



**THE
EXECUTIVE AGENCY
TRAINING PROGRAM**

**HOW TO: DELIVER AN
EFFECTIVE BRIEFING**

Understand the Situation

- **Why** are you delivering a briefing?
 - What is the purpose?
 - Why are you appropriate for the briefing?
- **What** is the topic?
 - What is the central issue?
 - What are the politics of the issue?
- **Who** is your audience?
 - Did they call the briefing or did you invite them to the briefing?
 - What do they already know?
 - What do they need to know?
 - What are their attitudes toward the issue already?
 - What related issues do they care about? Are there themes, phrases or concepts that would appeal to them?
- **What** are your goals?
 - What do results do you want from the briefing? To inform the audience?
Action from the audience?
 - What are the most important points to get across?
- **How much** time do you have?
 - How much total time? Presentation time vs. Q&A time?
 - Expect to be interrupted.

Prepare the Briefing

➤ Message

- Decide on a clear, concise, distinct message

➤ Organizational Strategy

- Audience's attention will be greater at beginning and end, so...

- ***Beginning is key***

- Introduce subject
- Provide road map
- State conclusions (ex.. key points or recommendations)

- ***Middle must be engaging***

- Use catchy graphics and an interesting story

- ***Conclusion is key***

- The end is what they are most likely to remember; make it count.

➤ Organizational Models:

- ***Linear Model***

- Introduction
- Problem
- Assumptions/background
- Options
- Analysis (Pros and Cons)
- Conclusion/Recommendation

- ***Decision Memo Model***

- Introduction
- Problem
- Findings/Recommendation
- How did you come to this?
 - Options
 - Analysis (Pros & Cons)
- Next steps

Delivering the Briefing

➤ Approach it like a conversation

- Be concise – speak in short, clear sentences
- Show enthusiasm for the subject
- Read the audience
- Be ready to adjust
- Don't use a script or memorize a speech
 - Delivery will be dull
 - Becomes problematic when briefing turns into back and forth
- Know the material well enough to own it
 - Outlines and notes can still be helpful
 - But do not need to refer to written materials, particularly when summarizing, unless quoting statistics or people.
 - Always be able to go into greater detail on any points you make or anything you reference.
- Be prepared for interruptions and tangents.

➤ Voice

- What not to do:
 - Speak in monotone
 - Sing-song
 - Speak too fast
 - Speak too softly (except occasionally to grab attention)
- Use pauses (oral white space).

Delivering the Briefing

➤ **Body language**

- Make eye contact
 - Helps keep your audience's attention
 - Gives you feedback as to how they're responding to your briefing
- Be relaxed, but not overly casual
- Use gestures if that's natural for you
- Have good posture

➤ **Visual Aids**

- Use only if it adds to your briefing (should help, not hinder)
 - Ask: Does it fit? Does it help? Is it necessary?
- Handouts vs. displays
 - Advantage of handouts: lets audience take better notes and gives them something to take away
 - Disadvantage of handouts: will distract from your briefing
- Keep it simple
 - Use bullet points, not full sentences
 - Do not overcrowd slides
- Keep it consistent with your briefing
 - Use words/phrases you use in your briefing

➤ **Practice Beforehand**

- In front of a group, not alone in your room.
- Practice having the audience interrupt, question and critique

Questions and Answers

- **Take advantage of questions**
 - Treat questions as an opportunity, not a problem.
 - Encourage (even solicit) questions
 - Make sure you understand the question. If necessary, ask for clarification
- **Have a plan for Q&A**
 - When will you answer questions? During or after presentation?
 - Advantages of after presentation:
 - Avoids potentially disruptive questions, tangents.
 - Advantage of during presentation:
 - Turns briefing into a conversation instead of a monologue
 - Provides useful feedback from audience to briefer.
 - Issues are fresh in mind
 - Prepare answers to likely questions in advance
 - And if possible prepare visual displays for anticipated questions.
- **Don't bluff or go on the defensive**
 - It may be tempting to make assertions in which you are not fully confident.
 - If you don't know an answer, don't pretend you do. Let the questioner know that you will get back to them.
 - Remember: The briefing is for the audience, not the briefer