

Keys to Giving a Good “Charla”

You have all done presentations many times before in a university or a high school setting. The presentations have been delivered to your peers, classmates and professors and have touched on various topics. Giving a presentation to a rural Guatemalan audience is in many ways similar to your high school and university presentations. Most of the same rules you know still apply. However, there are a few nuances and subtle as well as not so subtle changes that you will need to make in order to give a successful presentation in Guatemala. The following is a guide to how to give an effective presentation to a rural Guatemalan audience.

Before the presentation:

1. Preparation

- a. First and foremost, you are a professional and you are representing SolCom. It is important to dress and act appropriately during the presentation.
- b. Know your audience. You will receive a description of each organization or business as well as of their staff and the current knowledge they may have on the topic. Use this information to put together an effective presentation.
- c. Know the material. You will receive a guide to the topic of the presentation and all the information needed. You will also have access to the internet and SolCom staff will be around to answer any questions.
- d. Chances are, there will be no computer, projector or maybe even electricity to have a PowerPoint or media based presentation. But, remember, your slideshow is not the presentation, you are the presentation.
- e. It is important to have visuals. Posters, pictures, dramatizations and physical examples are great visuals that require no technology and only creativity on your part. Visuals will also help you to capture the attention of the audience and will help

you to better explain the topic when used appropriately.

- f. The presentation also has aspects of a training. Thus, if fitting, make up worksheets or activities that may better help to explain the topic.
- g. Write up a one-page outline (in Spanish) highlighting the important messages and themes to hand out to the audience once the presentation has been completed. The outline will be a great reference for the audience to look back on in the future.
- h. Practice, Practice, Practice. This is a presentation in a foreign language. To ensure a fluid delivery you need to feel comfortable with the words that you are saying. The clearer the presentation, the more impact it will have on your audience. If you have any Spanish questions, SolCom staff will be on hand to help out.

During the presentation:

2. The Introduction

- a. Who and the Why. Explain to the audience who you are and why you are there with them. Let the audience know the general theme of your presentation and what you hope to accomplish.
- b. Introductions. Go around the room and have everyone tell you their names and where they are from or what they do at the organization or business. Don't forget to include yourself in the introductions.
- c. Icebreaker. Icebreakers are very important to have for a rural Guatemalan audience. It will help put the audience at ease and will build trust or “confianza.” Confianza is the key to have a successful and interactive discussion. Without it, your audience will be too timid to answer questions or participate during the presentation. Do not be afraid to make slight fool of yourself in order to break down social barriers, but also remember to stay professional. See the List of Icebreakers to help you choose a suitable one for the organization or business.

3. The Presentation

- a. Introduce the topic and the key message or theme.
- b. Briefly review the content of your presentation. The presentation should be simple. A complicated presentation will be lost and boring however a simple and to the point presentation will be more easily retained by the audience.
- c. Present the information. Remember, it is important to be consistent and supportive of the topic. Avoid tangents and stay on target. Also, try to keep the audience's attention by being interactive and energetic. If your presentation is interactive you will also continue to build confianza with the audience.
- d. Hand out and work on the worksheets or start the planned activity or dramatization.
- e. Sum-up. Reiterate the key points and message of the presentation.

4. Questions

- a. Leave time for any questions the audience may have. Questions will also help you to gage how well the presentation went and how much your audience understood. After saying that, however, keep in mind that if there are no questions it may be due to the issue of confianza and timidity and not necessarily a reflection of the presentation itself.
- b. Pass out the prepared outline

5. Helpful Tips: the Do's and Don't

- a. Do make eye contact with as many people as possible to help make the presentation comfortable and keep the audience listening
- b. Don't just read from a script. You will bore your audience and lose the message
- c. Do keep the message simple (KISS).
- d. Don't be too wordy or offer too much information or the message will get lost.
- e. Do give logical flow to the presentation. The presentation should have a beginning, middle, end and most importantly a point.

- f. Don't mumble or speak too quickly rushing through the presentation.
- g. Do make sure you have all the necessary material before the presentation begins.
- h. Don't be unprepared.
- i. Do make sure that you really do know the topic of the presentation
- i. Don't make the presentation more show then content. Although, it is important to keep the audience's attention it is crucial that it has a clear and useful point appropriate to the audience.
- j. Do practice to ensure that the presentation will go smoothly, that the timing is correct. Practicing will help you feel less nervous about your Spanish and about public speaking in general.
- k. Do dress and act professionally
- l. Don't freak out if something does not go according to plan.
- m. Do go with the flow and keep the presentation going.

References

- a. Darlington, R (2009) How To Make a Good Presentation. <http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Presentation.html>
- b. Bourne PE (2007) Ten Simple Rules for Making Good Oral Presentations. PLoS Comput Biol 3(4): e77. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi.003007
- c. Russell, W (2009) 10 Bad Presentation Techniques and Their Remedies. http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/firststeps/p/lose_audience.htm