

Preface

If you

- have ideas and information to communicate;
- want to do so effectively;
- find the process stressful;
- have little time in which to prepare

then this booklet is for you.

The booklet is designed as a bag of tools to help you to tune up your presentation of complex information and ideas. To help in the run-up to a speaking assignment it offers

- headline points for rapid reference;
- brief commentary;
- review points and a check list for practice.

To use the book, read it straight through to get the line of argument. Then flip through the boxed-in headline points and the checklists when preparing your next presentation.

A major part of this booklet (Chapter 3) is devoted to an analysis of strategies which (in my observation of technical presentations over some 25 years) can make speaking technically lively and memorable.

As a teacher, and provider of courses for university teachers and for scientists and engineers from industry and the civil service, I could see the need for a short, sharp, even provocatively directive booklet dealing, as this one does, with matters of immediate concern to professional people in a manner which, while not doing violence to the research literature, is not clogged up with references to it.

The booklet deals briefly, even dogmatically, with matters on which I draw upon my own observation of people speaking technically in after-dinner speeches; conference presentations; coping with visitors; inaugural lectures; industrial presentations; industrial tourism; lectures to students; presentations to funding bodies; project reports; public inquiries; school talks; section and departmental meetings; telephone calls and consultations.

The list of points in Appendix A is designed as a “flight check” to be used from the moment you receive an invitation to give a technical presentation. The notes in Appendix B, and the check list in Appendix C, are designed for use in Speaking Technically workshops which are indispensable if the thoughts about speaking technically offered here are to be translated into personal skills. I will be delighted to supply further information about workshops on request:

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