



Bar Association of **Queensland**

Tips and Tricks for Presenters



Tips and Tricks for Presenters

The Bar Association of Queensland (Association) is grateful to the volunteer presenters who give their time to benefit the professional development of Association members. These presenters are invited to be part of the Association's Legal Education program because of their expertise, and leadership in their chosen fields.

To assist Association presenters with the delivery of professional development, the Association and its Legal Education (CPD) Committee have developed these 'tips and tricks' for creating engaging and practical presentations, in person and via live webcast.

1. Visual Aids

People learn in a variety of ways, and many require a visual aid to assist with conceptualisation and retention of content. According to research, about 90% of information transmitted to the brain is visual.¹

A powerpoint presentation is a simple yet effective visual aid, and the Association encourages its presenters to use its template to complement their presentation. To ensure it is an effective aid, we recommend the following:

- a) Ensure the powerpoint is formatted to 16:9 widescreen format ratio for the best appearance in the Association's training room and online via live webcast.
- b) The powerpoint should not replace a written paper – limit the text on each slide to thirty words or less. If you do not have the resources to prepare a paper, consider providing a handout with some notes for circulation by email after the presentation.
- c) Limit the number of slides included in the presentation so you are not changing slides too frequently.
- d) Ensure the content on the slide is limited to font size 32 or larger for headings, and font size 24 or larger for supporting points. If a member of the audience is struggling to read the powerpoint, they won't be able to engage with what you are saying and can quickly become lost or disengaged.
- e) If appropriate, use pictures to replace words but still make or support your key points. There are a number of free stock photos, including [Unsplash](#) or [StockSnap](#). [Canva](#) is also a great tool for developing the look and feel of your presentation.

2. Start with your audience

When developing your presentation, we encourage all presenters to start by considering their audience.

Often Association presentations are to a very diverse audience, with different experience levels and practice areas. It is recommended that a presentation is dynamic enough to offer the foundations to the inexperienced, as well as some content for members with

¹ <https://www.lst.org.au/members/continuing-professional-development/presenter-resources/> 27
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greater experience in the area. You will be able to locate some high level information on member demographics in the Association's [Annual Report](#).

If you are unsure who is in your audience, you can ask attendees questions at the beginning of your presentation (online and in person) to gauge their knowledge and experience. The Association can offer you support in using polls or online Q&A to engage with your online audience.

3. Set your objective

Forgetting things is an infuriating function of the human brain, and is something that we recommend that you consider when developing your presentation. Ebbinghaus' forgetting curve suggests that 50% of content will be forgotten by the audience within a day of your presentation, and up to 90% forgotten within a week. There are important things that the Association and presenters can do to combat this:

- a) Limit your objectives to 3-5 key points. To keep the amount of information you are providing digestible, these objectives should be clear and precise. *For example: understand these 2 key principles about the new practice direction, consider these 2 strategies for getting the best outcome for your client.*
- b) Like you would with an advice to a client; tell the audience what you are going to tell them (introduction), tell them (body), and then tell them what you have told them (conclusion). By reiterating these key learning objectives, you will improve the audience's retention of the content of your presentation.
- c) After legal education events, the Association publishes the recording and any available resources in its CPD Library. We also include a link to these resources following the event, in the Association's fortnightly CPD News. This is an easy way for members to refresh their knowledge, and a simple prompt for reflection of the content.

4. Planning and preparation

To assist with planning your presentation, the following structure is suggested as a starting point for a one hour lecture:

5:15-5:20pm	Chair person – Welcome and Introductions
5:20-5:25pm	Introduction of topic and key points: What, why, how
5:25-5:30pm	Key point 1
5:30-5:40pm	Key point 2
5:40-5:50pm	Key point 3
5:50-6:00pm	Key point 4
6:00-6:05pm	Summary of key points/learning objectives



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6:05-6:15pm Chair person – questions from the audience, restating key objectives

By planning the structure and timing of your session, you can ensure you are moving through the content at an appropriate pace. If you find that you are running out of time, try not to increase the pace of your presentation and deliver a lot of content in a short amount of time – if you speak too quickly, the audience may not be able to keep up with you and may quickly become lost.

As they say, practice makes perfect. We encourage you to practise your presentation at least once, if not a few times, prior to the actual presentation date. If you would like to master your presentation skills, you may wish to practise in front of a colleague and ask for their suggestions for improvement.

5. Tips for practical and engaging content

Association members are busy professionals, with demanding roles. In the great words of Ross Kodner, *“Lawyers have to listen to a lot of boring crap. If you are entertaining and give them a few chances to laugh, they will love your presentations.”*²

To assist you with keeping your audience engaged in your content, we suggest that you try some of these simple suggestions:

- a) Pick a topic that you are passionate about. At the very least, show enthusiasm for the topic as this will impact the engagement of the audience.
- b) Generate a connection with the audience and the subject matter by telling stories about your experience, particularly where things did not go to plan.
- c) Use practical examples to help the audience understand how the theory will work in practice. Telling the audience about the law makes a good presentation; providing a real example or story of how the law works in practice will lift your presentation to the next level.
- d) Pause. It is easy to forget the power of the pause, particularly if you are running out of time to deliver all that you planned to or you are suffering from some nerves. A pause can allow the audience a moment to reflect and plan, and improve concentration.
- e) Make eye contact. Reading a presentation, without years of practice and expert oration skills, will often disengage and frustrate an audience.

6. Adult learners

Adult Learning theory provides us with some insights into the way adults learn. Here are some strategies that the Association encourages you to consider:

- a) Adults like to manage their own time, and this is essential for Association members. Your timing and pace is important.

² www.attorneyatwork.com/desck-pro-tips-masterful-presentations 6 Feb 2021.



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- b) Ask the audience to participate and to assist with guiding the content so it is suitable for their needs – adults like to ‘choose their own adventure’, and busy people like to manage their own time.
- c) If the context is appropriate, consider ways that you can get the audience to participate – get them to ask questions throughout the presentation, ask them questions throughout the presentation, break into groups and have a discussion/report back, or use role plays.
- d) Ensure there is sufficient time for the audience to ask questions at the end of your presentation, rather than using this time to present extra content. To assist with generating questions, provide your chair person with 2-3 pre-prepared question.
- e) Ensure that you restate the question from the audience, so that the online audience can hear the question too.

7. Adaptations for an online audience

It is much easier to get distracted when you are viewing a presentation remotely via live webcast. Maximise your audience engagement throughout the presentation, by considering the suggestions above. Some of these suggestions will need to be amplified – for example:

- Consider interacting with the audience far more regularly than just at the end of the presentation. You are able to use polling or on-screen questions to ensure that the online audience is engaged and participating.
- If you are not able to take questions, consider other ways that you can grab the attention of the audience regularly throughout the presentation through visual stimulus, interaction or ‘a-huh’ moments.

To maximise engagement via videoconference, consider the following:

- a) Ensure that your background is not too busy and distracting. A simple white wall will suffice, otherwise consider some simple staging or virtual backgrounds.
- b) Check the lighting in the room and make sure your face is well lit, and your background is not too bright.
- c) Your face should be centred and about four finger widths from the top of the screen.
- d) Look into the camera lens as much as possible, to maximise eye contact with your audience.
- e) Increase the number of slides that you use when presenting remotely – every 30-60 seconds is ideal when presenting online.
- f) Ensure that your audio quality is sufficient. You may need to consider using a headset or microphone to improve the quality of your audio and reduce background noise.

The Association will arrange a test with you prior to the presentation to ensure that your audio and video are of a sufficient quality.



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8. How can we help?

If you require any assistance with the delivery of your presentation, please contact the Association's CPD Team on cpd@qldbbar.asn.au or 07 3238 5100.