



Presenting tips – April 2011

So, you've decided to make an online video programme. What next?

You'll need to ensure you're well prepared for the day. Here are Multichannel TV's tips on how to ensure your presentation works well for this medium. We'll also give you advice on how you as the presenter can deliver your information in an engaging and informative manner.

Remember, if you'd like to discuss your programme or have any questions please don't hesitate to call us on 0207 739 8800.

Creating an engaging presentation for online video

You may be using a presentation you've done before in front of a live audience. However, we suggest you review your presentation as a presenting for online video has different requirements.

When you're using a visual medium such as film you should fully embrace all that it offers – remember this isn't a brochure, an email or a report to hand out to your colleagues so think beyond what you'd typically use for a print medium.

Also remember that you are there to present this information for a reason, the human interaction is very important, so you should endeavour to be engaging, entertaining and convey enthusiasm for your topic.

In a live presentation you have a captive audience. It's unlikely anyone is going to get up and leave, and it would be pretty rude to start making a phone call, check their emails or wander off to make a cup of tea.

These are things you need to remember with your online video – also consider that your audience can easily switch screens with a click of a mouse then your message is lost. People form impressions quickly, so you only have a minute or a few slides to convince the viewer that what you have is worth viewing.

You need to grab the viewer's attention with a punchy opening and give them a good reason to keep watching.

When writing your presentation ensure you consider what the audience will be interested in hearing.

Think that your viewers are approaching the programme with a 'what's in it for me' attitude. Also, don't assume that everyone has the same level of knowledge – your viewers may be mixed so ensure you offer some old and new facts.

Using PowerPoint graphics

It's important to remember that the visuals should support your presentation - reading everything word-for-word off a slide full of text isn't engaging. If using bullet points, be sure that each one is only a short sentence, not a full paragraph.

Ideally your audience should be spending very little time reading the text on your slides. Any text should be a key phrase that your viewers will remember. Don't just give them the whole script to read along with you.

Tips for presenting a technical programme

Don't assume that because you're doing a technical presentation that it has to be 'boring'. It's your and our job to make sure it isn't!

As with all presentations, you should ensure that the first few words and graphics capture the audience's attention. From there make sure you keep a high-level overview of the issues and how your solution fills the existing gaps.

If you're giving a technical presentation ensure your slides are kept simple, not crammed full of complex diagrams or graphs. The slides should be talking points to keep you on track, or key phrases to help the audience remember your presentation.

If you need to include mathematics in your presentation don't bombard your audience with slides full of equations or complex graphs and charts. You are best off explaining in general terms how the sums work rather than going into too much detail.

Be sure to take full advantage of the medium by using animations to illustrate any complicated points or ideas. Discuss this with your Multichannel TV contact who can suggest the best way to present your information.

Preparing for filming – your script

Go through your script and make it sound like spoken English.

Usually when you write you use a style of English that is for people to read silently in their head. But this is different to how you would speak as there are many words and phrases that sound unnatural when read out loud.

It's important you have rehearsed and learned as much of your presentation as possible. You can use the slides as triggers, and during filming we can stop as often as you need to check the script. We can even put the script on autocue for you; however, unless you've practiced it the presentation will sound like you are just reading it.

The viewers won't have much confidence in you as a subject matter expert if you need to read it word for word from a script.

Make sure you use short sentences so you don't run out of breath when you're speaking. It also helps if you underline words on your script to emphasise. Remember to use volume, pauses and stresses on words to help your message.

Before you come to the studio

Avoid wearing fabrics with close-checked or herringbone patterns as on camera this will strobe and flicker. The same applies to closely-striped shirts in sharply contrasting colours.

Men should also avoid very dark suits, particularly in combination with white shirts which can drain colour from the face. Light pastel shirts are more flattering.

For women, go for the unfussy look if you are trying to appear smart and authoritative - bold patterned scarves and loud jewellery can detract attention from what you are actually saying. For jackets and suits, fairly neutral colours tend to work best.

Consider also wearing something light – the studio lights can become very warm and you will get quite hot if you're wearing a lot of layers.

During Filming

Give yourself enough time for the filming. It's surprising how long things can take and being under time pressure to get things right is a major cause of people fluffing or forgetting what they want to say.

Check that you're sitting or standing with a good posture when presenting – slouching will make your voice sound lifeless. Find a comfortable position that makes you feel fresh and alert, ready to present.

If you feel more comfortable standing please let the Multichannel crew know and we'll accommodate your preference. If you gesture in real life, do the same when speaking to camera, otherwise you will not sound natural.

Don't try to force in any gestures or rehearse specific hand movements – it will look staged and uncomfortable. Just go with what you'd do normally.

Breathe as you would in normal speech. If you put... pauses in strange places, you will gasp like a... fish and your presentation will be hard to follow. Take a **full** breath at a **full** stop and top-up at a comma. Follow any stress marks you have made on your script.

Avoid frowning - it makes you look miserable! Your presentation will come across much better if you manage to smile occasionally. A smile will also improve your voice. It may sound inappropriate to smile while giving a serious message, but imagining a smile at the back of your throat will lift your voice.

Be sure to slow down! Nervous and inexperienced speakers tend to talk way too fast. Consciously slow your speech down and add pauses for emphasis.

If your eyes flicker around during a presentation to camera, you look uncomfortable, nervous, and possibly even a bit guilty. Keep your eye-line focused on the camera, and then you come over as being in command of your subject.

Remember that it's unusual to get it all done in one take. Don't feel bad if you need to redo anything - just take your time until you get it right.

HAVE FUN! Sounds impossible? With a little practice you can inject your passion for a subject into your presentations. Enthusiasm is contagious!