

Self-study workbook

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Introduction

We've all sat through presentations that have left us shell-shocked, bored or baffled. A poorly delivered presentation can leave us feeling confused, and the presenter feeling dejected. A well thought through presentation can fill the presenter with confidence that they've got the message across in an interesting and engaging way.

Alan (Matthew Horne) is an old hand at presentations. He's given more than he cares to mention: and more than his audiences care to remember! Cue Christine (Sally Philips) to help him reflect on his less glorious efforts and help him think through his preparation, structure and style to ensure that everyone leaves his presentations understanding what he was trying to tell them.

This training programme from Video Arts looks at the fundamentals of good presentation skills: structure, slides and delivery.

Objectives

This self-study workbook will help you to work your way through the **Presentation is everything** training programme systematically, at a time and pace which suits your working circumstances. Once you have done this you will be able to:

- Structure a presentation
- Use slides to support your points: without conflicting with them, repeating them or confusing them
- Identify techniques for capturing and maintaining audience interest and attention

What the workbook contains

The Presentation is everything video

This humorous programme looks at the fundamentals of good presentation skills: structure, slides and delivery and features Alan (Matthew Horne) who is an old hand at presentations. He's given more than he cares to mention: and more than his audiences care to remember!

His colleague Christine (Sally Philips) helps him reflect on his less glorious efforts and help him think through his preparation, structure and style to ensure that everyone leaves his presentations understanding what he was trying to tell them.

A detailed self-study programme

This tells you precisely what to do at each stage. It contains a number of exercises which encourage you to think about particular aspects of presentations.

Specimen answers

Each of the exercises comes with a set of specimen answers. There are two important points to note about these:

- They are merely suggestions, provided to help you think about the issues raised by the questions posed in the exercises. They are not necessarily the only answers
- Please don't cheat! The specimen answers will be more useful if you consult them after thinking through your own, rather than before

Summary notes

The key learning points from the video are summarised in a series of short notes which you can use for future reference.

An action plan

The last stage in the programme involves deciding and recording what specific actions you will take to improve your presentation skills.

How to use the workbook

You can adapt the way you use the workbook to suit your particular needs and circumstances by:

Taking the programme stage by stage

The programme is in six self-contained stages:

- Introduction
- Presentation is everything - overview
- The importance of structure
- Using slides effectively
- Delivery
- Action plan

Though you should work through them in this order, you do not have to do them all at once.

Varying the amount of time you devote to the programme

If you want to cut down the amount of time you spend on the programme, simply leave out the exercises in which you are asked to record the answers to questions.

The full programme, including the exercises, should take not more than 60 minutes.

Session 1: Introduction to programme

Your objectives

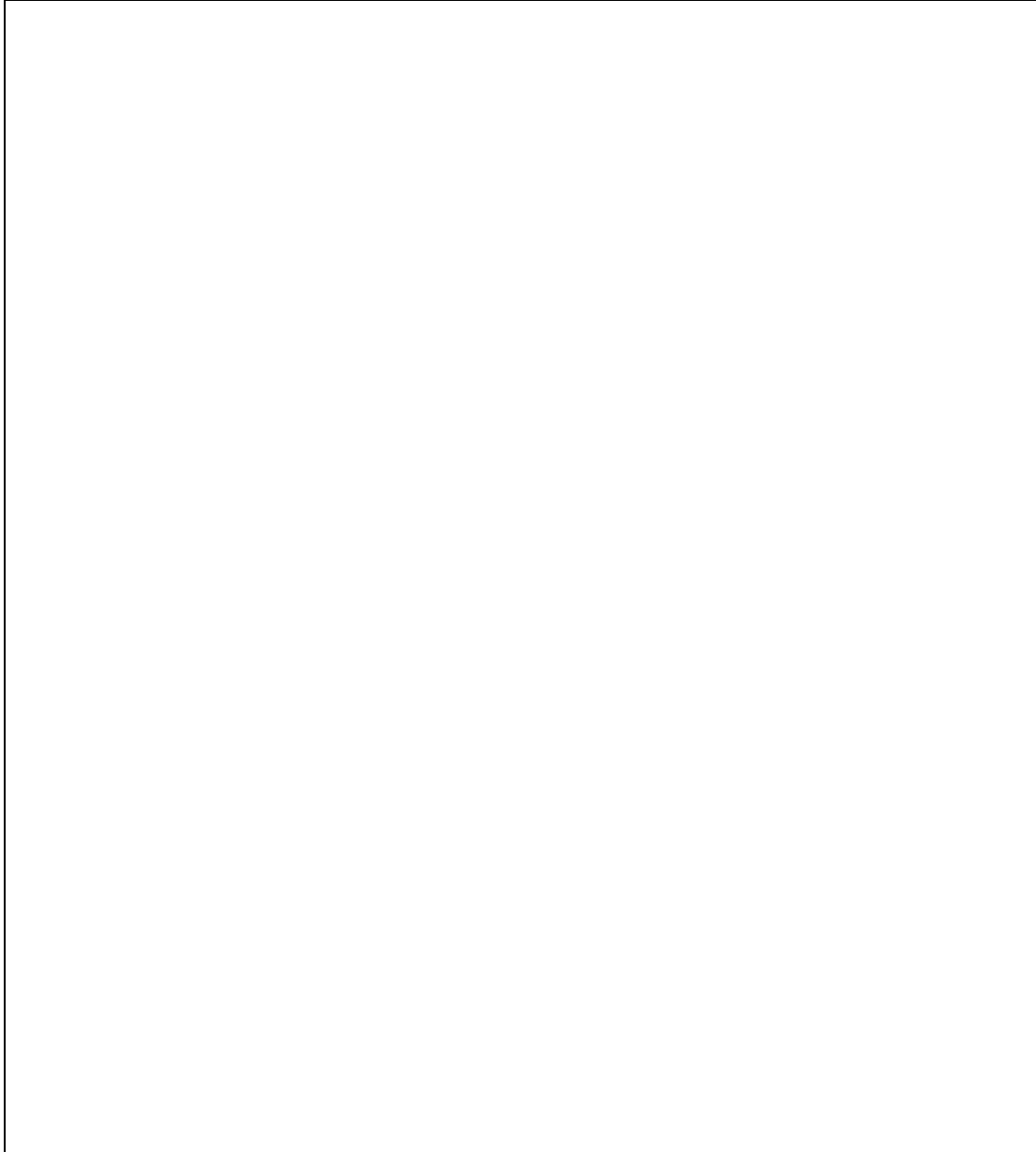
Before you start working through the programme, please record what, specifically, you want to get out of it.

My objectives for this programme

Presentations

- Reflect on the best presentations that you have delivered, or attended. What was memorable and why?
- Reflect on a presentation that you have attended or one that you have delivered that went badly. What was wrong and why?

Use the space below to record your thoughts:

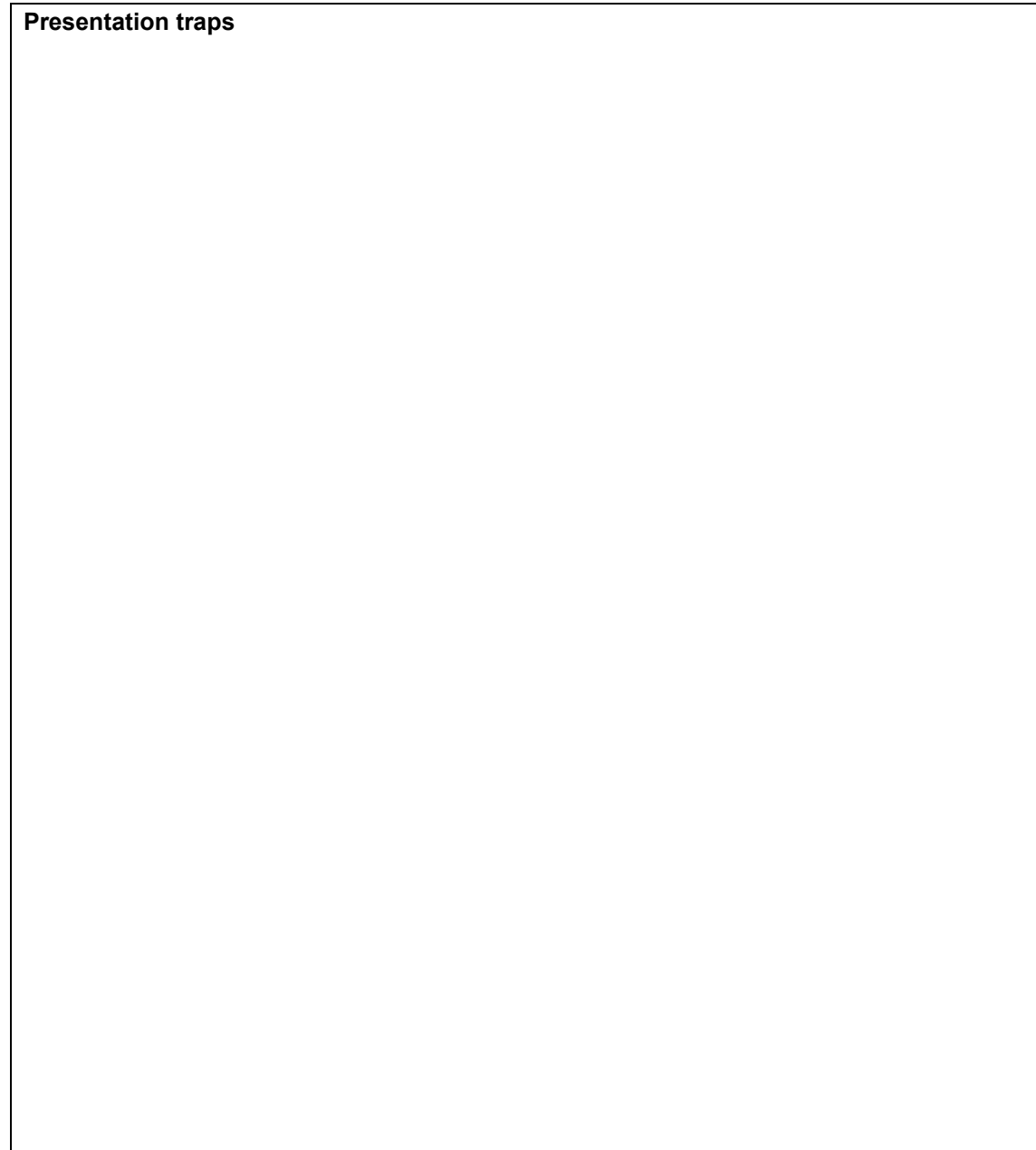
A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their reflections on presentations.

Session 2: Presentation is everything

Video

Play the video from start to finish. Identify some of the presentation traps that Alan fell into. Use the box below to record your findings.

Presentation traps



Compare your answers with those on page SSW-12

Session 3: The importance of structure

In the video Christine told Alan about the importance of structure. Look at the structure below and think about the key elements each part should contain. Use the boxes below to jot down your ideas.

Welcome

Beginning

Middle

Close

Compare your answers with those on page SSW-13

Session 4: Using slides effectively

Watch the excerpts of the video again that cover how to use slides effectively. Think about some of the mistakes that Alan made and identify some Golden Rules for the effective use of slides.

Golden Rules

Compare your answers with those on page SSW-14

Session 5: Delivery

Video

Re-start the video at the point when Christine tackles Alan about his delivery...“Actually - your delivery does leave a lot to be desired”...and run to the end.

Exercise

What tips did you pick up from this section of the video? Use the box below to record your answers.

<p>Effective Delivery</p>

Compare your answers with those on pages SSW-15

Session 6: Action Plan

Use the box below to plan out the steps you will take to improve your presentation skills.

Answers to questions

Session 2: Presentation is everything

Traps that Alan fell into:

- Lack of clear structure meant that sequence of presentations weren't logical and easy to follow
- Used jargon and complex language
- Some of Alan's visual aids didn't really support the points he made
- Lack of visual aids or use of inappropriate visual aids to support points
- Some annoying habits interrupted the flow of Alan's presentation and distracted his audience (turning back to audience, scratching his rear end, scratching his ear)
- Seemed unenthusiastic and at times monotone
- Sometimes avoided eye contact with the audience
- Reading out what's on the screen. Audience didn't know if they were supposed to be looking or listening
- Presented complex information using inappropriate graphs/charts rather than simplifying for the audience
- Using gimmicks such as annoying background fonts and inappropriate imagery (fat cat) taken from internet
- Inappropriate humour that could cause offence
- Read from bullet points
- Appeared unconfident and disorganised
- Poor slide sequencing, moved on with all the previous information still on the screen

Session 3: The Importance of structure

Every presentation should include four elements

Welcome:

In your welcome you introduce yourself and tell everyone why you're there.

Beginning:

Your beginning sets out what you're going to tell the audience. Let the audience know if they can ask questions during or after the presentation.

Middle:

The middle is where you get all your points across - you should keep it simple and punchy.

End:

And in the close you summarise the main points of your presentation.

Session 4: Using Slides effectively

Golden Rules:

- Simplify things for your audience. If you use a graphic, make sure it's easy to understand.
- Keep it simple.
- Never stand between a member of the audience and the screen. Above all, never stand between the projector and the screen, not just because of the shadow you cast but also the part of the slide projected onto your face makes you look silly and distracts the audience.
- Don't keep looking over your shoulder at every slide change to make sure the right one comes up. Rehearse to make sure you know the sequence of your slides.
- Avoid talking to the screen. The moment you turn towards the screen you make it difficult for the audience to hear you. Best to stand square to the audience with the screen beside you.
- Once you have finished with a slide, get rid of it. If you leave it on the screen when you are talking about something else it will only be a diversion or distraction.
- When you plan your presentation, think about the slides that you require and keep them to a minimum – no one wants death by PowerPoint!
- Keep your colours to a minimum.
- Use quotations or stories for impact. The best ones are short, memorable and relevant.
- Avoid abstract phrases or jargon; otherwise you may lose your audience.
- Use simple and relevant images – a picture is worth a thousand words.
- Try to avoid adding tables of figures in slides. The information you want from them is usually better displayed by a chart or diagram.
- Avoid wordy slides – never put more words on a slide than you would print on a tee-shirt.
- Use pictures and graphics to help people visualise complex information. Make sure the graphics are simple and relevant. Don't overuse wacky fonts, effects or clip art – it's very distracting.
- Don't read out what's on the screen – use bullets to highlight your points.

Session 5: Delivery

Key learning points about delivery:

- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use positive body language. Use hands to emphasise and reinforce points
- Always make eye contact with your audience
- Vary your gestures to maintain audience interest
- Move around as you speak to hold the audience's attention
- Don't read from a script or a list of bullet points
- Make sure your slides are in sequence with what you are saying
- Take time to rehearse your opening and closing lines, and then put your key points and facts on cue cards if necessary
- Interact with the audience - make regular eye contact, invite questions
- Don't turn away from the audience and don't hide behind office furniture
- Interact with your audience, don't just talk at them
- Avoid risqué jokes or comments that might offend your audience
- Rehearse your presentation to make sure it runs smoothly

Summary points from Presentation is everything

Structuring a presentation

- Welcome
- Beginning
- Middle
- Close

Using slides

- Use simple and direct language
- Use simple and relevant images
- Use quotations if appropriate
- Avoid reading out what's on the screen
- Simplify complex information for the audience
- Avoid gimmicks such as annoying animations or whacky fonts

Delivery

1. Always speak clearly
2. Use positive body language
3. Don't read from a script
4. Make sure your slides are in sequence with what you are saying
5. Interact with the audience - make regular eye contact, invite questions
6. Rehearse! Rehearse! Rehearse!

...and preparation

1. Is your equipment working properly? AV, correct leads etc.
2. Have you got enough seats? Think about the room layout.
3. Is the room too hot or too cold? Comfortable for the audience, suitable breaks if it's a long presentation.