

4.2: Presentation-Participation Assignment

The presentation-participation assignment is a role-playing assignment where every participant benefits through practice. Generally, a group of presenters assumes the role of consultants, while the audience assume the role of firm executives, other consultants, or both.

Before the presentation, the presenting group should agree on the positions to take and on each member's part in the group presentation. Every member should have a substantive part that involves a position and an argument for or against the position. No one should be assigned solely to introduce or to conclude the presentation. Every member should speak only once.

Presenters should dress in a way that does not detract from the presentation. To assure that the audience knows each presenter's name and can therefore address each one by name in the discussion that follows, the group should either plan for each speaker to be introduced by the immediately preceding speaker, or for each to begin with a self-introduction. To aid memory, the introduction should highlight a distinctive attribute of the speaker.

Speakers should be respectful of the audience. The speaker should refer to the firm by name, not as we or you. The former is wrong because the presenting group does not speak for the firm. The latter is condescending even when the presentation is to executives of the firm in a live case.

Be mindful of the context. Unlike a sales presentation, whereby the sales team makes a pitch to the firm that if successful will result in a sale, the consultant's presentation is delivery of a product that the client has already purchased. While the executives may be interested in arguments supporting the consultant's recommendation, they also will be interested in the limitations of the recommendation, for much of the value that executives gain from consultant's work comes from understanding limitations.

During the presentation, members of the audience should note points of interest that should be clarified. When the floor is open for discussion, members of the audience should bring up the points of interest, taking care not to repeat points already stated. Each member should look for an opportunity to make one contribution to the discussion, and generally not more than three contributions, depending on the number of participants and the time allotted for the discussion.

The quality of the contribution is important. One contribution is better than none, for one attempt shows that one tries. But more than one is not necessarily better than one, because the later attempts may show that one does not listen.

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