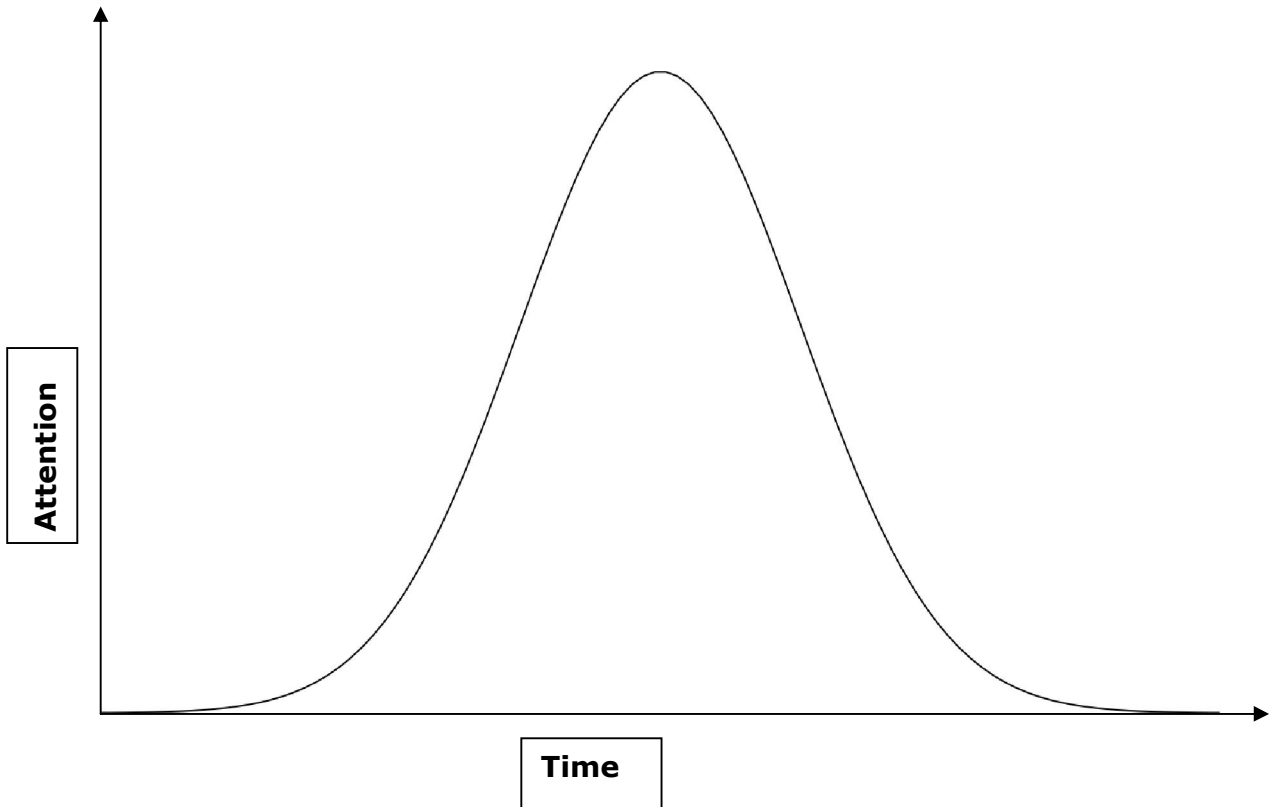


## The Attention Curve

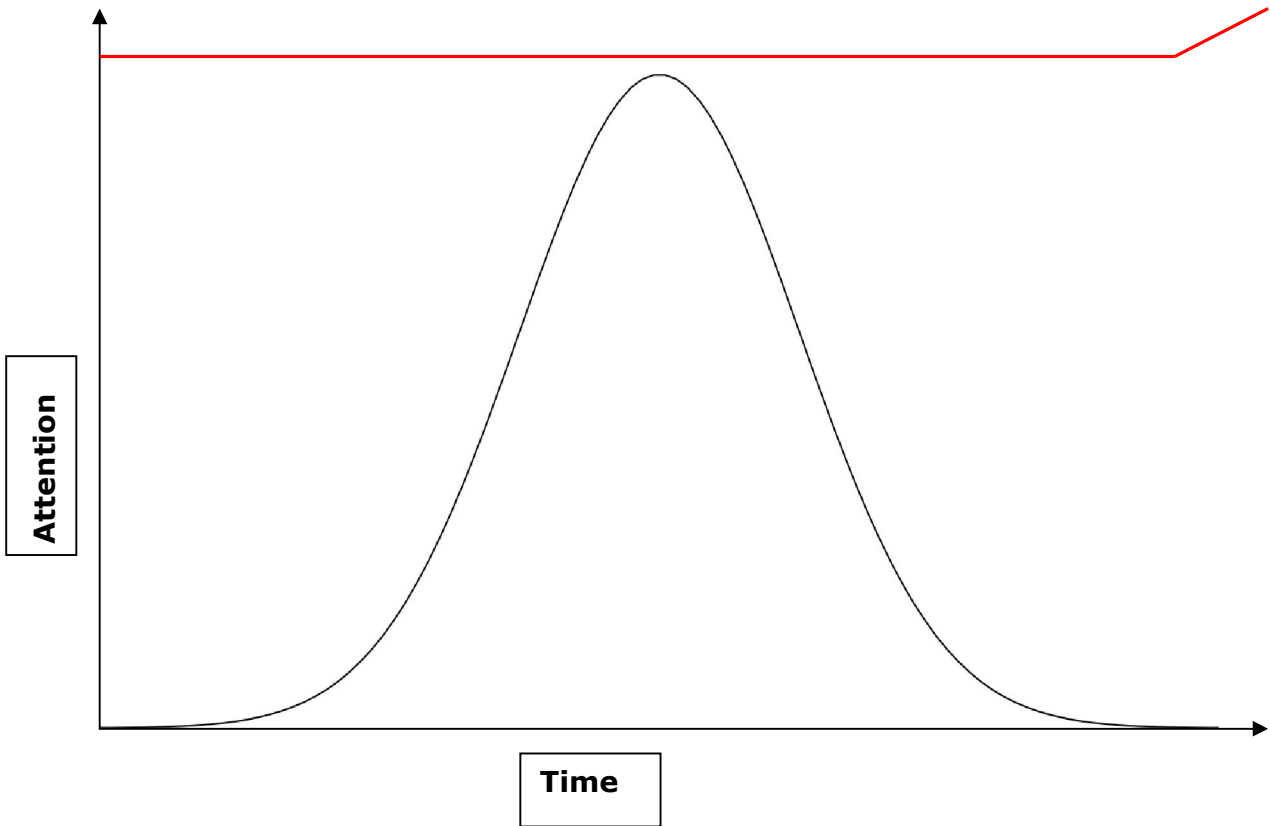
Extensive research demonstrates that audience or listener attention follows the pattern illustrated by the curve below, which we call the Attention Curve.



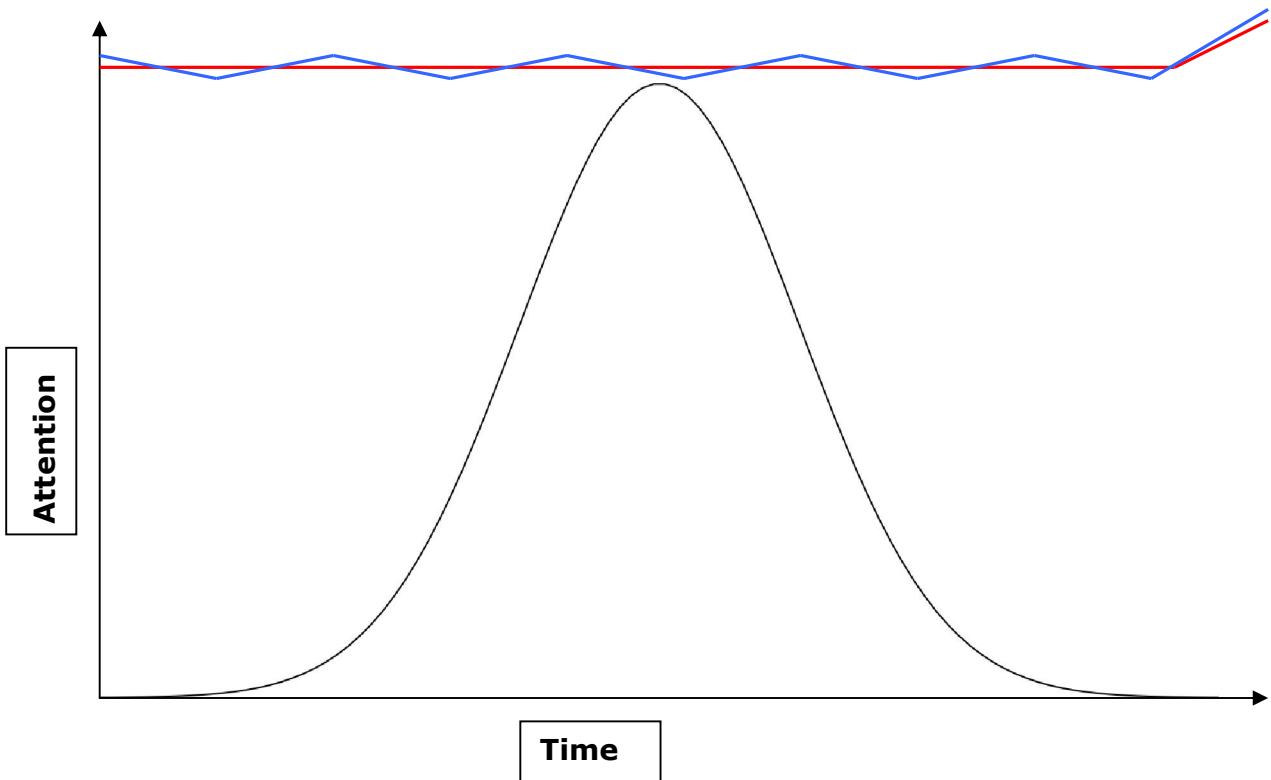
This applies especially to 'one way' communication, but also to activities such as watching TV/Film/Video, reading, listening to radio etc.

For anyone attempting to persuade or sell, this can be a real problem, because when this part of the message is delivered, the other people may be totally 'switched off'.

As speakers and presenters, we must strive to achieve a different shape to the attention curve. This is shown below in red.



While this is difficult to achieve it is possible to achieve the result (in blue)



Film-makers, particularly of the 'action movie' genre, constantly introduce 'cliff hangers' and other forms of attention grabbers; they might bring in a new character, stage an ambush or a dramatic turn of events.

We have seen from the video clips of the great speakers in action that they lace their speeches with rhetoric and their voices are full of vocal variety. That way they achieve the blue line of performance. It is especially noticeable that at the end of their speeches usually achieve a peak of interest through the way they use their voice and their demeanour; a prime example is Martin Luther King's great Freedom speech.

In a later section, entitled Structured Approach to Presentation Content Preparation we will see how to use the impactful opening, the impactful close and a call to action to ensure we have audience attention at the most critical parts of our delivery.