

# A+ Presentations: Three Key Elements

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If you think because you are out of school, you don't have to worry about grades, think again. Your listeners are grading you any time you address them on three things: **Organization, Relationship and Delivery**. How well you do in each of these three categories determines whether you pass or fail. To score straight A's, you need to be thoroughly prepared and focused on your listeners, not you. If you are throwing a presentation together at the last minute, inevitably, one or more of the areas will suffer.

## Organization:

First and foremost, listeners expect that you will be logical. Each point must clearly relate to the next. The simpler your strategy, the easier it is for listeners to connect the dots and come to the desired conclusion.

The mistake that many speakers make is to overload listeners with extraneous information. As a result, people lose their focus, and the argument becomes "muddy." Another mistake is that speakers bury their points by "over-connecting." Instead of clear, simple sentences, every sentence seems to connect to the next with "and," "but" or "so." Finally, speakers today turn nouns and adjectives into verbs or vice versa, leaving listeners groping for meaning.

## Relationship:

Listeners want you to bond with them. They need to feel that they have a relationship with you. By gearing your content to their issues, you connect with them on a cognitive level. You show respect as you talk about things they care about.

Another way speakers relate is by asking questions. It makes listeners feel you are interested in their opinions and are willing to adjust content accordingly.

By sharing your personal stories or examples or by adding humorous asides, you connect on an emotional level. People feel they know you. It again builds a bridge and demonstrates you have nothing to hide.

## Delivery:

The way a speaker delivers a message is every bit as important as what an audience hears. If you want to move people to action, you can't look or sound boring. You have to be passionate and animated.

To have real presence, you need to look people in the eye and have energy in your voice. You need to let your hands create word pictures and allow your face to show how you feel. With a stellar delivery, you demonstrate confidence and openness. People trust what you say.

When speakers are pressed for time, they often deliver the same content, regardless of the audience. Often, they read directly from a slide show. If you go into a presentation with an attitude of just wanting to be done, it will show. Instead of scoring straight A's, you will end up with all F's and sometimes, you won't even know why. Presentations that have impact take work. They take preparation and focus. They take paying attention to tightly organizing the content, relating it to the things listeners care about and delivering it in a strong, confident manner.

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).*