

PRESENTATION STRATEGIES IN ARCHITECTURE



EDWARD T. WHITE



Presentation Strategies in Architecture

Edward T. White



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Presentation Strategies in Architecture

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Reformatted edition published by ArchiBasics Press 2024. <https://ArchiBasics.com>

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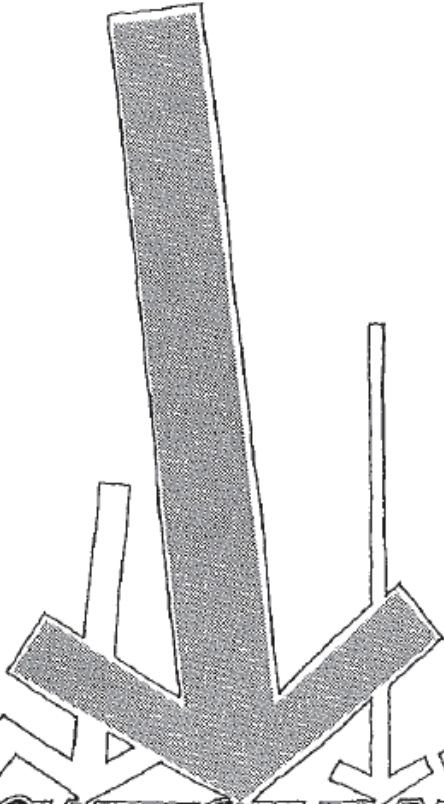
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Contents

1	Preface
11	Background
23	Definition
29	Strategy System
99	Checklist and Question Set

Preface

3



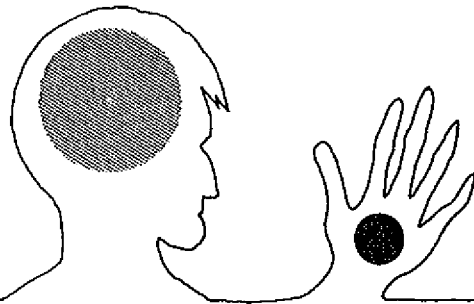
Presentation
quality

Its goal is to improve
the **QUALITY** of
presentations in
school and in the
profession.

ARCHITECTURAL PRESENTATIONS

This book is about
ARCHITECTURAL
PRESENTATIONS.

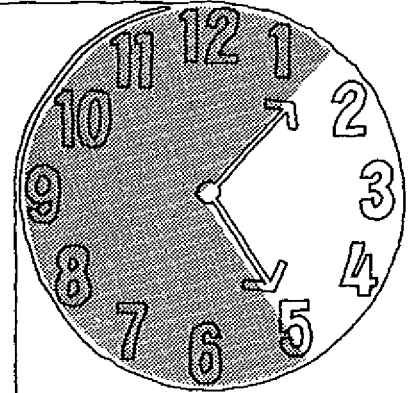
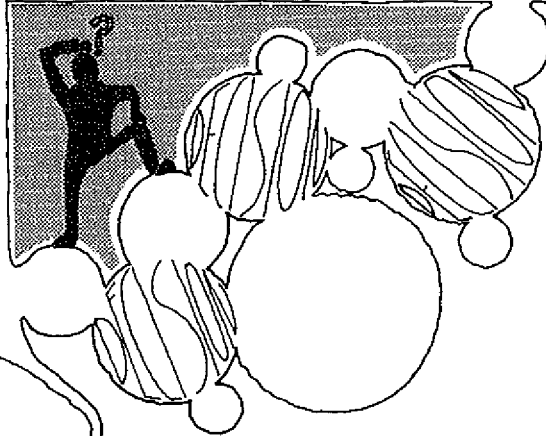
THINKING
SUCCESS
DOING



Most presentation problems
and mistakes are made with
our **HEADS** rather than
our **HANDS**.

Its thesis is that presentation
SUCCESS is more dependent
on pre-presentation **THINKING**
than on what we traditionally
think of as presentation
activity (drawing, model
making, etc.).

We all have experienced the problem of working ourselves into a presentation corner through poor planning where we then waste valuable time trying to extricate ourselves.....



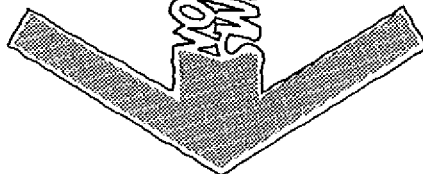
For example: Choosing a rendering technique that can't be finished in the time we have to present.....

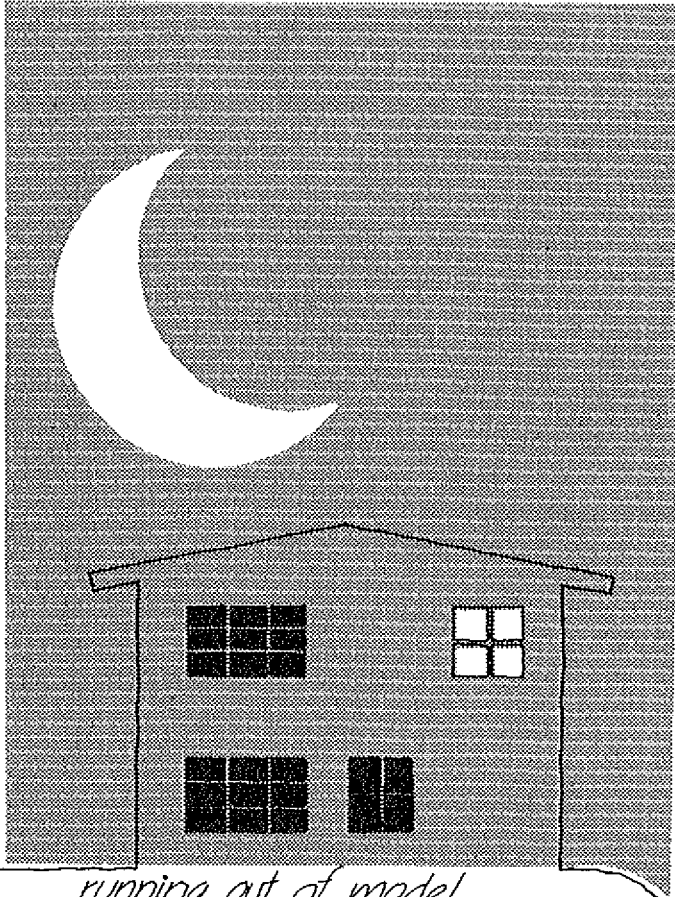
Difficulties in presentations are largely caused by poor **STRATEGY** decisions or the lack of thought altogether rather than a lack of drawing ability, poor craftsmanship in model making or awkward style in verbal delivery.

PRESENTATION PROBLEMS



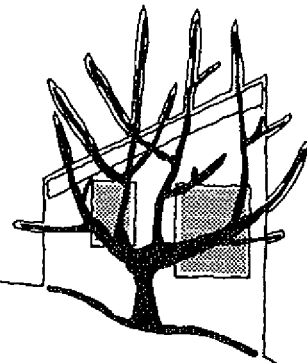
....or trying to arrange the last few drawings within a format that wasn't thoroughly thought out.....



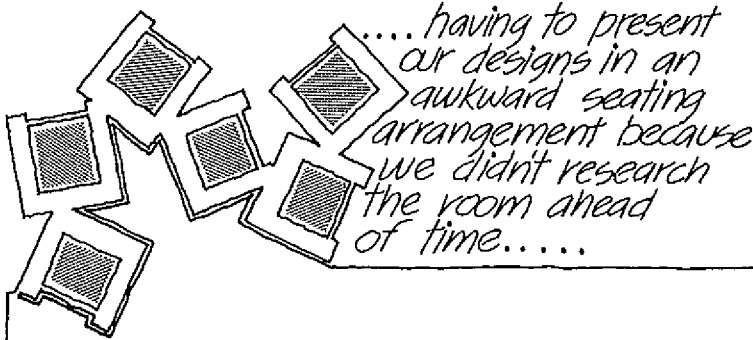


..... running out of model making materials the night before the project is due.....

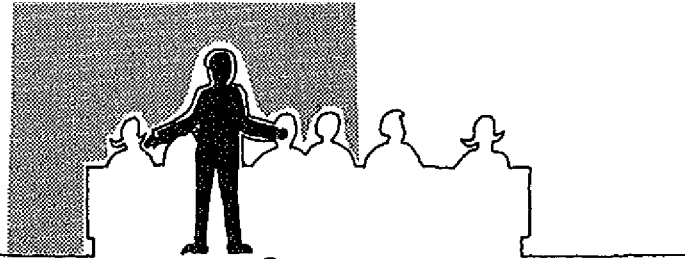
..... spending time drawing our building through the lacy texture of tree limbs because we placed the tree in the drawing without thinking.....



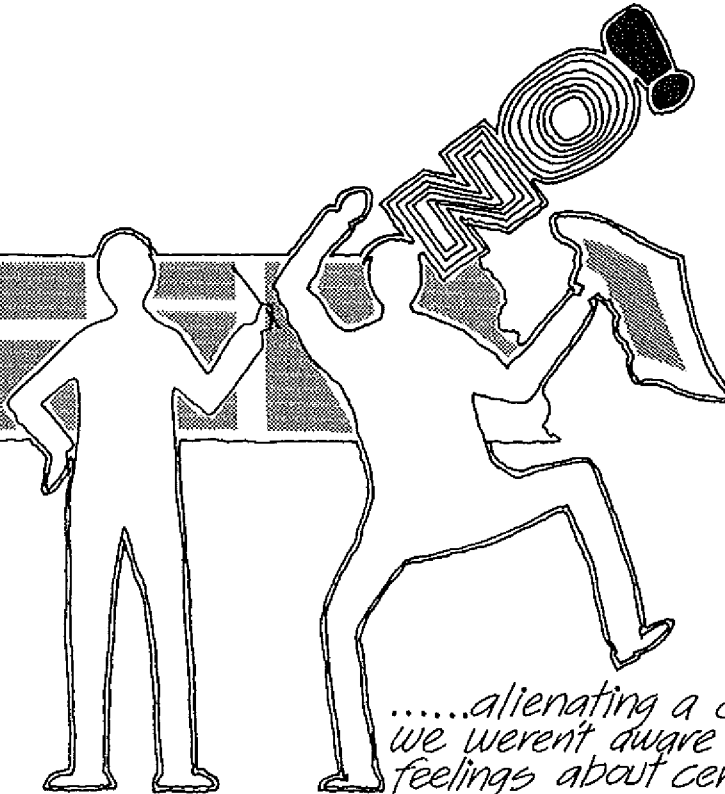
7



.... having to present
our designs in an
awkward seating
arrangement because
we didn't research
the room ahead
of time.....

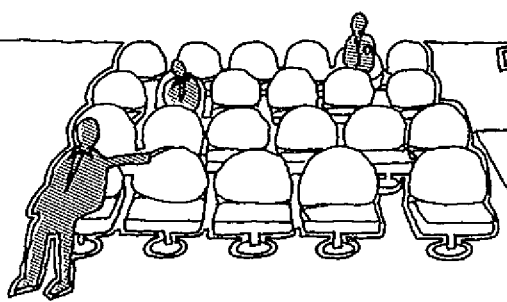


.... failing to get a
commission because
we didn't know the
key concerns of
the selection
committee.....



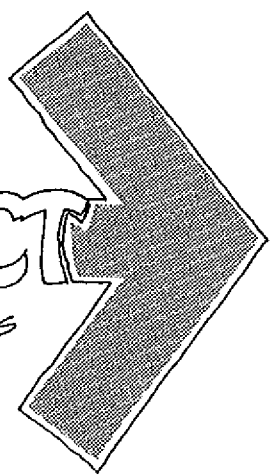
..... alienating a client because
we weren't aware of his strong
feelings about certain design issues.....

.....presenting to a sparse audience because we weren't aware of a simultaneously scheduled presentation.

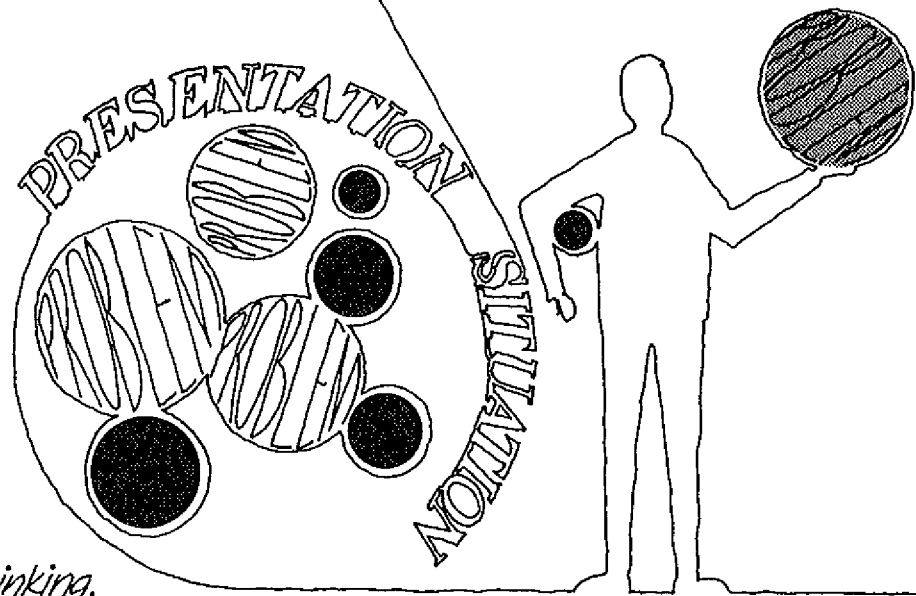


1 THINK 2 ACT

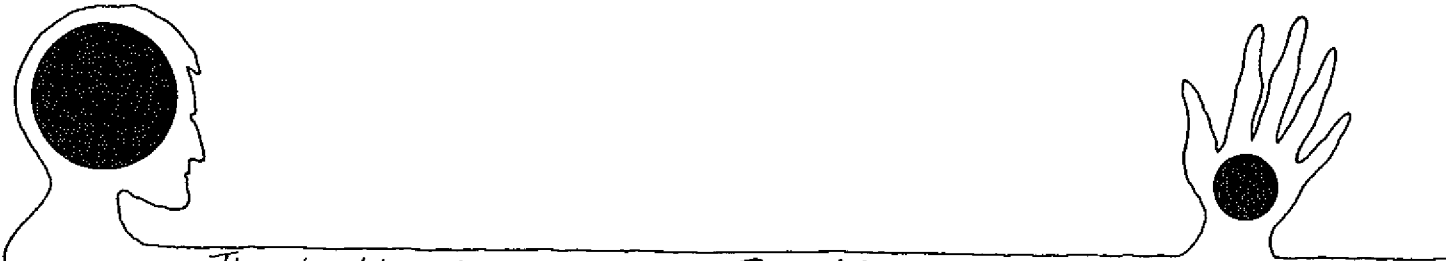
These types of experiences should prompt us to **THINK** before we **ACT**.



There are plenty of problems waiting for us in any presentation situation. We needn't create **MORE** for ourselves by faulty or inadequate thinking.



9



The traditional emphasis on **DOING** in architectural presentation too often results in a **PREMATURE** start of **PRODUCTION** (handwork) with insufficient prior **PLANNING** (headwork).

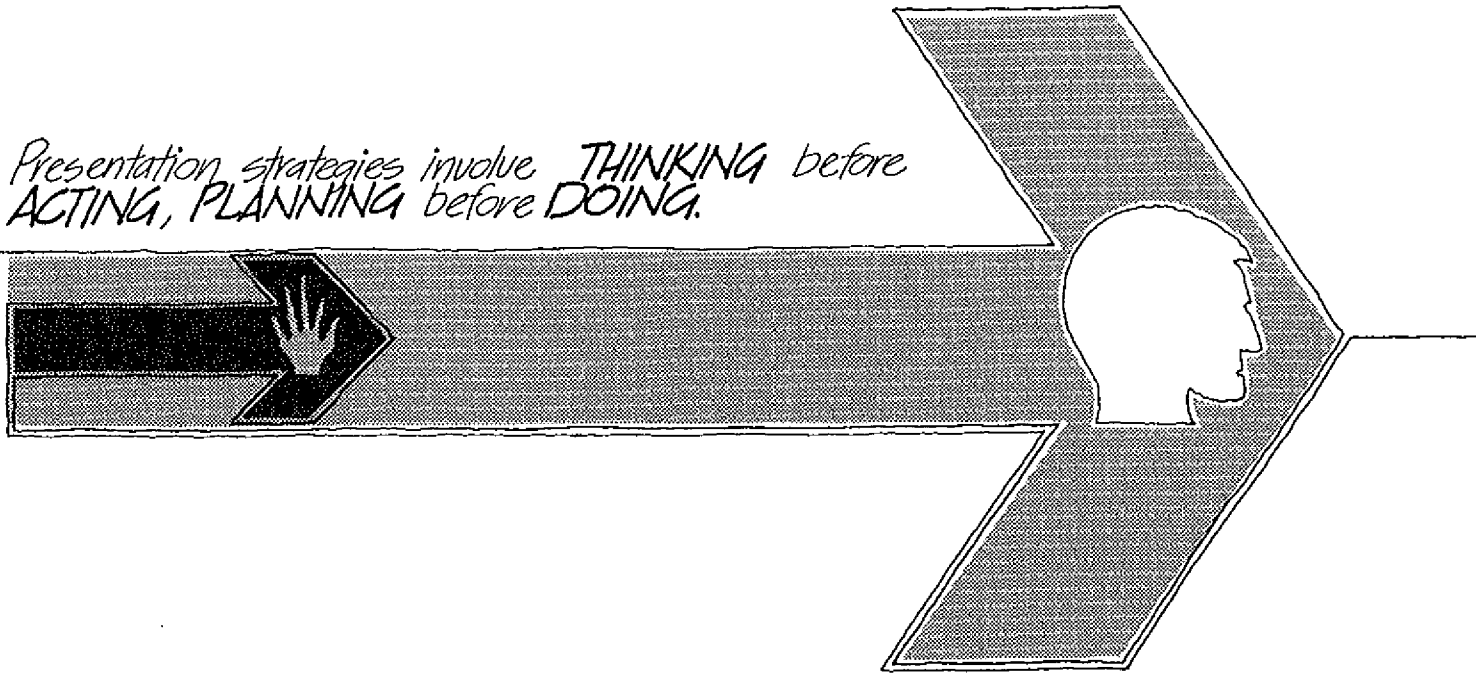
TIME
TIME

← NORMAL TIME →
← EXTRA TIME →

← TOTAL PRESENTATION TIME →

Time spent solving problems we have **CREATED** is wasted in that it needn't have been spent that way at all.

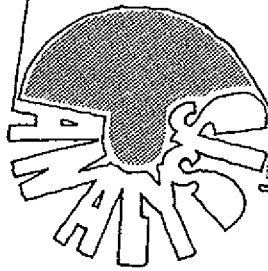
Presentation strategies involve **THINKING** before
ACTING, **PLANNING** before **DOING**.



Background

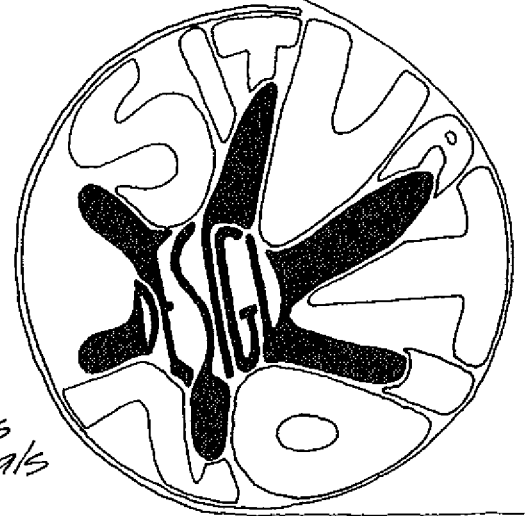
We all like **SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATIONS**. They don't just happen by chance. Really good presentations are thoroughly planned beforehand to insure their success.

Plan → **PRESENT**

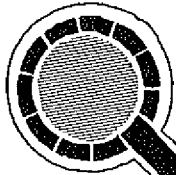


As architects, we are used to engaging in project analysis **BEFORE** embarking on design. This is second nature and usually its value is unquestioned by most designers.

→ **DESIGN**



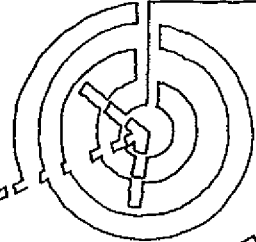
We wouldn't think of designing our buildings without knowing all the circumstances **SURROUNDING** the design situation. It is somewhat ironic then that we don't seem to place much value on pre-presentation analysis before preparing our communication materials and making our presentations.



PRESENTATION

Most of us, when faced with a presentation to make, conduct at least a **BRIEF, INTUITIVE** analysis first. This leaves a lot to **CHANCE**.

GOAL



EFFORT

We too often spend endless hours **DOING** a presentation while spending no time at all in **PLANNING** it. Many times this results in misspent effort.

present



prep

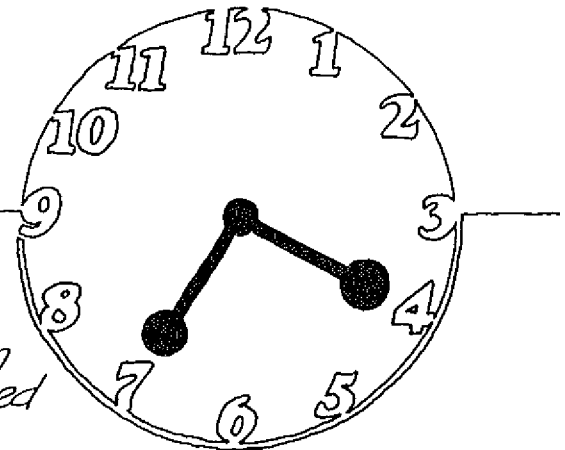
If we value design, it seems inconsistent that we don't also carefully and thoughtfully **PREPARE** for our presentations.

strategy
technique

TECHNIQUE, the "doing" should always occur within and be guided by STRATEGY, the "thinking." technique, to be most effective, must be applied only after thorough forethought.

We need to make sound INITIAL judgments to help insure that labor spent later is spent effectively and efficiently. It's discouraging to work hard toward a goal, only to discover later that our assumptions were incorrect or incomplete.

A COMPREHENSIVE presentation strategy can help us avoid the extra time and anxiety caused by unnecessary presentation dilemmas.

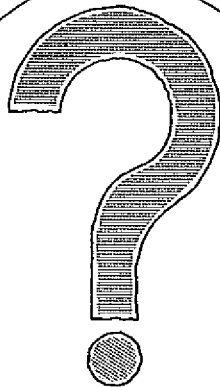


school
PS
 practice

PRESENTATION STRATEGY is a concept that can be used both in school and in practice. It is a model that should be applicable to **ANY** presentation situation.



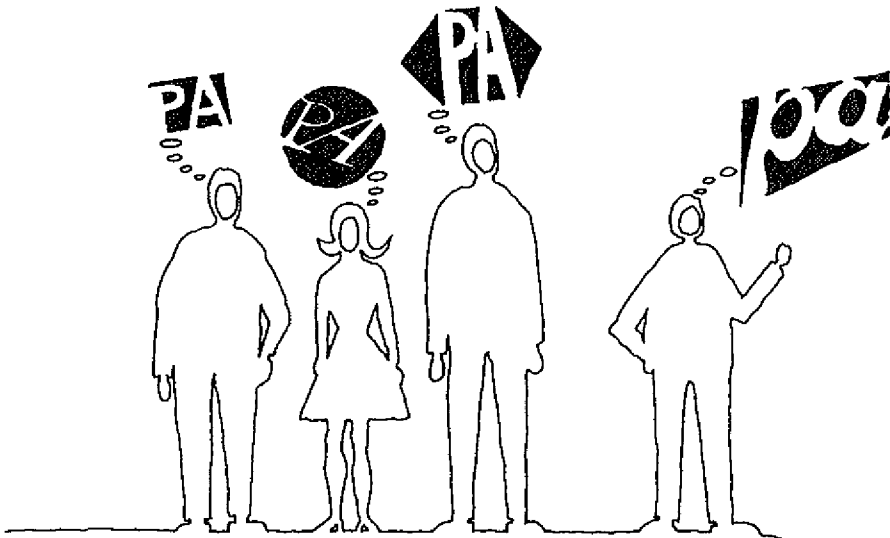
PRESENTATION STRATEGY is not a set of answers or instructions. It is, rather, a sensitizing instrument intended to prompt more pre-presentation thinking in whatever **PERSONAL** and **INDIVIDUAL** form it may take.



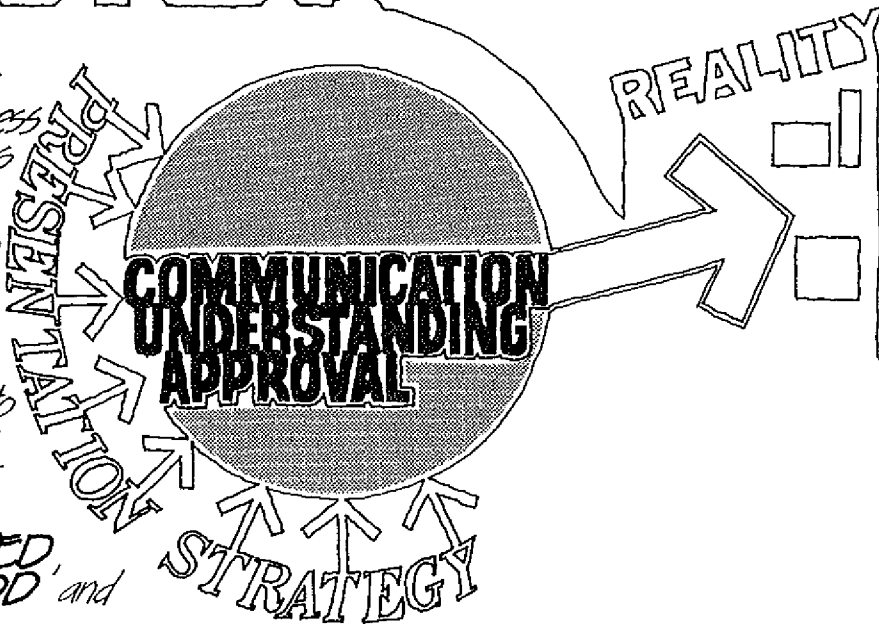
The best way to solve presentation problems is to **PLAN** to **AVOID** them.

17

There are no established notation systems or rules for doing a **PRESENTATION ANALYSIS**. We must develop our own.



If we consider the overall success of the building as a goal, then we must recognize **PRESENTATION STRATEGY** as a design determinant. For the design to become a built reality, it must first be **COMMUNICATED, UNDERSTOOD, and APPROVED.**

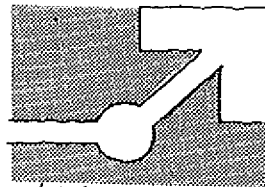


ELABORATION of STRATEGIC TASK LIST

1 Decide **WHETHER** to make the presentation or not.

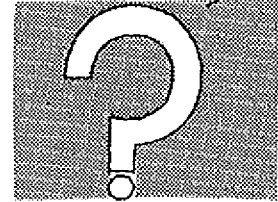
12345

Is one or more of the five "Ws" missing?

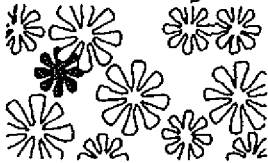


Will the presentation change anything?

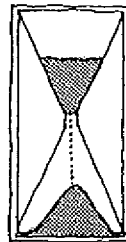
Is it necessary?



What are the consequences of not presenting?



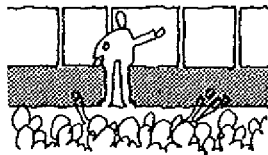
What's the most we can hope to gain by presenting?



Can we afford the time?

WHAT

Do we really have anything to present?



How important is it to perform for the audience?

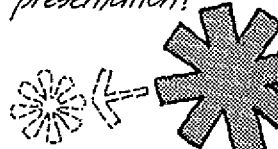


Will anyone be upset if we don't present?

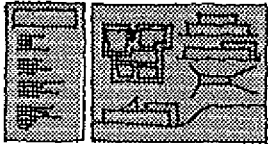
Is there any real purpose?



Would there be an advantage to postponing the presentation?



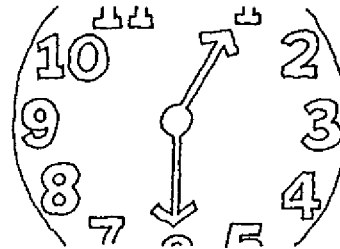
2 Establish any of the five "w's" that have **NOT** been determined.



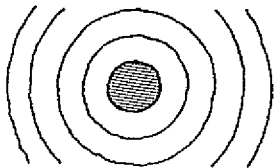
Do we know what the presentation content will be?



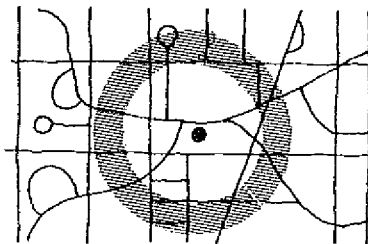
Has our audience been established?



When will we make the presentation and how long do we have?

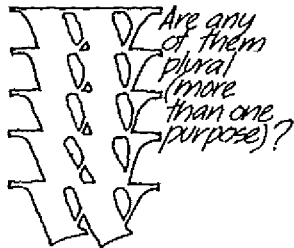
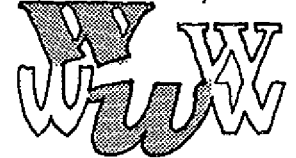


Do we know why we are making the presentation?

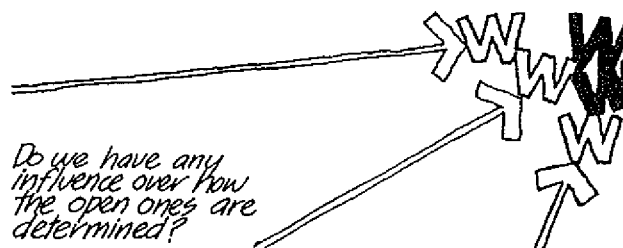


Where is the presentation to be given?

Which of these have been determined and which are still open?

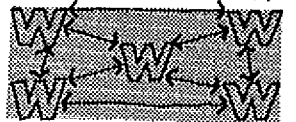


Are any of them plural (more than one purpose)?

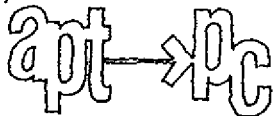


Do we have any influence over how the open ones are determined?

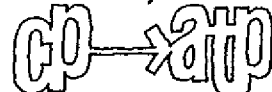
What is there about the known 'w's' that may influence the determination of the unknown ones?



What are the important factors about audience, place and time that might influence purpose and content?



What are the factors about our content and purpose that could help decide about audience, time and place?



What are the critical issues about audience and purpose that influence content, time and place?

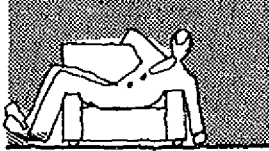


If we have no control over establishment of the five 'w's', can we expedite their determination?

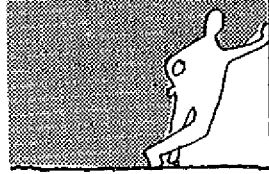


3 Determine the **IMPORTANCE** of the presentation and how **DETAILED** the presentation analysis should be.

Can we simply show up and chat or should we carefully prepare for the presentation?



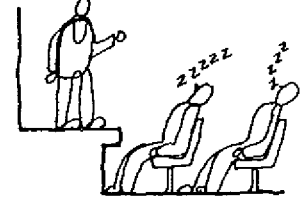
Would we be better off unprepared and extemporaneous?



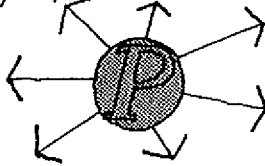
How crucial is it that the presentation succeed?



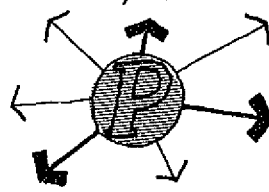
Can we afford a failure?



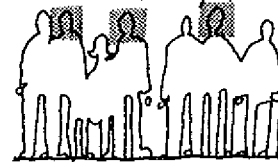
Does the presentation have multiple purposes?



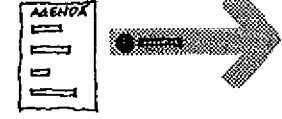
Which purposes are most important?



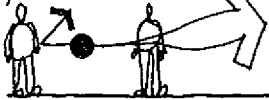
Are there members of the audience we want to impress?



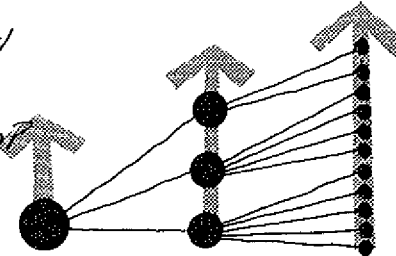
Is there an opportunity to use the presentation to convey content not advertised in the agenda?



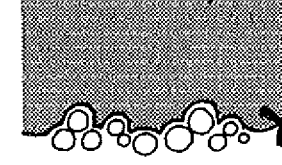
Are any audience members in a position to help or hinder us later as a result of the presentation?



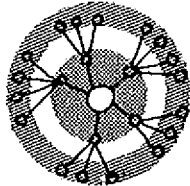
Should we balance the degree of detail in the presentation analysis with the relative importance of the presentation?



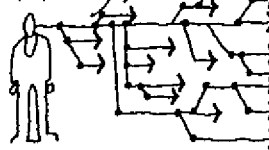
Can we afford to conduct only a brief overview analysis?



Is our content general or detailed?



Do we envision a complicated, intricate presentation delivery?



Are there any important interpersonal relationships between audience members or between us and the audience?

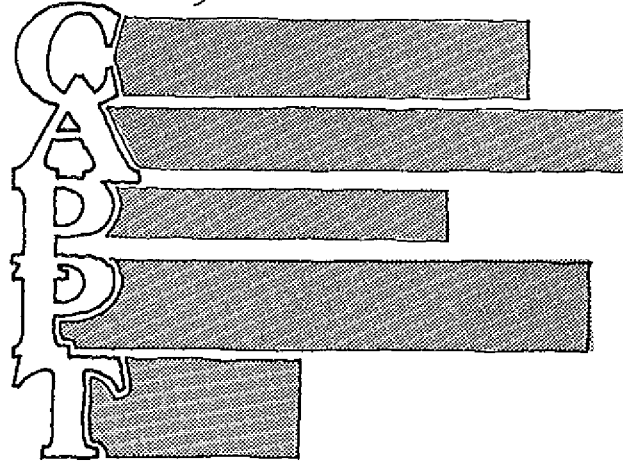


How much time do we have to prepare for the presentation?

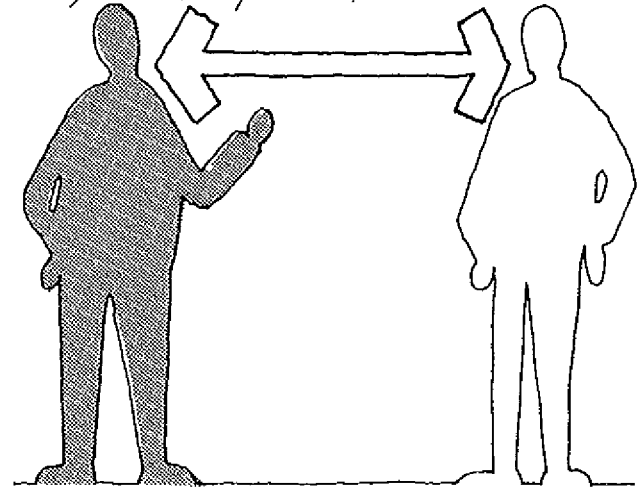
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29					

Using the **CHECKLIST** and **QUESTION SET**, conduct a preliminary analysis of the presentation situation. Determine **WHICH** of the five "W's" is most important in planning the **STRATEGY**. Within the important "W's" determine **WHICH** items of the checklist and question set are **CRITICAL**.

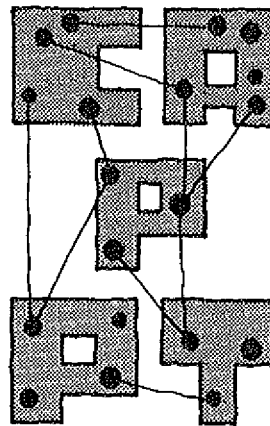
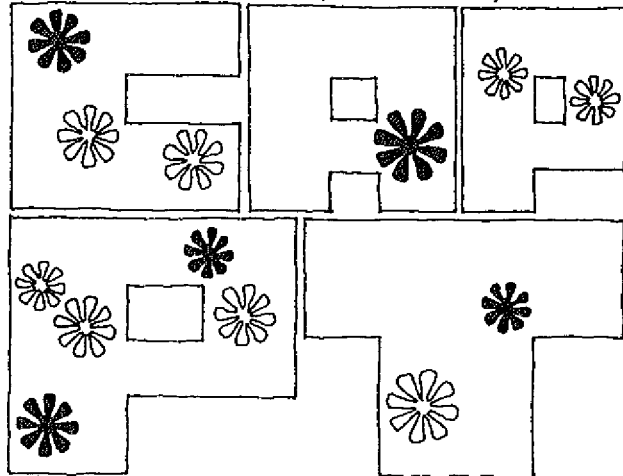
From what we know about our presentation at this point, is the content, audience, purpose, place or timing most important to its success?



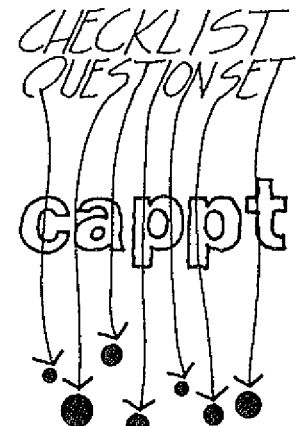
Can we confer with anyone in our preliminary analysis of the presentation situation?



Within each of the five "W's" which sub-issues seem most important and pertinent?



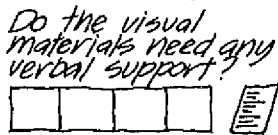
Are there any crucial relationships between the five "W's" or their sub-issues?



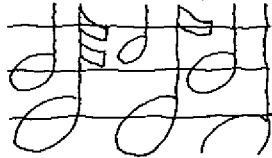
Do the checklist or question set suggest any other relevant sub-issues?

30 Develop the **VERBAL** accompaniment to the visual materials.

Should we make a statement or just answer questions?
 ↑↑↑???



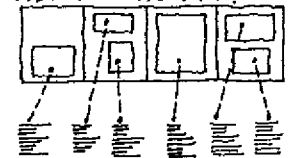
Can we simply establish an ambience with music and no words?



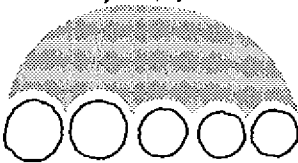
How can we briefly state the presentation, purpose, content and how long it will take?

PURPOSE
 CONTENT
 TIMING

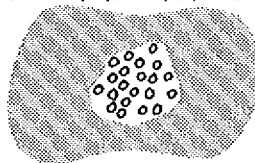
Do we want to say something about each aspect of the visual materials?



Should we cover general overview issues first?



How can we establish a context for dealing with detailed issues?



What were the basic assumptions we made in starting our project decisions?



What were our supportive sources on the project?



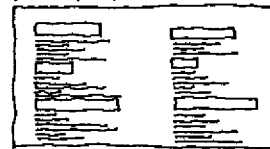
How can we clarify confusing points, diffuse potential controversy and prepare against attack?



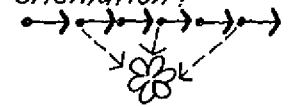
How can we isolate the individual aspects of our design rationale to avoid generalizations about our design?



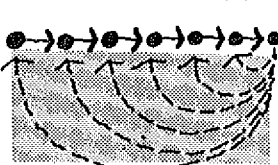
How can we clearly outline our content for the audience at the start?



Does the length of the presentation warrant intermittent reference to our outline for audience orientation?



Should we summarize what we've covered when we're finished?



How can we anticipate changes that may need to occur during the presentation (elaborate on a point, shorten the delivery, etc.)?



How much project background should we include?



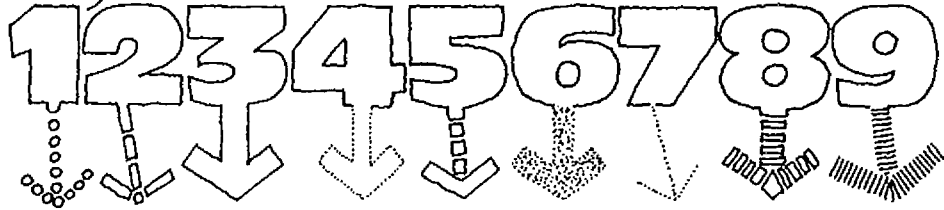
What does the arrangement of the visual materials suggest about verbal information sequence?



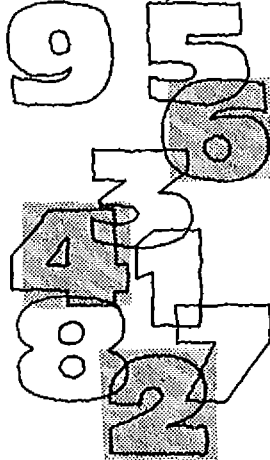
3) Determine the verbal **DELIVERY** method.

- in person
- by representative
- written handout
- tape recorder
- telephone hookup
- written notes on boards
- no verbal, no written
- music only
- combination

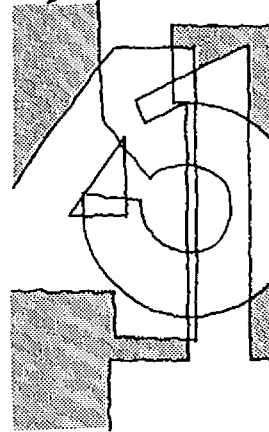
What are the respective impacts on the audience of the various delivery methods?



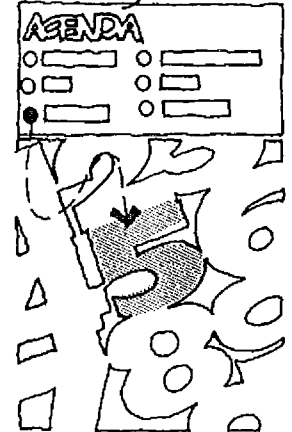
Which methods seem most appropriate to our content?



Would a combination of methods be more effective than a single method?



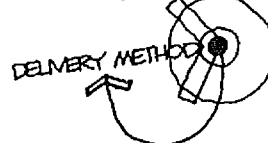
Does the scheduling of our presentation influence our choice of delivery method?



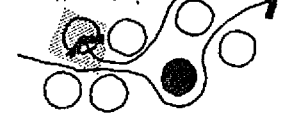
What is the impact of location on delivery method?



What is the relationship between presentation purpose and delivery method?



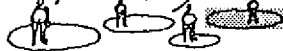
Can anticipated problems be avoided by choosing or avoiding certain methods?



Establish a **POSTURE** toward the audience.

- confident
- aggressive
- apologetic
- depressing
- matter of fact
- belligerent
- supportive
- enthusiastic
- stoic
- persuasive
- informal
- formal
- domineering
- conversational
- from notes
- extemporaneous
- structured
- unstructured
- emotional
- detached
- involved
- pressured
- relaxed
- unsure
- tentative
- pessimistic
- positive

Whose turf will we be presenting on?



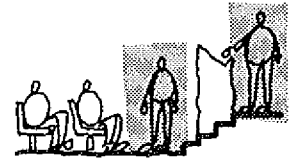
How does the length of the presentation affect our posture?



Does the time of year or day influence our posture?



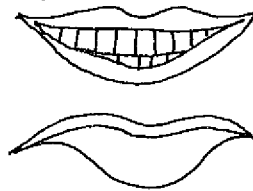
Should we use the stage and lectern or not?



How should we dress in relation to our planned posture?



What will the mood of the audience be?



What is our most effective posture in relation to presentation purpose?



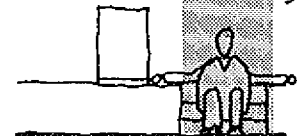
Which posture can most effectively neutralize anticipated audience problems?



How can we reinforce our planned posture with props?



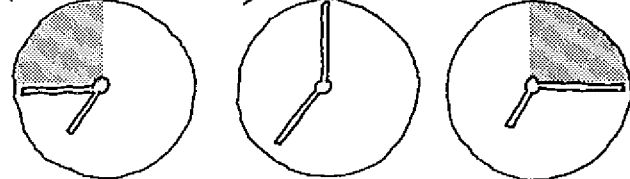
Should we abandon the formal presentation location (lectern) for the sake of informality?



How important is the element of emotion in our posture?



What are the implications of arriving at the presentation early, on time or late?



Purpose

PURPOSES of architectural presentations can be singular or plural. Possible reasons for presentations are:

- General INFORMATION and UNDERSTANDING of the audience.
- FEEDBACK for ourselves gained from audience reaction to our presentation.
- Audience ENTERTAINMENT.
- OUR entertainment.
- INPUT for audience decision making.
- Input for OUR decision making from audience participation.
- Presentation of ALTERNATIVES for audience CHOICES.
- Making RECOMMENDATIONS to the audience.
- GETTING recommendations from the audience.
- Giving GOAL-ORIENTED information (office trainees, students).
- Communicating OUR evaluation to the audience.
- Getting an evaluation FROM the audience (project jury).
- Raising the APPRECIATION and AWARENESS level of the audience.
- Giving APPROVAL to the audience.
- GETTING approval from the audience.
- Giving ADVICE.
- GETTING advice (preliminary schematic presentation).
- REBUTAL of a previous argument.
- Giving CRITICISM.
- GETTING criticism.
- Trying to secure an architectural COMMISSION.
- Seeking SUPPORT from the audience.
- PERSUADING the audience of our point of view.
- Preparing the audience to perform a TASK.
- Preparing the audience for OTHER presentations.

The success of a presentation is more dependent on pre-presentation thinking than on traditional presentation activities (writing text, preparing graphics, etc.). Most presentation problems are made with the heads rather than the hands, such as failing to get a key commission because the key concerns of the selection committee weren't understood.

This profusely illustrated book explores the essential characteristics of strategic planning for presentations, a crucial consideration regardless of whether the audience is a teacher, a government review board, a community organization, or a private client.

The title reveals the author's perspective as an architect and educator. But people in any discipline whose success depends on being able to make effective presentations, and particularly those where graphics are a key element of those presentations, the ideas, techniques, and strategies presented here are well worth repeated reading.

PRESENTATION STRATEGIES IN ARCHITECTURE

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