

## **COMMUNICATING using VERBAL and VISUAL MEANS**

There is only one way to learn and develop presentation skills, and that is by doing it. Do not turn down any opportunities to learn these skills whether it is in a formal (wedding speech) or informal (pub joke) context. The more practice you get the better you will become.

However, an awareness of what makes a good presentation is helpful:

### **Check list:**

**YOU:** You will be the main determinant of how well the presentation goes.

Stance, eye-contact, speed, clarity and tone of voice, clothes, panache, knowledge of your subject, your attitude toward your subject, your attitude toward the audience, your enthusiasm.

**SPEAKING:** Use correct English, speak clearly and firmly to people. Use pauses to catch attention and give emphasis. You don't have to fill the silence completely with your voice.

**MAKE IT VISUAL** as well as aural. Visual aids, OHP's, models, acting, diagrams, drawing as you go, headings, video, computer simulations, DVD, slides, etc.

OHP's: Don't make the writing too small.  
Don't put too much on a page. (Be confident in the technology!)

**PREPARATION:** Only a few are good at 'off the cuff', take time to prepare, study your subject, be prepared for questions, answer honestly (including 'I don't know!').

**TIMING:** Brevity is often the essence of clarity. If you have grabbed the attention of the audience time will fly (for them) - but generally: don't ramble on ad nauseam, don't repeat yourself, don't go over time.

**STRUCTURE:** Beginning, middle and end. Make sure each is identifiable. Make it 'followable' - one thing should lead on from another.

**ENVIRONMENT:** in so far as you can influence it, ensure that your presentation is delivered under the best possible conditions. Stuffy, crowded, smoky rooms, uncomfortable chairs, excessive outside noise, disruptive individuals are not going to help.