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Chapter III

Presentation

Presentation is a common activity for a project or team manager, since often the need arises to present the ideas, the work performed, or the work that your team has to perform, or you have to justify the work that has not been performed.

In this chapter, I will address such presentations, while presentation made for training purposes will be discussed in detail in the chapter on training (Chapter IV).

A presentation is a three-step process. In the first phase, the material presentation is produced (online presentation, slide presentation, paper presentation). Each presentation type is different and will be analyzed, since it is important to know how to prepare a presentation for each different format.

The second phase is the preparation of the speech for the presentation. Again, a different way to present the speech is needed to deal with different people attending the presentation (i.e., top management, customer, your team, etc.).

The third phase is the real speech by which you have to transfer to the audience the knowledge or messages in the presentation.

In all the phases, and especially in the third, the value of communication must be present in order to have a chance of success, as reported in the values section.

Values

Communication

Communication is the basic value around which a presentation moves. Unfortunately, communication for presenting is a skill that can be improved but not created, and therefore, if you have communication capabilities, you can use some tricks to establish a feeling with the audience, to focus the attention of the audience, and so forth, but if you have no communication skills at all, no one can teach you how to communicate.

This section is suitable for all people that want some suggestions on how to improve their communication skills, but it may not have any results for people who have no communication capabilities at all.

How many times does an interesting presentation topic become a boring event only because of the speaker? In my career, several times I have heard boring presentations, and each time, I tried to notice the errors that made the presentation — a couple years of good work — fail.

Phase 1: Prepare the Presentation

First, you have to focus your attention on the type and media of the presentation, since each media requires a different schema, different length, and different type of messages to be transmitted.

Online Presentations

Online presentations usually are made for the Web and for the stands at fairs. This presentation type must be aggressive in order to capture the attention of the reader; it must be short in order not to compel people to stay in front of the presentation monitor or Web browser for long periods of time, and it must transmit simple messages that stimulate the audience's curiosity, encouraging the reader to click on (in the case of Web) or to ask for more information (in the case of a stand at a fair).

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