## A=Audience

For whom am I presenting?

For most internal presentations, you'll know the members of your audience. Occasionally, if you're giving a command performance, you'll be talking to some people you've never met. Make sure you're informed in advance of everyone who may be coming to the presentation and do a little preliminary checking. Nothing is more unnerving than a walk-in appearance by the executive vice-president when you had planned an informal session with a few colleagues and subordinates.

Once you know who the members of your audience are, start to construct a picture of them, either by asking yourself a few pertinent questions about them (if you know most of them and the subject is relatively simple) or by filling out an audience profile (if the group includes many people you don't know and the subject is relatively complex).

Filling out such a profile form forces you to take the needs of your audience into account when you're developing your presentation. It may also alert you to a recycling point. That is, as you think about your audience and its attitudes, you may realize that your preliminary attempts to build consensus have been inadequate. If you discover that members of your projected audience are locked in apparently irreconcilable conflict, you may decide to defer your presentation until you have a better chance for success. There is a sample in the workbook that we will look at tomorrow.