

Determine Your Objective

The goal of our sessions is to provide valuable information that our audience can take home and begin using. When you begin preparing your presentation, please keep in mind the following:

- What is the topic? Make sure you and your audience are both on the same track.
- Who is the audience? When you prepare your talk, consider what the audience wants to know. Put yourself in their position and think, “what’s in it for me?”
- What is the main objective of the presentation? Note your main points and make sure you elaborate fully on them.
- What are the learning objectives for the session? Make sure your audience knows what to expect from the presentation and then deliver that information.

Develop A Clear Introduction

You need to clearly state the topic but it is sometimes helpful to personalize the presentation. For example, you can share a relevant story, anecdote or quote. Or you can use a statistic to demonstrate a need. Metaphors and comparisons are also useful. Use humor very carefully; when it works it’s very powerful, but when it flops, it fails miserably.

The Body Of Your Presentation Should Include:

- Discuss your main idea(s) in detail.
- Use supporting examples.
- Use visual aids to reinforce and illustrate your points.
- Develop a theme.

The End Of Your Talk Should Include:

- A summary of your main points.
- A restatement of your topic and conclusions.
- Reiterate the plan of action or any future plans.
- Share another relevant story, anecdote or quote.
- Remember to leave time for questions.

Additional Tips:

- Please get to your session room at least 15 minutes before the session is to start, to allow time to meet your moderator and to check out laptop hookup, data projector, screen, microphone(s), lighting, water and water glass, etc. (If no one is using the room, try to get there 30 minutes before the session begins.)
- Please speak at the natural frequency and projection of your voice. If there is a microphone (such as at a larger presentation), let the microphone project your voice—don’t shout!
- Speak distinctly at adequate volume and with good voice inflection (no monotone or mumbling!).
- If you’re doing a formal presentation and speaking at a podium, stay with and speak into the microphone.
- Use a laser pointer, but only when necessary to highlight a slide. Waving the pointer around the screen during your presentation is extremely distracting. Remember not to walk in front of the screen. Never point the laser pointer at the audience.
- For your PowerPoint presentation, have it loaded on a portable USB drive. Carry an extra copy of your presentation on a CD or disk in a separate briefcase/bag as a backup.
- Visual aids should present an overview, not your entire presentation – please do not simply read from your images; likewise, do not simply read from your papers.
- Intersperse text slides with photographs or graphs or other images.
- Do not use slides with excessive amounts of text. Keep the wording simple and easy (and fast) to read.
- Have good quality images with good contrast between object and background. Do not use many data points in graphs. And please do not use details or larger areas from design drawings – they will not show properly.
- Use calculations and tables sparingly (if at all) since they are very difficult for the audience to see. Equations and calculations are more effective in your paper or handouts.
- Consider including a summary of the most commonly used equations, tables or charts in your handouts. This will encourage the attendees to keep your handout as his/her prime reference for this subject as everything will be consolidated and easy for her/him to use.

Make Them Legible

No matter how much time and money you've spent on the production of your visual aids, it's wasted if your audience can't read them. No one's ever been criticized for graphics that were too big.

- Try to use at least 24 point lettering for slides done in all capitals and 32 point lettering for slides utilizing both upper and lower case.

24 PT. CAPITALS

32 Pt. Upper & Lower

- Use a "sans serif" typeface, such as Helvetica or Arial, for your slides rather than a "serif" typeface such as Times or New Century Schoolbook.
- Try to use contrasting colors, such as yellow text against a black background or white text on a dark blue background (note that light text against a dark background works better than dark text against a light background in slides). However, don't use too many colors in your presentation; too many colors can add confusion and reduce contrast and legibility.
- Dark text (red, blue, dark green) against a dark background (black, blue) is difficult to read.
- Use colors to highlight a particular item or for emphasis (for example, to contrast actual from projected data or to emphasize a particular thought).

Keep Them Simple

Visual aids are designed to quickly present an overview of data.

- They shouldn't be used to present highly detailed statistics.
- Round off numbers and cut decimal places.
- Use a scale along the horizontal and vertical axis of a graph or chart instead of a number at the end of each bar or column.
- Substitute symbols for words (\$ is better than "dollars" and % is better than "percent").

Use Each Slide To Convey A Single Point

If you're not sure whether you have too much material on a slide, you probably do. It's better to err on the side of too many slides than too few.

- It takes the same amount of time to show six slides with six ideas as it does to show one slide with six ideas.
- It's easier to keep an audience's attention when they don't have to look at the same slide while you make several points.

Visual Aids Should Present An Overview, Not The Entire Presentation

Slides should be used to add to your presentation, not replace it.

- Don't simply read from the slides.
- Likewise, don't simply read your presentation.

Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse

Practice giving your presentation as often as possible prior to the Conference. Start by presenting privately; then do a "dress rehearsal" with a colleague.

- Having a colleague review your slides is an excellent way to get feedback!

Remember That Each Presentation Has A Set Time Limit

A good rule of thumb is that you can plan on one slide per minute of presentation. Also, remember the old adage that "less is more."