Tips for Team Presentations

Team presentations are common in business. Your manager may ask you and your team to present your work to an executive team. You may be part of a multi-functional team pitching a proposal to a client. Presenting as team can be less stressful because your team can back you up if your audience asks a question you cannot answer or becomes difficult to manage. However, team presentations often need more preparation and additional delivery strategies. Here are some best practices to make your team presentation a success.

PREPARATION

- Use the Communication Development Process to jointly analyze the target audience and to specifically define the purpose/desired outcome of the presentation.
- Agree on the key messages and structure needed to support the purpose.
- Agree on a strategy for presenting the major elements of the presentation: the intro, the body and the conclusion. Within the body, who will present each of the key points? Agree on how much time you will spend on each section.
- Avoid switching presenters too frequently. It makes the presentation sound less cohesive.
- Learn the entire presentation, even if you are assigned to present a specific section. You want to be prepared if a team member gets sick at the last minute.
- Rehearse the delivery. Pay attention to details like:
  - What you will say to hand off to each other?
  - Who will advance the slides?
- Plan your strategy for managing the Q&A. Some options:
  - One person directs the questions to the appropriate team member.
  - Team members respond to questions related to their assigned topic areas.
  - Assign an order for answering questions – rotate according to that order
- If you are presenting online and using the chat for audience questions, assign one team member to monitor the chat for your team.

DELIVERY

- BRIEFLY introduce the team. It usually works best for one member to introduce everyone rather than have each member introduce themselves.
- If possible, arrive early to set things up, test out the room, and decide where everyone will sit or stand. If presenting virtually, try to test the technology.
- When you are not speaking, look engaged and supportive.
  - Consider your facial expression and body language.
  - Avoid looking at your notes as you anticipate your turn to speak.
- When presenting online, keep your microphone on while your group is speaking to avoid being muted when it is your time to speak.
- Avoid jumping in with additional points you think the speaker forgot to make. Jumping in like this should only occur if the missed point is critical to understanding the message.
- During the Q&A, if someone cannot answer a question, do help answer it.
  - If possible, get "permission" via eye contact to jump in. It could be your teammate is just pausing to think about their answer before responding.
  - Avoid interrupting or talking over other speakers.

PRESENTING WITH SLIDES

Agree on a common look and feel for the slides.
- Unifed color scheme, fonts, layout, etc.

Assign slide creation.
- Typically, whoever presents should create the slide. It is easier to present your own work.

Combine the slides and walk through the deck as a team, focusing on cohesion:
- Does the presentation concisely accomplish the purpose?
- Does the message flow fluently and logically?
- Did you address all key points at the same level of detail? If not, is there a good reason for covering them differently?
- Do the slides have a common look and feel?