



154 Consulting

PRESENTATION DIAGNOSTICS

No one is helped by diagnostic tools that funnel you to one “right” answer and serve only to suggest that you need to purchase expensive consulting services.

Instead, we offer these questions as a way to help you assess whether your presentations, the presentations you hear from your direct reports, and your offsite meetings/retreats are serving you well.

If you don't like your answers to these questions, 154 Consulting would be happy to help you make some changes. Email us at info@154Consulting.com for more information.

Assessing Your Own Presentations

The single most important measure of the quality of your presentations is whether or not the positions your presentations advocate are taken by the audience. Did the Board do as you suggested? Did the client sign the contract? It's nice when members of the audience say things like “hey, you gave a great presentation,” but if they are not inspired to act by it, how good was it?

Are ideas that you perceive as less sound but better presented being implemented instead of yours?

Are the members of your audience (be they your managers or direct reports) clearly bored or inattentive? Do they find reasons to miss meetings at which you will be presenting?

Has anyone asked (or told) you to improve your presentations?

Assessing the Presentations You Hear

Do you know what decision you are being asked to make? If you assigned the presenter to speak to a particular decision, consider whether you would have understood what the presentation was about if you hadn't known ahead of time.

Are you able to make a decision given the information that was presented?

Are you confident in your decision? Did the presenter cover all of the possible options and outcomes, or give you confidence that they had considered them so that you don't need to?

If asked, could you justify your decision using just information from this presentation? Is there evidence from the presentation that you could use to explain your decision (to the CEO, shareholders, or the public) without any modification?

Did the presentation focus on helping you with a decision, or was its purpose simply to raise the stock (or cover the flank) of the presenter?

Was the presentation a good use of your time? Could you have reached the same decision, with the same level of confidence, in less time on your own?

Assessing Meetings, Offsites, and Strategy Retreats

Do you know the true cost of your meeting? Have you calculated the direct cost (facility rental, food, lodging), the resource cost (wage per hour of all attendees for the length of the session), and opportunity cost of putting the group you're assembling in a room together?

Do you have a clear plan for re-capturing that cost?

Do you know the main point you want the attendees to take away from the meeting, or the main question you want them to grapple with? When someone asks an attendee what happened at the strategy retreat this year, what do you want their reply to be? If your answer to this question is, "I just want to get everyone on the same page," cancel your meeting. Reschedule it once you can explain how the attendees are misunderstanding each other now, and what specific agreement or understanding you want them to reach by the end of the meeting.

Do the team members presenting at the offsite have a clear understanding of your goal for their presentation?

Is presenting at the annual strategy retreat seen as a professional opportunity or an obligation?

Are the best conversations at your offsites about your business or about golf?