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## **Questions to Ask When You're Presenting**

Lately, I've been hearing from a lot of people who have been asked to present at a meeting for a different department or group. Essentially, they're told (by phone or email), "be there at 1 pm to talk for a few minutes about your project." That's not enough information.

If you're asked to present, here are the questions that you should ask the organizer to ensure that you convey a message that is useful and appropriate to that audience:

- Who is in the audience? What is the purpose of the meeting? How many people, what is their background and what is their level of experience and knowledge about my topic? What have they been told about me and my topic? Who is introducing me? (send them an intro)
- How much time do I have to present? What comes before and after my presentation?
- Do I need slides, handouts or other visuals? Who is responsible for creating them? (I've seen presenters try to deliver a slide deck that they've been handed five minutes before – trust me, that doesn't work).
- Where am I presenting? What is the space like? How big is it, am I standing, sitting or behind a podium? Am I expected to use a microphone?
- What is my goal? What do you want to happen as a result of my presentation? Do you want me to
  - Inform the audience so they know
  - Educate so they can do
  - Convince so they believe
  - Entertain so they can enjoy
  - Inspire so they will act
- Why did you ask me? Sometimes the truth is that no one else would do it, but often, it's because you have a specific background or particular knowledge. For example, a program for a global company might start with a presentation by a senior leader who had experience working in the U.S., Asia and Europe.

The answers will help you convey a useful and effective message – which is a goal that you and the meeting organizer share.