

Effective Openings

Communications experts are all agreed that the first three minutes of a presentation are the most important. They talk about 'hooks' — simple techniques for getting the immediate attention of the audience. A good start makes you feel more confident. Here's how the experts suggest you 'hook' your audience:

1. Give them a problem to think about.
2. Give them some amazing facts.
3. Give them a story or personal anecdote.

task

Look at the presentation openings below and divide them under three headings:

PROBLEMS	AMAZING FACTS	STORIES
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What do you think each presentation was about?

1. Did you know that Japanese companies spend four times more on entertaining clients in a year than the entire GDP of Bulgaria? 40 billion dollars, to be precise. You know, that's twice Colombia's total foreign debt. You could buy General Motors for the same money.
2. Suppose your advertising budget was cut by 99% tomorrow. How would you go about promoting your product?
3. According to the latest study, by 2050 only one in every four people in Western Europe will be going to work. And two will be old age pensioners.
4. You know, R&D is 90% luck. When I think about creativity, I'm reminded of the man who invented the microwave oven. He spent years messing around with radar transmitters, then noticed the chocolate in his pocket was starting to melt!
5. Statistics show that in the last ten years more people have legally emigrated to the United States than to the rest of the world put together — about half a million of them a year, in fact. Now, over ten years, that's roughly equivalent to the population of Greece.
6. Have you ever wondered why it is that Americans are easier to sell to than Europeans? And why nine out of ten sales gurus are American? You have? Well, if I could show you what stops Europeans buying, would you be interested?

7. I read somewhere the other day that the world's highest paid executive works for Disney and gets \$230 million a year. Now that's about \$2000 a minute! That means he's currently making more money than Volkswagen.

8. How many people here this morning hate going to meetings? Just about everybody, right? Well, imagine a company where there were never any meetings and everything ran smoothly. Do you think that's possible?

9. Have you ever been in the situation where you've had to negotiate with the Japanese? I remember when I was working in Nagoya and everybody had told me the Japanese don't like saying no. So in meetings I just kept saying yeah to everything. And they hated it. It turned out yeah sounds like no in Japanese!

PRESENTATION

Use the frames below to help you prepare effective openings, using the problem, amazing facts, or story technique. Whatever technique you choose, prepare your opening carefully. You should always know exactly how you are going to start.

PROBLEM TECHNIQUE

- Suppose
How would you ?
- Have you ever wondered why it is that ? You have?
Well, if I could show you
..... would you be interested?
- How many people here this morning / afternoon / evening ?
Well, imagine
..... Do you think that's possible?

AMAZING FACTS TECHNIQUE

- Did you know that ?
- According to the latest study,
- Statistics show that
- I read somewhere the other day that

STORY / ANECDOTE TECHNIQUE

- You know,
When I think about
I'm reminded of
- Have you ever been in the situation where ?
I remember when
It turned out