

Chapter 1: Planning for your presentation

"It takes me three weeks to put together a good impromptu speech."
– Mark Twain (1835-1910), American writer

Tip 1: Respect the process of preparing for a presentation	Essential
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We need to get some things straight, before we start preparing for your presentation.

The preparation for your presentation starts right here with Tip Number 1 – with you mentally accepting and believing that the preparation for your presentation is at least as important as – if not more important than – your delivery on the day of the presentation itself.

You may be a born natural public speaker with the most confident and comfortable style of talking. But unless you have done your preparation, you won't be able to achieve anything worthwhile with your skills.

I am sure you have at times sat in an audience and watched a well-polished professional speaker delivering a fact-filled, smoothly flowing seminar, making the business of speaking look easy. But before even professional speakers can succeed at their trade, they must also perfect their speaking skills.

Great speakers constantly work on ways to improve their performances. They continually hire speech and drama coaches. They spend their free time researching new materials and in rehearsals. They accumulate and learn from a vast amount of practical experience.

But do not be fooled. While there may be 0.1% who are "naturals", for the rest of us it takes a great deal of preparation and hard work to achieve this natural look. It is because of this preparation that some speakers are good, not despite it.

It does take a surprisingly long time to prepare for a good presentation, and a lot of work goes into it – the vast majority of this human investment is not seen by the general public audience.

➤ **There are no shortcuts: Preparation is the key to a successful talk.**

So get yourself psyched-up for it *now*. I don't want you to be one of those fools (like I have been in the past) who procrastinate and delay their preparation. Maybe they don't realise the importance of preparation or maybe they are simply running scared. Or maybe they are arrogant enough to think they can pull off a great presentation without any preparation?