

Preface

Let's keep this short. Preparing for presentations typically takes too long, and the results aren't what people hoped for. This book will help you with these common problems. It shows you how to get to a great presentation in one go, without rework. You'll learn to follow a systematic approach that cuts out the guesswork.

The material has been arranged as a self-teaching course, essentially mirroring intensive presentation skills seminars we have taught for more than two decades. Take the presentation skills self-assessment (Exercise 1-2), which will tell you what parts of the course need your special attention. Then work through the rest of the course, making sure to complete those exercises that fall within your personal improvement areas.

The "Short Road" we're showing you here is the *direct* route, with no unnecessary detours. It ignores all the fussy nonessentials that worry so many presenters and focuses on the real musts:

- A single-minded focus on the audience and their needs and interests
- A clear grasp of what goals you can realistically achieve in a given presentation
- A simple structure that works for you every time
- Visuals and other backup material that supports your message in persuasive and varied ways
- The attitudes and techniques that will keep you connected to the audience all through your talk
- Helpful technology that you should learn to use efficiently

Taking that Short Road is not at all difficult, but it requires a bit of *self-discipline*. In particular, you must avoid the temptation of taking *shortcuts* (such as today's favorite, filling in some Wizard outline template before even thinking about the audience). Those shortcuts usually are anything but short; on the contrary, they cost you lots of time and extra effort. Why? Because you'll end up redoing everything from scratch.

So, get ready to do some good, clear, original thinking within a surefire, systematic framework. The results, we are sure, will please you.

One last point: We always like to hear from people who are interested in improving their communication skills. There are two easy ways to get in touch with us. One, you can reach us by e-mail; the address is **perccom@aol.com**. Two, we invite you to visit our web site at **www.allaboutcommunication.com**, where you will find useful information not only about presenting but all aspects of communication.

Best luck in your efforts, and we hope to hear from you!

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