

LOBBY ELEMENT: SUBMISSION PRESENTATION

Know your message

Work out your key message, making it as unique and memorable as possible.

Get it over briefly and clearly

- Plan to speak for no more than 5 minutes – and time yourself when practising. Keep 5 minutes extra in reserve (in case they have longer available); have a 3-minute version ready (in case they are under time pressure).
- Do not assume that the members of the panel have read your submission.
- Do not read your submission word for word. But do plan the flow of your presentation on the direction taken by the submission. Use ordinary language –and the occasional strong phrase to stress a point. Speak clearly. Avoid being too technical.
- Remember that you are probably not speaking to experts.

Give it colour and life

- Use anecdote, especially personal experiences, to get panel members on your side. Telling a story about an issue, and/or talking about yourself, is a good way of getting a message over.
- If possible, and if it doesn't confuse your message, have someone with you who can give the message more depth and character.

Stay calm

If the panel cuts back on your time, do not show your annoyance. Accept that they are a pressured body. Do not spark in response to panel members whose only intention is to upset you. Keep returning to your basic message.

Plan for the worst

Anticipate the most difficult questions which opponents of your message might ask you – and plan superb answers to them. If possible, deal with those issues in your presentation.

Don't say what you can't justify

Avoid making open-ended comments and exaggerations which you can't prove. That plays into your enemies' hand.

Don't demonise the members of the panel

The panel members will have a variety of views on the issue which you are submitting about. Do not assume that they are all against you, and don't attack those who you know are opposed. Don't ask rhetorical or direct questions of individual Committee members.

Give them a bit more

If you have something new and urgent to say, or more in-depth information on a matter raised in your submission, produce a supplementary submission. It could be in your own words; some statistics; an item from the media or a researcher. The panel staff will take the paper for recording and distribution.

Say it with more than words

If there is a non-oral way of getting your point over (for example, a role play; a photograph; using slides or a OHP, or whatever), and it fits in OK with your topic, use it. Make the experience of your submission a memorable one for the panel.

Wrap it up

If you want changes to what a bill says, or want an inquiry to make certain recommendations, make it clear and even provide wording.