

Strategic Presentation Skills Checklist

By Communication Guru



15 Must-Have Tips for Impact & Influence

Why Use a Presentation Checklist?

- ✓ Stay organised
- ✓ Build confidence through preparation
- ✓ Avoid common pitfalls
- ✓ Focus on what matters most
- ✓ Deliver with consistent quality

Use this checklist as your coaching tool before every presentation.

✓ 1. Start with the end in mind

Ask: What do you want your audience to think, feel, and do?
Clear outcomes sharpen your message and drive structure.

✓ 2. Craft a captivating opening hook

- Grab attention fast — within the first 30 seconds
- Use a question, bold statement, story, or startling statistic

✓ 3. Know your audience inside out

- Who are they?
- What problems do they care about?
- Tailor your tone, visuals, and message accordingly

✓ 4. Structure your message clearly

Choose a structure:

- Problem → Solution → Benefit
- Past → Present → Future
- Challenge → Choice → Outcome

✓ 5. Use visual slides, not documents

- Slides are aids, not your script
- Keep them clean, minimal, one idea per slide

✓ 6. Rehearse out loud, on your feet

- Practice standing up, at least twice
- Fix fluency gaps and weak transitions

✓ 7. Time yourself

- Use a timer
- Leave room in your slot for Q&A and interaction

✓ 8. Warm up your voice and body

- Stretch gently before presenting
- Do vocal warm-ups to project better and stay energized

✓ 9. Make eye contact and pause

- Shared eye contact builds trust
- Speak in “sense phrases” and use pauses for emphasis

✓ **10. Use gestures and movement purposefully**

- Stand tall with open gestures
- Avoid fidgeting — move intentionally to highlight key points

✓ **11. Tell stories that connect**

- Use narratives to humanise data
- Stories are memorable and emotionally engaging

✓ **12. Handle questions with confidence**

- Prepare responses to likely tough questions
- Stay calm, ask for clarification if needed
- Avoid phrases like “I don’t know,” “I’m not sure”

✓ **13. End with impact**

- Summarise your main points
- Issue a clear call to action
- Finish strongly, not with a fizzle

✓ **14. Perform dry runs with peers**

- Get honest feedback from trusted colleagues
- Ask: What’s unclear? What’s strong? What can you remove?

✓ **15. Record and review yourself**

- Use your phone to record practice
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement

Bonus Tips for Lasting Influence

- Use the **Rule of Three** — trios are more memorable
- Vary **pace, pitch, and pauses** to hold attention
- Use **dramatic pauses** for emphasis
- Be **authentic and energised** — show your passion

For presentation skills support:

 Email me at john@johnfrench.co.za — we are happy to assist!