

Tips on Effective Oral Presentations
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Outline

Content

Types of talks

Meeting presentations (7-15 min): platform presentation, poster presentation

Research presentation (30-60 min): state-of-the-art review, research presentation, job interview

Clinical presentation (30-60 min): grand rounds, state-of-the-art lecture

Organization facilitates audience attention

What to include: Decide what points you must convey
 Determine content needed to make these points efficiently
 Tell what you are going to them, tell them, tell what you told them
 Rule of thumb: 1 slide per minute (but plan fewer slides than minutes)

What not to include: Anything not relevant to the main point(s)
 Anything that might be personally offensive
 Too much material

Slides

Content ≠ PowerPoint

Slide rules (from Balistreri, JPGN 35:1, 2002)

1. KISS & KILL: keep it simple, stupid; keep it large & legible.
2. Visual aids should be visible & should aid.
3. Don't let the medium upstage your message.
4. Never show a slide for which you have to apologize.
5. "Use it or lose it": delete deadspace & irrelevant material.

Using graphics: Problems: Resolution, data density
 Displaying >2 dimensions in 2 dimensions
 Limited amount of time to make points
 Goals: Use to convey main points
 Integrate necessary information
 Enforce visual comparisons
 Avoid clutter (chartjunk)

Presentations

Preparation: Prior to the event: Rehearse, get feedback
 Plan for the correct length
 Test PowerPoint file on appropriate system
 Consider purchasing your own laser pointer
 Show up early: Get a feeling for the venue
 Test the equipment
 Talk with the AV personnel & moderator
 Drink some water

The Presentation

Throwaway sentences: adjust voice to room/microphone, allow audience to adjust their ears

Speak clearly • Don't read your slides (don't make them to be read)

Be careful with the laser pointer (or don't use one)

Be passionate about your subject • Finish early

Handling questions

Be prepared; anticipate questions

Treat questions & give answers carefully

May have huge impact on people's opinion of you and your talk

Remember they are often really saying "What about me?"

Repeat or rephrase the question

Keep your cool! • Learn something • Avoid being monopolized

Handouts

General references

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Gurus

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Peter Norvig, Ph.D.

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- Director of Search Quality, Google.com; formerly Division Chief, Computational Sciences, NASA Ames Research Center, among other positions.

Slides/PowerPoint

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