



# **AIA Best Practices: Client's-eye view of marketing presentations**

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Contributed by Frank Stasiowski

## **Summary**

Effective marketing presentations are thoughtfully prepared and delivered from the client's point of view. Time, effort, and practice determine the outcome of a presentation.

Clients uniformly respond well to clarity in both language and visuals, customization to the needs of the specific project, staying within time limits, and a sense of the personalities in the firm who will work on the project.

They dislike disorganization; lack of focus on the clients' specific needs; unclear, irrelevant, or excessive visual aids; and presenters who will not be in charge of the project or who act like prima donnas.

## **Prepare, prepare, prepare**

Clients want to work with people they know and trust. A good proposal demonstrates to a client that you are qualified to do the work. A successful presentation helps the client get to know and trust you and your team.

A thoughtful, professional, and polished presentation takes time, effort, and practice. The outcome of your presentation is determined before you walk into the room—by how well you have prepared.

Clients are remarkably consistent in what they wish to hear and how they react to presentations. While the elements of a good (or bad) presentation are relatively obvious, they are too often ignored or overlooked.

## **What clients like**

- Customized presentations that focus on the specific needs of the specific project, not on the presenter's portfolio of past projects
- Clear, straightforward layman's language
- Visuals that are clear, understandable, and that support and reinforce the oral presentation
- A sense of the personalities of the people who will be working on the project
- Presentations that conclude on time, within the specified time limit

## What clients do not like

- Prima donna presenters who seek to impress or be the center of attention
- Generic unfocused presentations not clearly related to the clients' specific needs
- Unclear or unrelated visual aids
- Too many visual aids
- A review of qualifications or other information already furnished in the proposal
- A presentation made by someone other than the person who will be in charge of the project
- Presentations that are evidently disorganized or carelessly prepared

## About the contributor

Frank Stasiowski, FAIA, is founder and president of PSMJ Resources. He is a consultant to the building and design industry, and the author of numerous books and publications about management.

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This article corresponds to:

*Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice, 15th edition* Unit 1 - The Profession  
Chapter 06 – Marketing and Business Development  
Section 01 – Marketing Architectural Services