

# presentation preparation

Some solo time is essential to gather your thoughts and develop your story



## Successful workshops don't just happen.

There is more to a successful workshop than the program design, consider these five factors.

- You
- Learners
- Venue
- Learning materials
- Rehearsal/Practice

### You

Are you ready? Had enough sleep? Well Prepared? Seemingly minor points but all help to point to a successful workshop - leave nothing to chance! The question I ask myself is, "will my learners know if I am running this workshop for the first time?" If they could, you are underprepared.

From a big picture perspective what are you doing to improve your skills?

- Do you regularly attend workshops to learn new ideas and skills?
- How many hours a month do you commit to improving your skills?
- Do you keep up with new ideas via books, blogs and newsletters?
- Do you belong to a group of learning professionals who share stories, ideas, tips? If you can't do this in person, try some online groups, see links on left for details.

Have you planned your own development needs for the next 6 months? I suggest that you start by identifying your own knowledge/skills gaps, and then use a Personal Development Plan to outline a range of actions that you will follow to build your skills.

### Learners

What do you know about the learners/audience? From a learning point of view you should know as much as possible, it helps you 'pitch' material at the correct level. That said, this should have been a part of your preparation/design process, designing an appropriate program.

Questions to consider include:

- What learning have they undertaken previously?
- Why are they attending?
- What is the ONE thing they'd like to learn by attending?
- What fears do they have about the session?



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## Venue

Have you been to your venue before? Sometimes you will have booked this yourself, at other times it will be organised by your client. Is it suitable? It is best to communicate clearly with your client about any special needs you may have, size of room, seating arrangements, audio/tech support, flipcharts, whiteboards, projectors, microphones etc. Regarding size, it's better to have a room a bit too large rather than too small. This is especially the case if your workshop includes any group/breakout work. I also like to work in a room with some natural light, I know it's not always possible but I think it helps with the mood of those attending.

## Learning materials

What materials will you need during your workshop? Learners' guides, handouts, activities? For me this one's more a matter of ensuring that everything is at hand. The development/design aspect of the materials should have been completed long before now.

There is little that distracts you more than finding out too late that materials that are essential for your workshop have not been printed/delivered correctly.

## Practice

In the participants' eyes you are the 'expert', it does little for your credibility to come across as underprepared/lacking knowledge/unsure of the learning materials/lacking familiarity with the slides/unsure how to set-up and use equipment.

So, what can be done?

Practice, practice, practice!

Read, re-read, research, review slides and timing, set-up computer and projector until you're sure you know what to do.