

Planning a Presentation for Newcomers

ADULT LEARNERS

- Prefer information that is relevant, useful and practical vs. theory or a lecture.
- Will remember more if they are involved in their learning as opposed to just passive listening.
- Types of learners: audio(need to hear it), visual(need to see it) and kinesthetic (need to do it) – best if you incorporate all three.
- Differ from children in that they have a whole lifetime and experiences that they incorporate and draw upon in their learning that children haven't acquired yet.
- Resources created for children are never appropriate for adult learners.

PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

You may have a standard presentation/PowerPoint you give about your service or organization. Please consider the following when preparing to speak to newcomers.

If you are presenting with an interpreter, it will take twice as much time than if you are speaking to learners whose first language is English.

Understand that newcomers won't have the same cultural context that those of us who grew up in North America do. So, some things may require a deeper explanation, especially things that involve laws or systems that we take for granted and assume everyone knows. Newcomers may not.

The "just ask me anything approach" doesn't often work well with this population as they often don't know what they don't know. Please prepare at least a short presentation in order to give some context prior to opening it up to questions or discussions. You don't have to use PowerPoint, but even a one-page, easy-to-read page with the main points and possible resources would be fine too.

Upon arrival to Canada, newcomers receive a lot of information within a relatively short period of time, and it can be overwhelming. The majority is all new, so the clearer, more specific and easy to understand the better.

The "more information the better approach" to presentations where tons of information is crammed into a short period of time, is appropriate in some situations. However, what a better approach for this population, in this circumstance is to choose 3 or 4 of the most important or critical concepts that you really want them to know and understand. Take your time to explain them thoroughly, with examples. And, if you can include an interactive component to solidify learning, even better. In this case it is better for them to have a few things covered solidly, than overwhelming them with too much information.

ADVANTAGES OF A PREPARED PRESENTATION

TIME MANAGEMENT

- Often, when people “wing” a presentation, it is easier to get off track, and unintentionally get into side conversations you weren’t intending to cover and the main points can sometimes be missed.
- It is easier for the interpreter to support you, especially if they have it in advance, they can be better prepared and figure out if there are words which will need more explanation, especially if it is a topic that is unfamiliar to them.
- It is easier for you in the long run. The initial preparation will be the most work, but then you can adjust accordingly, and it will save time later on. You won’t forget important concepts.
- It is easier for newcomers to follow along with you, especially if there are appropriate pictures. If you give them the slides deck or even just an info page, they can refer back to it, when they have the need or have more time.
- Public speaking is not for everyone; having a prepared presentation will help you just in case you all of a sudden draw a blank or get nervous.
- It helps settlement workers or others who may be presenting to reduce overlap.
- If learners know they will have prepared notes or a copy of your presentation, they can just relax and listen to you, not having to take notes.

PREPARING A POWERPOINT OR NOTES

- Slides – Choose a clear “san serif” font. 14-16 – Ariel is a good one. Use black lettering (White lettering on a colourful background is pretty but very difficult to read.)
- Choose simple and clear over “pretty” or “clever.”
- Keep slides simple and easy to read – utilize “Plain Language,” which includes sentence case, (no capital letters). Add a picture if it adds to comprehension.
- If you have notes, keep them to one page – (make sure copyright laws are adhered to.)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- Tell them who you are and why you are here, (or have your host introduce you.
- An outline as to what to expect with a timeline, including breaks is helpful.
- Housekeeping: let them know your preferences ie: if you are ok with questions as you go or if you prefer for them to wait until the end. Give them permission to let them know if you are speaking to quickly or if they can’t hear you.
- If you know that you have new or challenging vocabulary, consider making a short glossary.
- If you do an interactive activity, make sure the instructions are clear.



403-320-1589



lbranner@lfsfamily.ca



www.lethbridgeimmigration.ca



1107 2A Ave North, Lethbridge

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