

Tips for an Effective Presentation

Oral presentation skills can be learned by anyone, and will reflect positively on the presenter and the organization she or he represents. The two most important aspects of a good presentation are good preparation and practice. Take the time, not at the last minute, to carefully and thoughtfully plan and prepare your presentation and above all:

PRACTICE YOUR PRESENTATION!!!

Important Presentation Characteristics

- **Purpose**
 - Be clear about the message that you are trying to convey.
- **Audience**
 - Know your audience and their level of understanding.
 - Make your presentation appropriate to their interests & level of understanding.
 - Make it interesting.
- **Approach**
 - Make it easy for your audience to agree with your message.
- **Time Limit**
 - Do not exceed the time limit.
 - To know how long your presentation will run you must practice.
 - Do not move any faster than one slide per minute.

Key elements of Visuals

- **Organization**
 - The rule of Tell'em.
 - Tell'em what you're going to tell'em.
 - Tell'em.
 - Tell'em what you just told 'em.
 - Make sure your talk has a logical flow of information.
 - Introduction – where the point of the presentation is articulated.
 - Body – where the details of presented.
 - Summary – where the conclusions are presented.
 - Orient your audience early in your presentation.
 - Specify objectives, motivation and goals at the beginning of your presentation.
 - Work from a universal theme.
- **Templates**
 - Design a template, or use a standard template, for your presentation.
 - Standardize text, figures and colors.
 - Use the same symbol (shape and color) for similar data sets in different figures
- **Content**

- Do not crowd slides with too much information.
 - Include only necessary information.
 - Content should be self-evident.
- Be specific with the material you present.
- Use data and figures as the basis for your discussion.
- Be professional; avoid the use of slang, jargon, abbreviations and clichés.
- Check grammar and spelling – nothing looks more unprofessional than grammar and spelling errors in a presentation.
- **Background & Color**
 - Use contrasting colors, but limit the use of color.
 - Text should appear clean and crisp.
 - Avoid nauseating combinations.
 - Avoid pastels – these washout on projection.
 - Minimize Glare.
 - Use dark background with light text – dark blue and green backgrounds are good.
- **Fonts**
 - Avoid multiple typefaces – use no more than 2.
 - Use bold and Italic strategically.
 - Use capital letters only as the first letter.
 - Determine the minimum font size by room size – the audience should be able to read comfortably from the back row.
 - Use font size to communicate importance; font size should be limited to the range 18-48pt.
- **Amount of information**
 - No more than 7 lines per slide – KISS.
 - No more than 7 words per line, less if a slide contains a figure – KISS.
 - Use bullets and key words.
- **Graphics**
 - When appropriate present information in graphical form rather than in tabular or in word form.
 - Include no more than two figures or graphics per slide.
 - Make figures **big** and **bold**.
 - Don't assume the audience knows what they are seeing.
 - Explain key elements (components, axes, etc.)
 - Explain the significance, and how it relates to the point you are trying to make.

Presentation Mechanics

- **Appropriate Dress**
- **Delivery and Mannerisms**
 - Do not read your presentation from a set of notes, or worse, from the slide.
 - Talk to your audience, not to the slide.
 - If you are using a podium microphone, maintain a constant distance from the microphone.

- Maintain eye contact with your audience, but do not focus exclusively on one or two persons.
- Avoid a laser light show.
- Learn to mask your nervousness.

On-line Resources

[108 Tips for Making Effective Presentations](#) (Western Association for Art Conservation – Stanford University)

[4 Important Design Concepts for Presentations](#) (Psychology Department – Columbia University)

[Creating Effective Presentations](#) (University of South Dakota)

[Effective Presentations](#) (Office of Sponsored Research – UCLA)

[Important Elements of an Effective Presentation](#) (Kansas University Medical Center)

[Guidelines for Effective Presentations](#) (American Water Works Association)

[Guidelines for Preparation of Effective Presentations](#) (American Society of Primatologists)

[Making effective Oral Presentations](#) (College of Business Administration – Northeastern University)

[How to Give a Bad Talk!](#) (Computer Science Department – University of Wisconsin)

[Presentation Tips](#) (Physics Department – Rice University)

[The Art of Communicating Effectively](#) (Presenting Solutions!)

[Tips for Making Effective Presentations](#) (Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics)