

Hi, my name is Oliver and I'd like to tell you a bit about how to make successful business presentations and to take a look at the cultural differences.

With me today there is Bridget. Hello!

Bridget: Hi Oliver! Great topic!

Oliver:

Thank you very much. The main purpose of an oral presentation is to present subject in an organized, concise and effective manner to a live audience. You might want to sell a product to potential buyers or investors, you might want to persuade and convince employees or bosses, or you just want to inform people about the status quo of a project.

No matter what the purpose of your presentation is, the following aspects should be considered:

- Be clear about your objective and tailor the scope!
- Preparation (audience, location, equipment and how long it should take)
- Structure (formal or casual)
- Select the visuals, graphs, videos etc. multimedia beats static presentations!
- Set the rules for the presentations (Do you accept questions during your presentation or at the end?)
- Use signposting and summarize and repeat important information
- The most important rule: Preparation, preparation, preparation...

Only if you feel comfortable your audience will.

So Bridget, the last points apply to all kinds of presentations. Is there a difference between presentations in Europe or in the States?

Bridget:

I would say that teamwork is much more important in the US than in Germany. Communication, brainstorming and your fixed meetings without a clear target are more common. We develop ideas by trial and error and take actions faster. In contrast to that Germans consider meetings without a clear aim as a waste of time. They start with an in depths analysis first and like to consider all pros and cons before scheduling a meeting to finally make a decision. Germans consider Americans as superficial and undisciplined and Americans tend to think about Germans as opinionated and stiff.

Oliver:

Wow that leaves a lot of room for misunderstandings.

Bridget:

Of course. Another big difference is the presentation style. We focus in our presentation on the audience. We try to level and interact with the participants right from the start. We express our gratitude that they made the effort to come and praise them for their background. We also like to entertain the audience to keep them on alert.

"What a nice group of people here today. I'm very proud that you all came and I am so excited to present the new Ax5 Software program. I'm sure you will love it, too."

Oliver:

Germans on the other hand like to start a presentation by impressing the audience with their knowledge, background and thorough analysis. They like to present themselves as serious business partners. They are more lecturing than entertaining.

“Thank you very much for coming today. My name is Oliver and I am the CTO of AX5. I have been involved in this project for more than 5 years...”

Bridget

So, is there a difference in the presentation structure between Americans and Germans?

Oliver

Yes. Germans usually organize their information deductively. Which means that they are carefully presenting facts and figures leading then to the grand conclusion. Every argument is based on a logical conclusion. I remember one story: A salesman wanted to present a new product to a group of businessmen. Right at the start of the presentation one guy from Texas asked the presenter, “How much is it?” The German replied that this information would be irrelevant at this stage, because he hadn’t explained all the different models and features. The businessman got up and left the presentation.

So Bridget, how do Americans present information?

Bridget

Americans use an inductive approach, which means that they present the most important arguments or information first and go later into detail. They start with the big bang and provide proof later.

“The new AX5 is the most advanced, most effective and, guess what, most economical model ever.”

We also tend to be a bit overexcited and too enthusiastic.

Oliver:

Okay, let’s talk about other tools. Other important presentation tools are

- **Signposting to inform the audience where they were, where they are and where they will go:** I’d like to start by...; Now we’ll move on to...; Let’s look into that in more detail; To illustrate this point...; Firstly..., Secondly..., Thirdly..., Lastly...
- **Summarizing:** In conclusion..., Let’s sum up., The bottom-line is...
- **Repetition:** As I said before..., Let’s recap., As pointed out before...

Bridget, how do you get the audience involved?

Bridget:

We keep the audience involved by frequently asking for feedback and understanding:

- Is everyone with me so far?
- Is that clear?
- Do you follow me?
- Do you see what I mean?

- Does that make sense?
- Are there any more questions at this point?
- Shall I go through those numbers again?

Oliver

Thank you so much Bridget for all the details and cultural insights.

So please have a look at the script below and do the following exercises. As always, you can download your certificate, if you answer all the questions correctly.

For more information, please send a mail to podcasts@advanx.de. See you later. Bye, bye.