

Signposting

In a good presentation, what you say – the content – is much more important than anything else. But a clear structure helps. When you move on to your next point or change direction, tell the audience.

You can do this easily and effectively, using simple phrases as 'signposts' to guide the audience through your presentation:

- To move on
- To expand on
- To digress
- To go back
- To recap
- To conclude
- To summarize
- To turn to
- To elaborate on

TASK 1

Choose one of the 'signpost' expressions from the box above for the following situations:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. When you want to make your next point. | To . <i>move on</i> |
| 2. When you want to change direction. | To . <i>turn to</i> |
| 3. When you want to refer to an earlier point. | To . <i>go back</i> |
| 4. When you want to repeat the main points. | To . <i>recap</i> |
| 5. When you want to give a wider perspective. | To |
| 6. When you want to do a deeper analysis. | To . <i>expand on</i> |
| 7. When you just want to give the basics. | To . <i>summarize</i> |
| 8. When you want to depart from your plan. | To . <i>digress</i> |
| 9. When you want to finish your talk. | To . <i>conclude</i> |

SS TASK 2

These nine basic signposts are all you need, but you have to remember them automatically. Listen to your cassette or your teacher. When you hear an instruction, for example, *make your next point*, write the correct phrase:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.

Survival Tactics

Giving a presentation in a foreign language is a challenge. Concentrate too hard on the facts and you make language mistakes. Concentrate too hard on your English and you get your facts wrong.

TASK 1

If you have problems during your presentation, don't panic. Pause. Sort out the problem and continue. Here are the eight most common problems people face. Match what you think with what you say:

WHAT YOU THINK

WHAT YOU SAY

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| 1. I've got my facts wrong! | → | a. So, let's just recap on that. |
| 2. Too fast! Go back. | → | b. So, basically, what I'm saying is this . . . |
| 3. I've forgotten to say something! | → | c. Sorry, what I meant is this . . . |
| 4. Too complicated! Make it simple. | → | d. Sorry, I should just mention one thing. |
| 5. I'm talking nonsense. | → | e. So, just to give you the main points here . . . |
| 6. How do you say this in English? | → | f. Sorry, let me rephrase that. |
| 7. Wrong! Try again. | → | g. Sorry, what's the word / expression? |
| 8. I'm running out of time! | → | h. Sorry, perhaps I didn't make that quite clear. |

Notice how some of the words are stressed in each phrase. Repeat the phrases until you feel comfortable saying them.

cass TASK 2

Knowing how to get out of difficulty in a presentation is essential. If you learn these expressions by heart, you will be able to do it automatically and, therefore, confidently. Listen to the following problems and use the correct survival phrase.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|
| 1. Facts wrong! | > | Sorry, what meant this. |
| 2. Too fast! | > | So, let's recap that. |
| 3. Forgotten something! | > | Sorry, should mention thing. |
| 4. Too complicated! | > | So, basically, saying this. |
| 5. Talking nonsense! | > | Sorry, perhaps didn't make clear. |
| 6. Don't know the English! | > | Sorry, word looking for? |
| 7. Sounds wrong! | > | Sorry, let rephrase |
| 8. No time! | > | So, just give main here. |

Repeat this activity several times until you can do it automatically.

CASS TASK 3

Once you know the nine basic signposts, you can build them into the points you make to give direction and coherence to your presentation.

Complete the following signpost phrases and sentences using the notes to help you. Say them first. Then write them down. The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. Moving on / question / the US market,
Moving on to the question of the US market,
2. Expand / the figures / last year,
To expand on the figures for last year.
3. I'd like / recap / the main points.
.....
4. Let's go back / question / clinical research methods.
.....
5. Digress / a moment, let's consider / alternatives.
To digress for a moment, let's consider some the alternatives
6. Going back / a moment / the situation last year,
Goin back for ... to the sit
7. Let's turn now / our targets / the next five years.
to for
8. I'd like / turn now / our projections / year 2005.
to to for the
9. Go back / the main reason / our collaboration / the Germans,
To go back to the ... reason for our coll. with the
10. I'd like / expand / that / little, before we move on.
I'd like to on a
11. Let's go back / a moment / what we were discussing earlier.
for to
12. Let me expand / some / the main points / our proposal.
on of of
13. Elaborate / that / little / those of you / aren't familiar / Russian business practices,
To on a for who with
14. If I could just move on / some / the problems we face / Central / Latin America,
to of in and
15. I'd like / conclude / I may / repeating what I said / the beginning / this presentation.
to, if I may by at of

Present the signpost sentences above until you feel comfortable saying them.

Neat, short signposts are more effective than long explanations of the structure of your presentation. Remember, the simplest way to signpost the end of one stage of your presentation and the beginning of the next is to say:
OK. So, ...