audience?
- Does the particular project provide for an interesting way of presenting? For example, a project about the development of a new product, which includes showing prototypes of the product, may provide for a more interesting way of presenting, than a project which involves developing a Policies and Procedures Manual.

Brainstorming, Mind Mapping and Conducting Research

Once you have decided on a topic to present, techniques such as brainstorming and mind mapping are useful to clarify your thinking on the topic. Brainstorming is a useful exercise, generally conducted in groups. It can be conducted in relation to identifying content of a presentation, by writing the presentation topic on a white board or piece of paper, and then getting participants to identify words that they associate with the topic. For example, a brainstorming session on organisational change could produce words or phrases such as 'restructure', 'fear', 'unknown', or 'redundancy'. The associations help reveal interpretations of the topic which may not have previously been considered.

Mind maps involve the mapping of ideas onto paper using words or pictures and allows a visual depiction of the many aspects of a topic and the relationships between them. A mind mapping exercise could develop from a brainstorming activity. The topic name can be written in the centre of the board / piece of paper and then key words and terms identified in the brainstorming activity, which are likely to be covered within a presentation, could be shown as 'branches' from the topic. Participants may then identify words or phrases that relate to these key words. For example, associated with the word 'restructure'

could be terms such as 'performance reviews', 'expertise required' and 'job descriptions'. This helps identify sub-topic areas that could be covered within the presentation.

Unless you are already an expert in the area, research is vital to presenting a credible and informative presentation. The presenter must know as much about the topic as the audience would expect them to. Primary sources include your own research or experiences. Secondary sources include resources available on the internet and in books / publications. Note that the presentations for the assessments in this programme are unlikely to require further research – for Assessment 3 of Module 1 you will be giving a presentation based on your analysis of a case study and for Assessment 2 of Module 3 you will be giving a presentation about your experience in undertaking a business implementation project within your business.

Preparing a Presentation: Content, Format and Language

Preparing an Outline

Preparing a presentation outline is a good starting point for writing your presentation as it ensures all the important elements are present. A suggested format to use is as follows:

Suggested Outline Format

1. What is the topic of your presentation?
2. What is the purpose of your presentation?
3. Title
4. Introduction
 - a. A strong opening line
 - b. Establish your credibility
 - c. Introduce your argument
5. Main Body
 - a. Main Point 1
 - i. Explanation
 - ii. Example
 - iii. Evidence
 - b. Main Point 2
 - i. Explanation
 - ii. Example
 - iii. Evidence
 - c. Main Point 3
 - i. Explanation
 - ii. Example
 - iii. Evidence
6. Conclusion
 - a. Summarise main points
 - b. Concluding remarks

Title

The choice of title creates the first impression for the audience, so if you select something that sounds uninteresting then you are immediately giving the perception that your talk will not be interesting. Kushner (1999) suggests reworking song and movie titles, asking questions or using numbers as useful techniques for creating more interesting titles. For example, which of these presentations on business development would you rather attend: “How to Grow Better Business”; “The Top Ten Ways to Take Your Business to the Top”; or “The X Files: Secrets to Taking your Profits out of this World”?

Introductions

The key to capturing the attention of an audience is to establish your credibility as a speaker and to convince the audience that you have something of interest to tell them. Audiences want to know ‘what is in it for me?’ before they are willing to commit their attention to the speaker.

The three key things that an introduction needs to do are:

1. Capture the audience’s attention,
2. Create an interest in the topic, and
3. Introduce the subject.

It is also useful to provide an outline of your presentation so the audience can see where you are going with your presentation.

Some techniques that can be employed to gain the attention of the audience include:

- Asking the audience a question

- Getting interactive and involving the audience
- Beginning with a rhetorical question which makes the audience think
- Beginning with a quotation or anecdote
- Telling a story

Never start your introduction with an apology. The audience does not need to know that you are nervous, that you know very little about the topic or that you ran out of time to properly prepare for the presentation.

The Main Body

The 'body' is the section of the presentation where the main points are covered in detail. It should be the longest section (the introduction and conclusion sections of the report should be about the same length as each other). Depending on the nature of your topic, a good way to format the body is to introduce and explain each main point, preferably using an example and then backing up the main point with some supporting evidence.

Depending on the length of your presentation, identify a set number of main points and stick to these. For a ten minute presentation, limiting yourself to three main points should allow you sufficient time to effectively cover each point. Kushner recommends a maximum of seven main points, regardless of the length of the talk.

Once you have selected your main points, it is necessary to put them in an order which maximises the understanding and impact they have on the audience. If your presentation refers to a timeframe, it is probably more logical to order main points chronologically. It also assists the audience to follow a presentation if

similar points are grouped together rather than covering a main point, moving on to something different and then diverting back to a point similar to the first.

Conclusions

What you say in your conclusion is very likely the message that the audience will take away with them. Your conclusion should summarise what you have discussed in your presentation and reiterate the main points. Never introduce new material in your conclusion. It should be written in a way that makes the audience feel that your presentation is complete. Any unfinished points or stories must be completed here. Finally, it is your last opportunity to create an impression with the audience.

Other Hints for Preparing Content

- Sentences should preferably be short, of between five and fifteen words. The longer the sentence, the more easily it can be misunderstood.
- Use frequent signposts such as 'Firstly', 'Secondly' and 'Finally' to allow the audience to keep up.
- Use active verbs. For example, say "Staff members conducted research" instead of "Research was conducted by staff members".
- Avoid clichés, jargon and abbreviations that some people may not understand.
- Be specific. For example, if you went overseas, tell the audience where you went as it helps build a stronger picture.

Additional Information to Include

It is important to the credibility of your presentation that you back up any claims with evidence to prove that they are substantiated. Facts, statistics, testimonies and examples all add weight to an argument. As a guideline, the less expertise you have on a topic, the more evidence you require to back up what you are saying. Similarly, the more controversial or complex a point is, the more you need to back it up with supporting evidence.

Additional information can be included in handouts that you give to the audience. This allows you to share information with the audience without making your presentation too long or too complex. A biography of the speaker, references, statistics and contact details can be included in a handout. The speaker could also refer the audience to a website where additional information is available or a copy of the presentation can be downloaded.

Presenting Information and Data

An effective presentation should be rehearsed, but should not be memorised word for word. It needs to sound like it is natural for you to talk about the topic of your presentation. This is called 'extemporaneous speaking' and is most appropriate for business presentations as it allows the speaker to appear knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the topic and furthermore allows for spontaneity and adaptation to the audience's needs.

Hints for Presenting

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Do not read from notes or slides – only refer to them when needed.
- If you feel that you do not have enough eye contact or attention from the audience, try turning off / blanking the presentation so they focus on you – not the visual aids.
- Use pauses to allow the audience to consider key points.
- Be careful of speech appendages such as 'ums' and 'ers'.
- It is better to go under your time allocation, than over it.

Meeting Organisational Policies and Procedures

Wherever you make your presentation, there will be guidelines in place around what constitutes acceptable practice. It is important that you are aware of any rules or guidelines that exist within your own organisation or within an organisation where you are making a presentation.

Common topics covered by organisational policies that are likely to affect presentations are:

- Copyright laws surrounding the use of written or pre-recorded materials.
- Company policy on branding and the use of logos / colours, etc.
- Discrimination policies, confidentiality and privacy policies regarding what information you disclose.
- General rules of good conduct and acceptable business behaviour.

Part (C): Discussion Questions / Activities

1. You have been asked to make a presentation to a local business society on 'product distribution'. You know the importance of attracting the audience's interest with the introduction, so you need to write an introduction that will create the maximum impact. You also wish to establish your credibility with the audience and to introduce your presentation. Use the information on introductions above to write a short introduction for this presentation.

2. There are many language tools which can be used to increase the effectiveness of a presentation. What do each of these terms mean?
 - a. Simile
 - b. Onomatopoeia
 - c. Alliteration
 - d. Metaphor
 - e. Rhetorical question
 - f. Syntax
 - g. Cliché

(Answers are given following Part D).

3. Assume that you have been asked to talk about your experience in employing people in your business. Write titles for your presentation using the following ideas:
 - a. A well-known phrase
 - b. A newspaper headline
 - c. A song title
 - d. A movie title
 - e. A number. E.g. Ten tips for.../ Three ways to...

Part D: Presentation Q&A Sessions

Questions form an important part of the presentation process and it is important that they are prepared for, and managed, just as well as the presentation itself. Below are some useful guidelines for both the presenter and audience on discussion etiquette and effective question and answer sessions.

Responding to Questions and Facilitating Discussion

- One problem that presenters often fail to consider is that even if they allow time for questions at the end of their presentation, perhaps no one in the audience will ask a question. The presenter can stimulate questions by suggesting that the audience takes a minute to speak to the person next to them so that questions may arise in the conversation. Alternatively, if no one starts the questioning, the speaker can make some suggestions or ask the audience a question. “The thing everyone always asks me is ...”; or “What was the most useful thing you got out of today’s presentation?”
- Anticipate the questions that you may be asked and prepare possible answers to them.
- Repeating questions from the audience is good practice as it ensures everyone hears the question and that you have heard the question correctly. It also gives you a moment to think about your answer. If you are actually unsure what the person is asking you, restate or rephrase the question. For example, you could say “As I interpret it, you are asking me if I agree that employers should... Is this correct?” If you are a confident presenter, you may be able to rework someone’s question to your advantage.

- Keep your answers brief and focus on the question. It is frustrating for the audience if they want several points clarified and you are spending the entire time allocated to a question on just one point.
- Do not be afraid to control the questions. If someone is trying to monopolise the question time, say "I'll come back to you if we have time. Who else has a question?"
- Give the person asking the question or making the comment your full attention. Even if you think they have nothing useful to add, look and act as if you are interested. Do not just dismiss an opinion because it does not fit with your own. Thank the person for their thoughts and if you truly believe they are wrong, refer them to where in your presentation they will find your answer. For example:

Audience Member: "I do not see how you can say that Thompson's model will reduce costs by 25%, it is all hype".

Presenter: "Thank you for your comments. In my presentation, I referred to the extensive research that has been conducted which shows beyond doubt that the model can achieve these savings. If you refer to slide 17 of the handout, it will provide details of where you can read more on the studies. Does anyone else have a question?"

- Be honest if you do not have an answer to a question you are asked. Tell the person you will attempt to find out and (if appropriate) will put the answer on your website.
- If you feel that the questioner is being hostile or smart, try reversing the question so the onus is placed back on them to answer. For example:

Audience Member: "You do not really believe that the Government will go ahead with that legislation?"

Presenter: "Well, what do you think?"

Alternatively, open the question up to the audience and ask if anyone has an opinion on the topic.

- Only answer interjections if you can use them to your advantage. If there is a heckler in the audience, the speaker and the audience should just ignore them if it is a one-off comment. Even if it persists, it is best not to engage with the heckler. Generally, the audience will become annoyed with the heckler's interruptions and side with the presenter.
- Share your answer with the whole audience. Initially, direct your answer to the questioner, but then address the entire audience.
- If someone in the audience is talking on a cell phone, politely ask them to take their call outside, or simply wait until they have finished. Similarly, if people in the audience are talking, just stop until they cease talking, or direct a question at them to break up their conversation.

Participating as a Member of the Audience

- Do not interrupt or contradict the speaker or any other member of the audience. Let them finish before you give your opinion.
- Give the speaker your full attention and try to make them feel at ease by nodding in agreement and making encouraging signals.

- Control your emotions. Do not let your emotions affect the rationality of your question or response. If you are so affected by what has been said, raise your point with the speaker after the presentation once you have had time to consider your response.
- Questions are usually best left to the end of the presentation so the flow of the speaker and audience is not obstructed.
- A useful tool when asking questions is to use 'reflective listening'. This technique involves you repeating the main points back to the speaker, or reflecting the feelings the speaker had on a particular subject. For example, *"The main point I believe you are making is that small businesses should not employ anyone in their first year of trading. Why do you believe this?"* or *"I do not believe that you really agree with the statement that you made on small businesses not employing staff in their first year of trading – can you please give us your thoughts on this matter?"*

This technique helps both parties to clarify their thoughts on a specific part of the presentation.

- Do not attack the speaker. If you put the speaker on the defensive, the discussion could escalate into an argument, which will not be constructive to the outcome of the discussion. If you do not think that something the speaker has stated is correct, ask the speaker what evidence they have to support their claims or ask them why they stated a certain point.

Part (D): Discussion Question / Activity

1. Assume that you are attending a presentation by a politician who is speaking about a particularly contentious issue. Most of the audience do not agree with what has been said and a couple of members of the audience are getting hostile.
 - Think of an issue that could be the topic of this presentation. For example, the politician could have been talking about an increase in business tax rates or about a policy which provides financial support to new businesses in areas of high unemployment (but not other areas).
 - Write three questions that the politician could be asked about the topic.
 - Identify three ways that the politician could defuse the situation.
 - What role could an MC play in this situation?
2. As a group, conduct a role play of the scenario using the ideas discussed in Question 1. The group needs to be divided so as to have one person playing the role of the politician, one as the MC of the event and the rest playing members of the audience.

References

Godefroy, C & Barrat, S. (1990). *Confident Speaking*. London, England: Piatkus.

Kushner, M. (1999). *Public Speaking for Dummies*. Foster City, C.A.: IDG Books.

Part (C): Discussion Answers

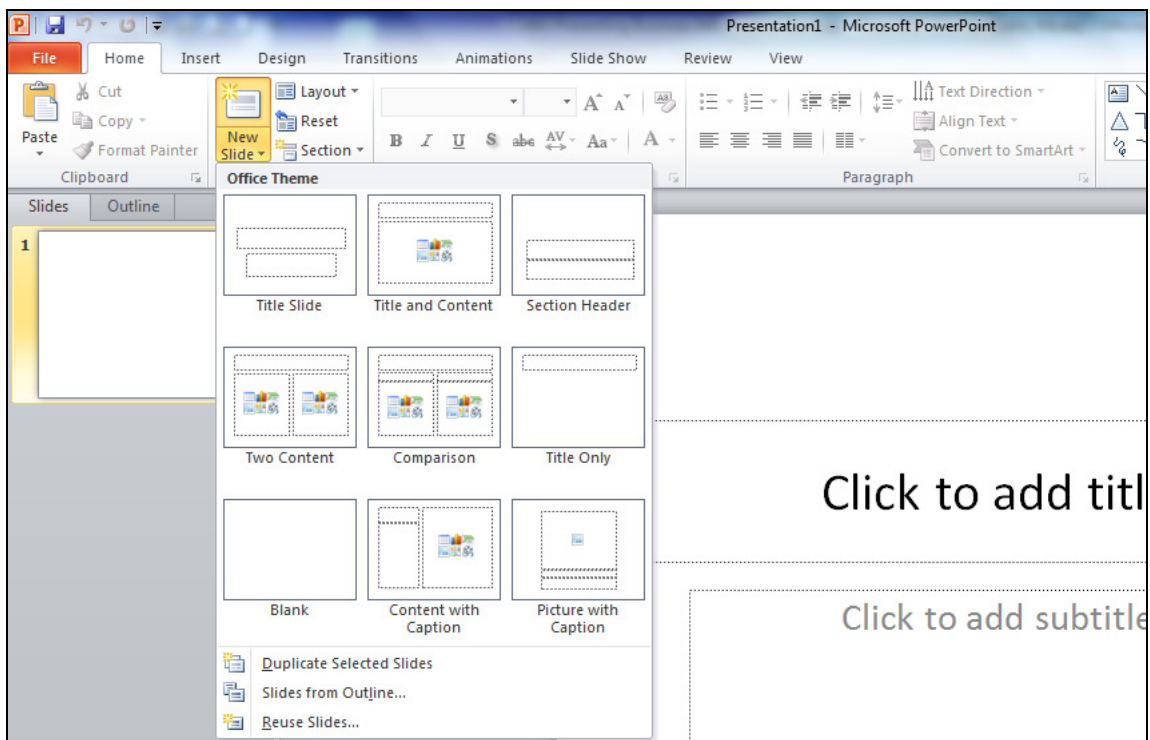
Question 2

- a. Simile = a comparison of two things such as 'like two peas in a pod'
- b. Onomatopoeia = is a word or a grouping of words that imitates the sound that it describes (e.g. 'click' on the button; it created a 'buzz')
- c. Alliteration = when a phrase uses words which all start with the same sound. For example, 'rapid rifles rapid rattle'
- d. Metaphor = A figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designates one thing is instead used to refer to another, thus indicating similarity between the two terms. It is a comparison of two things, without using words such as 'like' or 'as'. For example, the term 'the black dog' can be used to refer to 'depression'.
- e. Rhetorical question = a question that does not expect an answer
- f. Syntax = the order of words
- g. Cliché = A word or phrase that has been so overused that it has lost its impact or meaning.

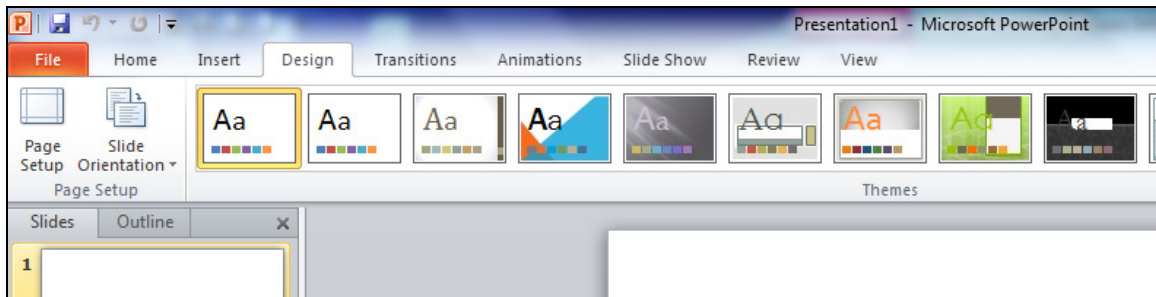
Appendix 1: Basic Guide to Creating a PowerPoint Presentation

The following screen prints taken from Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 are intended as a basic guide to getting started in PowerPoint. There are numerous websites, online tutorials and books which offer more in-depth guidance on producing professional looking PowerPoint presentations. The Microsoft Office Help option has some useful tutorials on how to use their software, as does the website www.about.com. The book 'PowerPoint for Dummies' is also a useful resource.

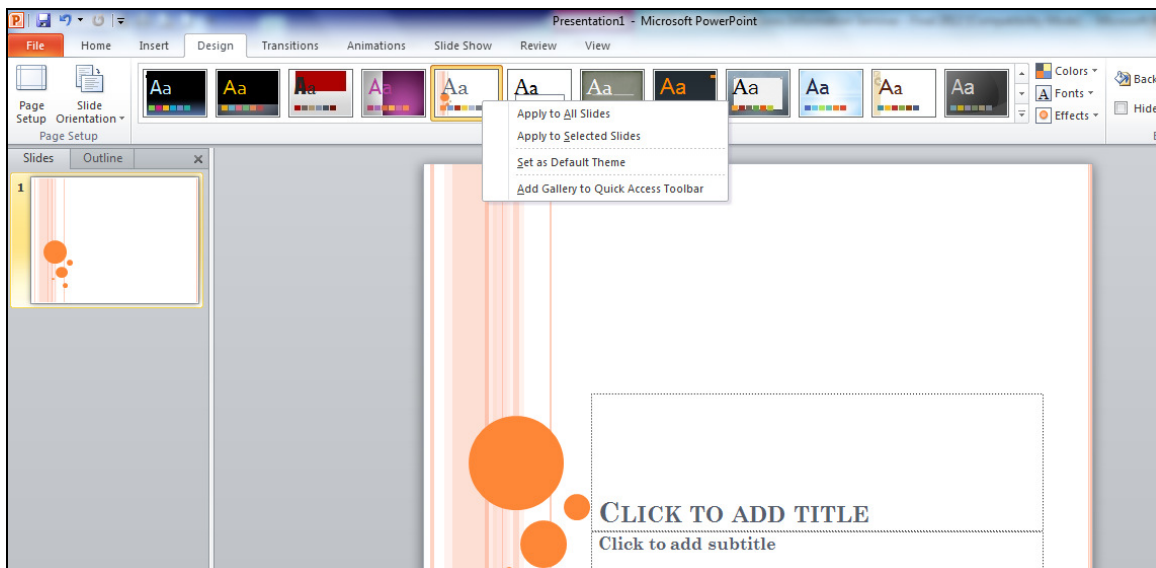
1. To **insert a new slide**, select 'New Slide' and choose the layout of the slide you want. Commonly used layouts include the 'Title Slide' for headings and the 'Title and Content' slide for other slides within the presentation. A view of each slide will appear down the left of the screen.



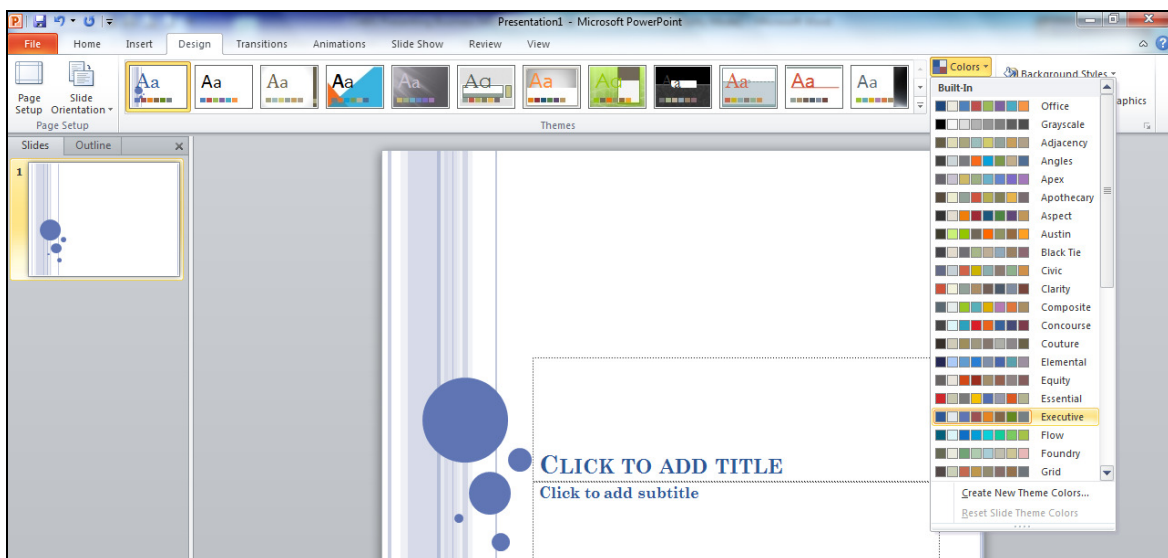
2. To choose a **design template**, click on the '**Design**' tab.



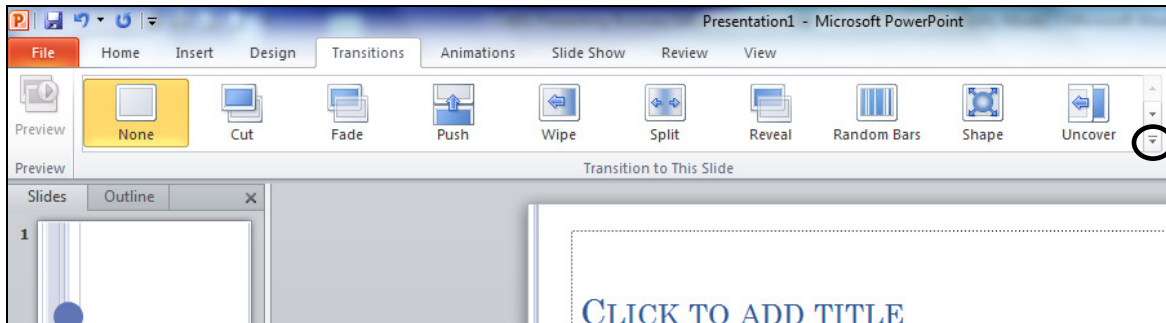
3. Select a design template. Apply it to one or all of your slides.



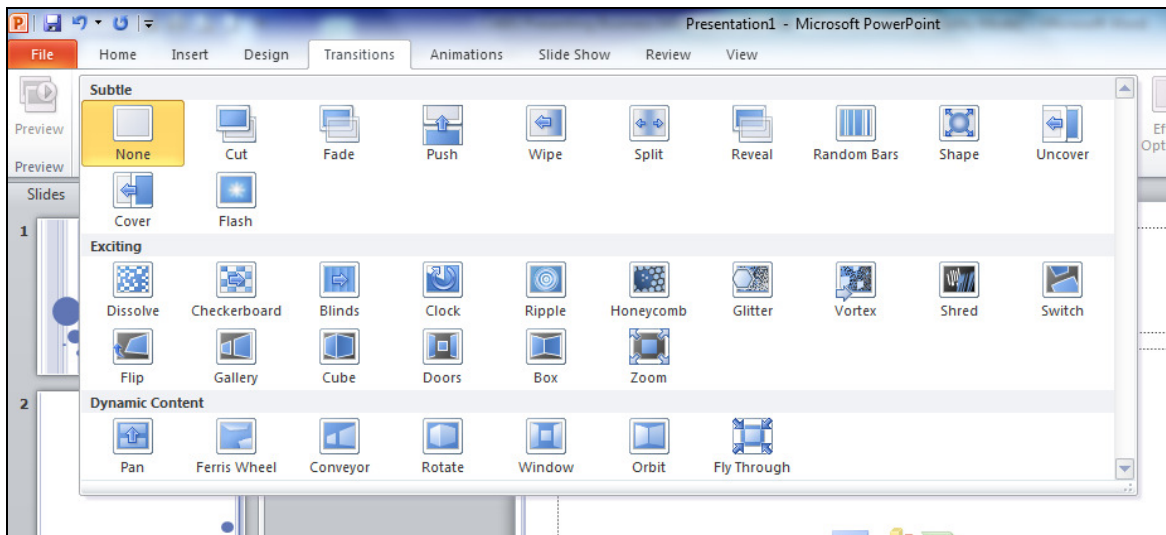
4. Select 'Colours' to choose a colour scheme.



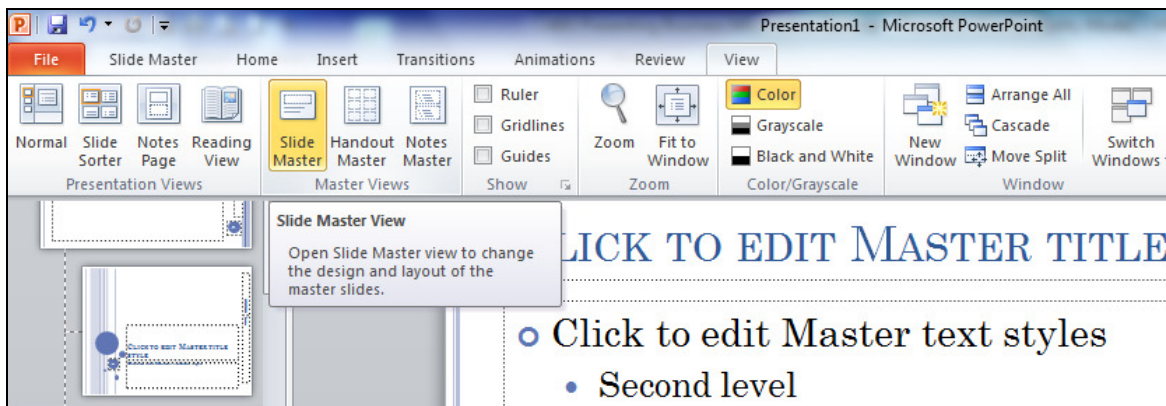
5. Select the '**Animations**' tab to select different ways your new slides can be introduced into your presentation (also called '**Slide Transition**').



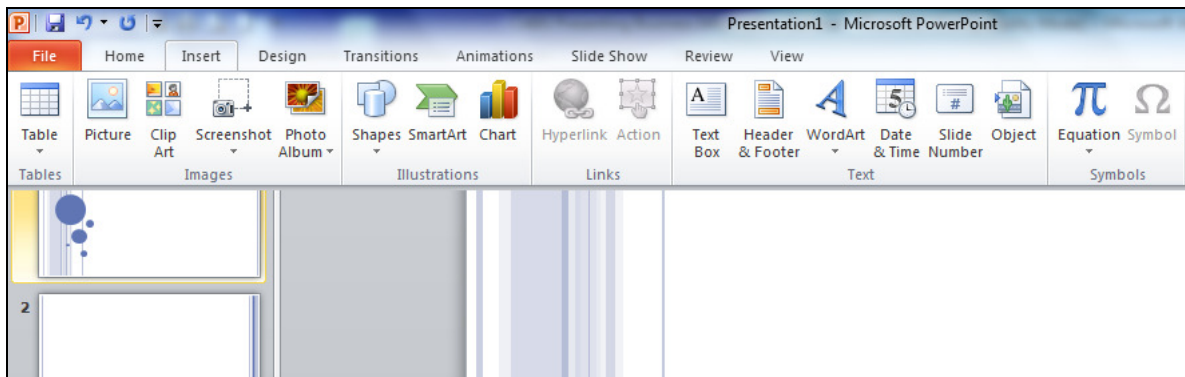
6. Use the little 'down' arrow to the right of the slide transitions shown (circled in above screen print) to view all options for slide transitions.



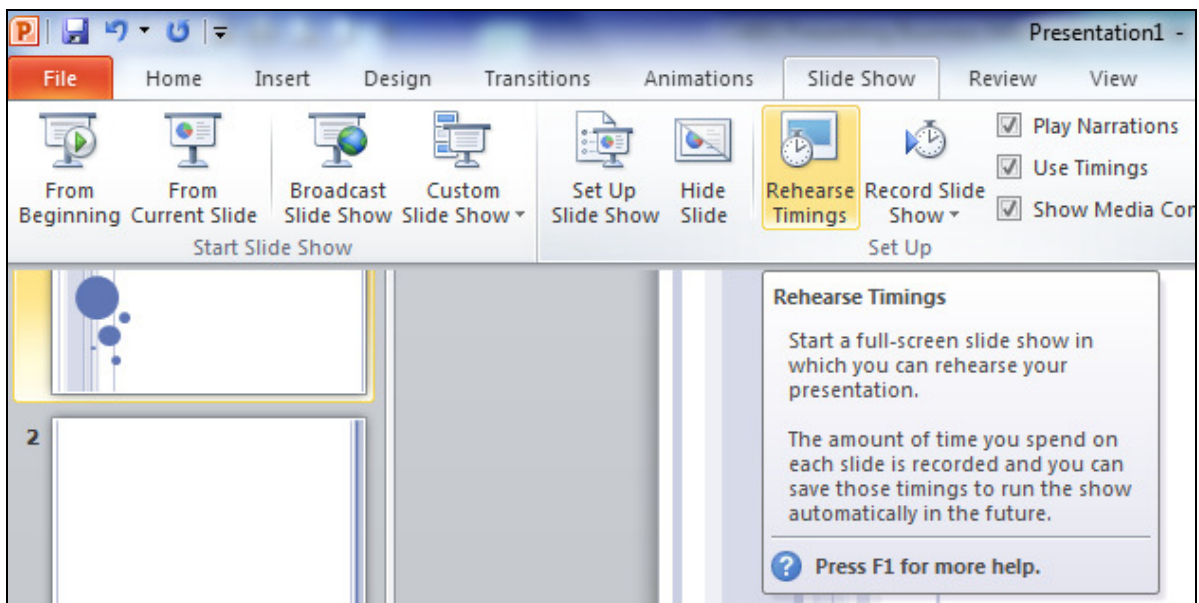
7. Use the '**Slide Master**' option in the 'View' tab to ensure consistency of slide design.



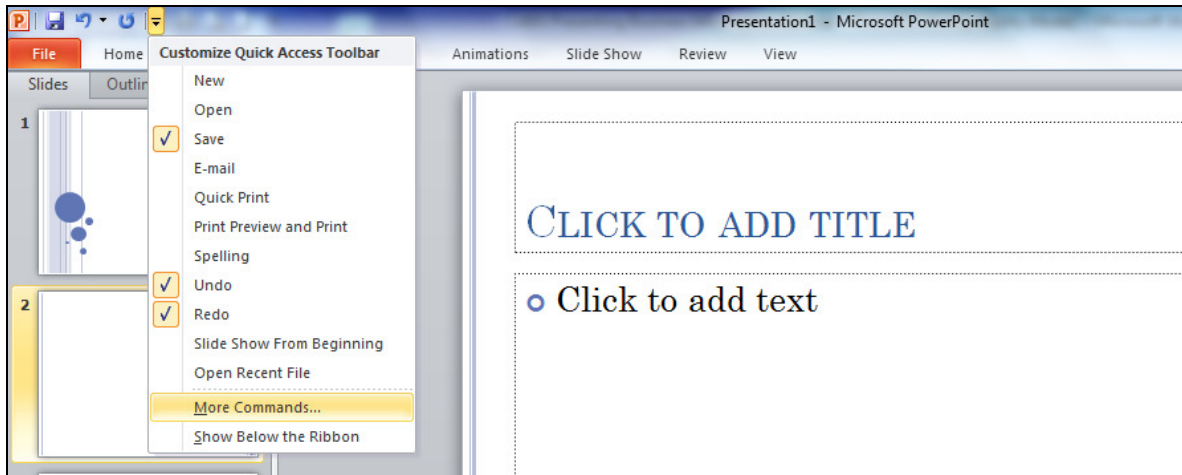
8. Use the '**Insert**' tab to add a diagram, photo, clip art, chart, movie or sound to your presentation.



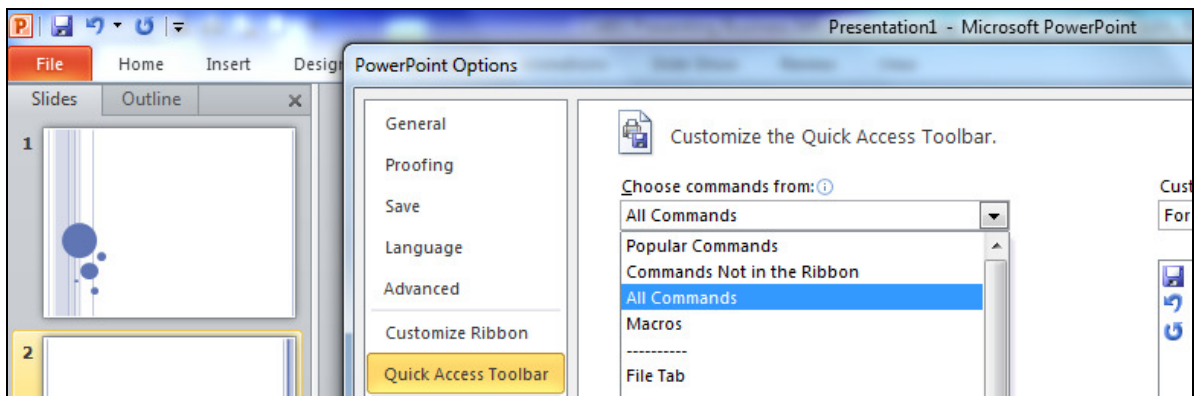
9. Use the 'Slide Show' tab to **rehearse your presentation**. The 'Rehearse Timings' option can be used to check the length of your presentation and record the amount of time you spend on each slide as you rehearse your presentation.



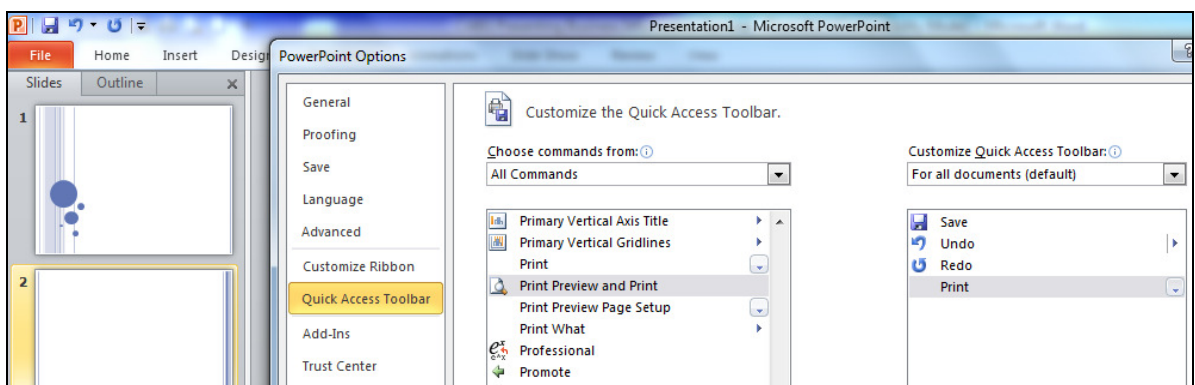
10. To **print your presentation**, if the 'Print' button is not showing on the 'Quick Access Toolbar' at the top left corner of your screen, you may need to use the arrow down button and select 'More Commands' to add the 'Print' button to this toolbar.



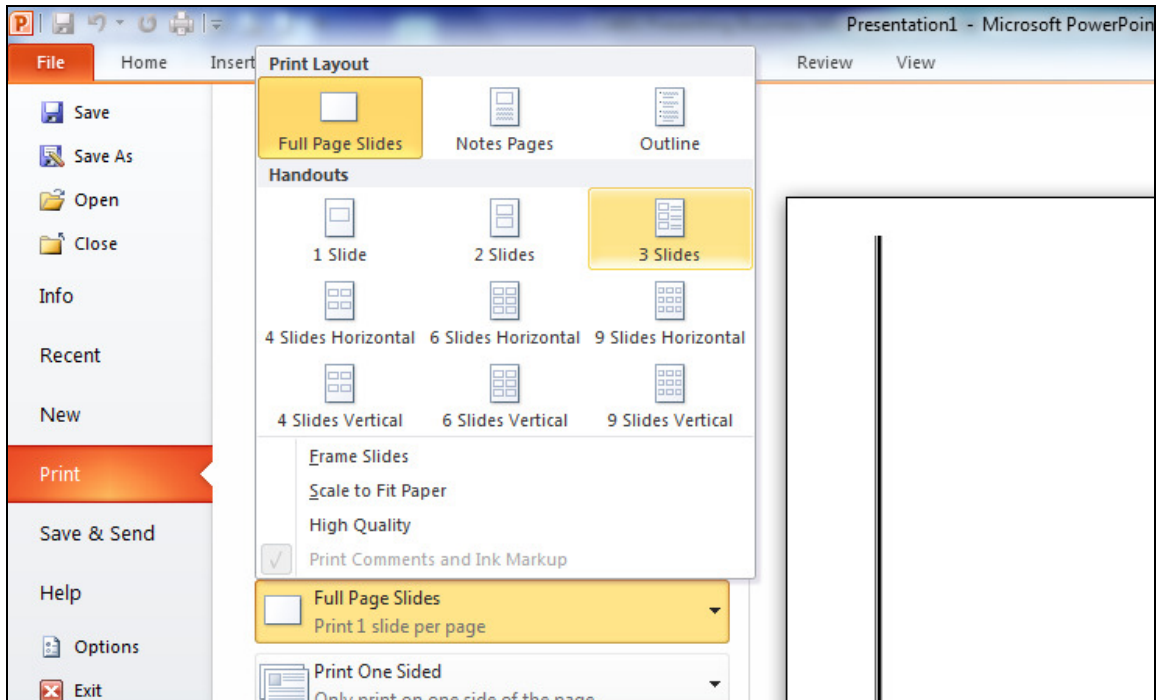
11. Select 'Choose Commands from All Commands' on the screen that appears.



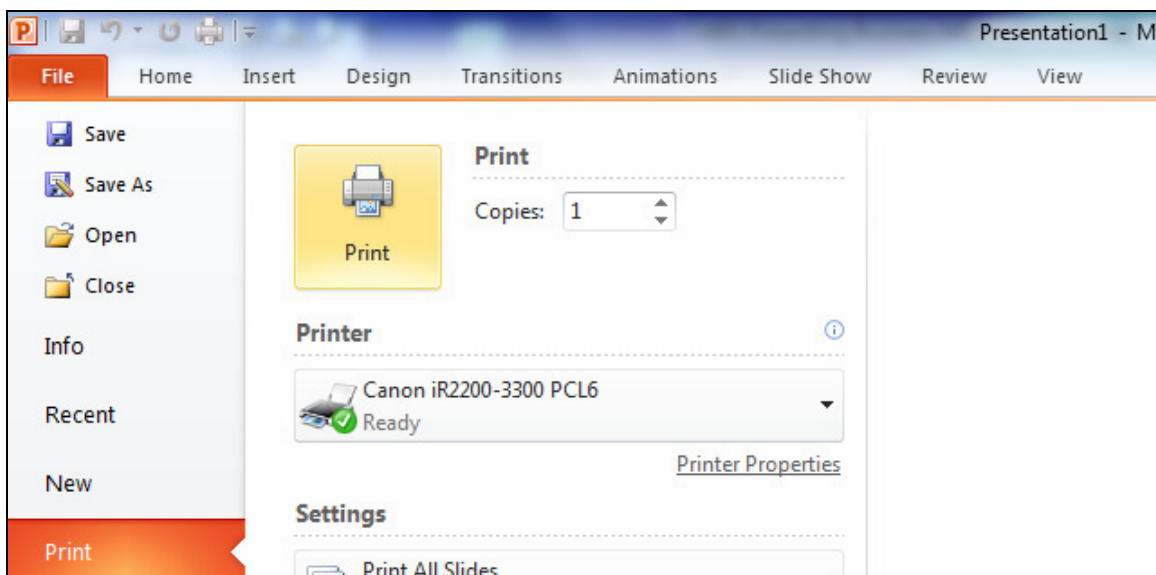
12. Then 'Add' the Print button to your toolbar.




13. Once the 'Print' icon is showing on the toolbar, use this to select printing options. In the 'Settings' part of the screen, click on the arrow beside 'Full Page Slides' to see your options. If you choose '3 Slides' it will print the presentation with three slides per page, with room for people to make notes.



14. Once you have selected your options, click the 'Print' icon.



Appendix 2: Slide Templates for Part B Activity

	<p>Slide 1</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 2</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 3</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<p>Slide 4</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 5</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 6</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<p>Slide 7</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 8</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 9</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

	<p>Slide 10</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 11</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	<p>Slide 12</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Programme Developers and Authors

Te Wānanga o Aotearoa acknowledges Aotahi Ltd (Aotahi) as the developers and authors of the programme. Other sources of material have also been acknowledged in the publications where appropriate. Aotahi is a Māori-owned business education company specialising in developing and managing educational programmes and resources for entrepreneurs / small business owners in Aotearoa. For further information regarding Aotahi, visit www.aotahi.com.

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