

## Final Interview Presentation Guide

Companies are more frequently asking candidates to make a presentation at the final interview in the hiring process. The purpose of this is:

- To allow several key managers to 'inspect' the (potentially) chosen candidate without having to spend time interviewing them formally
- To find out how much the candidate knows about the company, its products/services and market
- To observe how competently the candidate presents him/herself ('how will he/she appear to our customers?')
- To find out how the candidate reacts to 'pressure'

The subject of the presentation, its style, length and audience will vary from one situation to another of course, but many are very similar. There are a number of general rules which you should follow, which will stand you in good stead in any such circumstance.

Candidates for business-oriented roles such as sales, marketing and management are more likely to be asked to make a presentation at the final interview. This is because they will be required to make presentations in the course of their work, and it's a good opportunity for the hiring managers to see how well they perform. However, candidates for all sorts of jobs and at all levels, may be asked to give a presentation.

### General Rules

- Stick rigidly to any guidelines you have been given, regarding content and timing
- Use the most professional presentation method you can
- Appropriate content
- Keep slides/pages short and to the point
- Keep information transparent/easy to understand (don't 'blind with science')
- Show the presentation to an impartial professional observer and consider their criticisms carefully
- Practise the presentation before you give it
- Personal Presentation
- Try to involve the audience

### Guidelines

Instructions from companies for final interview presentations vary enormously, from no instructions at all ('Just give us a presentation on something you're interested in') to highly detailed technical instructions. Presentation timescales also vary, but will typically be between 10 - 30 minutes. Find out beforehand what presentation methods you will be able to use: PowerPoint (projection / computer screens?), overhead projector (OHP), flipchart, white board, just talking. Who will be present (titles, names, importance in the decision-making process and in the hierarchy of the company as it relates

to your employment there). If you are in any doubt beforehand as to what is expected of you, ask your Consultant well in advance.

### **Presentation Method**

You'll have to use whatever means are available to you, but be sure you are familiar with the method (don't attempt a PowerPoint presentation at a final interview if you've never done one before!) Prepare everything beforehand, and take backup (spare computer, memory stick, acetates for OHP, memory jogger cards etc). Produce sufficient copies of your presentation on paper, in neatly bound files, to distribute to all your audience after your presentation.

### **Content**

Content will obviously depend on what you have been asked to present on. However a number of common themes occur:

- A clear understanding of the company, its history, its place in the market, its products/services,
- its scale (turnover, profit, employees), its market/customers, its philosophy
- The job you have applied for: you understand exactly what you will be expected to do, and what will be expected of you
- A plan of how you will go about your task, especially in the first few months/year or so
- You understand what your strengths are as they apply to the job (what you can 'bring to the party') and what areas you will need some support in especially in the early stages (weaknesses, but not expressed as such!)
- You have a clear understanding of the difference between what is important and what is urgent; you will act, in order of priority, on:
  - What is important and urgent (quest for profit)
  - Important but not urgent (report for annual meeting)
  - Urgent but not important (water leak)
  - You will not occupy yourself with things which are neither urgent nor important! (booking your holiday for next year)
- You have a clear understanding of Pareto's Law: 80% of your measurable results will come from just 20% of the items on your daily to-do list. The major problem is that most people are so busy fighting fires that they never get around to the most vital few activities that will lead to the greatest results.
- You have a clear understanding that the good of the company (profit) is paramount, and comes before all other considerations

**Keep it Short!**

Prepare your presentation to last exactly the required length of time. If you are not given any guidelines about this, aim for 15 minutes (20 maximum). Each slide/page should have just a few points (4 maximum). Each item should be short and to the point. Words should be short, no jargon and no abbreviations. Capital letters should be used correctly (first word of sentence, proper names, acronym (eg DNA).

### **Get it Checked!**

The company's name must be spelt correctly! There must be no spelling mistakes! Practise the presentation in front of someone (partner, friend) or at least in front of the mirror (better still a video camera!). Practise in front of a 'lay' audience: if they do not understand what you're talking about, rewrite it! (Some of your audience in the interview may be 'lay' eg human resource people).

### **Personal Presentation**

Firstly, (unpleasant though it may be to contemplate!) bear in mind that all eyes will be on you! Look as sharp as a new pin! Buy new clothes if necessary (once you get the job, you can pay your Visa bill!). Get a haircut, press your suit, shine your shoes and wash your hands. Use cue cards rather than reading from a script: you must look the audience in the eye! Try to involve the audience, if not by asking them questions, certainly by looking at them and referring to them: 'Massive Co. Ltd was founded in 1975 by Sir Henry Widget here' (indicate with a hand gesture Sir Henry, with a smile!). Don't crack jokes as such, but try to inject a little humour. As in all human relationships, if you can get the other party to laugh or smile, you have mostly won them over. Exude enthusiasm and energy.

**Enjoy yourself, prepare, smile and good luck!!**

**The Sales Recruitment Team**

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