

Guidance for People Preparing a Presentation

Preparing for the Presentation

Technology (computers, DVD players, etc.) can enhance a presentation, but be sure to have an alternative plan so you can present your material even if the technology fails.

Handouts (and PowerPoint) should outline your presentation, not “be” your presentation. The handout should also include a resource list for those wishing more information.

Plan for about 50 copies of your handouts, and take along business cards in case the demand for handout exceeds the number. Attendees can then email you for handouts if they do not receive one.

Organize your presentation, as it should “flow” in a logical order to maximize comprehension by the attendees.

Get to the presentation room early, so you can make sure technology is working, you know where to put your materials, etc.

Giving a Presentation

Minimize distractions (eliminate when possible). Avoid “jingling” change in your pocket or wearing “noisy” jewelry like charm bracelets. Also be aware of your own habits and mannerisms, such as biting your nails, drumming your fingers on a surface, twisting your hair, or rustling papers while a colleague is talking (if a joint presentation).

Avoid reading your presentation material. Use of notes is fine, but a read presentation is almost always a boring presentation, no matter how interesting the material.

If you have an accent when speaking English, be sure key words are on PowerPoint or a handout, and let the audience know they are free to ask if something you say is not understood.

Project your voice so those in the back of the room can hear you. Do not rush or speak too fast (limiting the amount of information to be presented helps accomplish this). You may want to have some information that can be added to your presentation if time permits, but can be omitted without compromising the integrity of your material.

Let the audience know your background, why you chose to present in this area, what related work has already been done, and how your material fits into the larger context.

Plan to define an unfamiliar term multiple times in the presentation, as the audience may forget the meaning after 10 or 15 minutes.

Explain acronyms, even those you consider to be familiar to everyone. If you use a “word” for the acronym, be sure to clarify that with the audience.

When showing data from a graph or chart (via PowerPoint or a handout), be sure to clearly tell the attendees what is represented by the components.

Generally, engaging the audience in your presentation is a good idea—ask them for examples, questions, and comments. But also be mindful of the amount of engagement so you can complete your material in the allotted time.

Make your presentation “lively” by moving around the room or the front of the room, making eye contact with attendees, using lots of appropriate expression in your voice, and possibly telling jokes or stories related to your material.

Keep track of the time yourself (putting your watch on the podium or table can be helpful), and pace your presentation to finish with time at the end for questions.

Start and end your presentation on time. Once your presentation, including questions, is over you can gather up your materials and move to the hallway outside to converse with attendees who still have questions. This is necessary with most sessions since the next person needs to get into the room and set up.

Sources:

Conference proposals and abstracts. (2009). Retrieved from:

<http://www.cgu.edu/pages/865.asp>

Some practical guidelines for conferences presentations. (n.d.). Retrieved from:

<http://plaza.ufl.edu/edale/SOME%20PRACTICAL%20GUIDELINES%20FOR%20CONFERENCE%20PRESENTATIONS.htm>