



Fact Sheet

Oral presentations: preparation and delivery

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Presentations can be positive experiences. There are a few things you can do to ease the strain to ensure that your presentation runs smoothly. This resource has been prepared to assist you with the planning and delivery of your next paper presentation.



Plan

- ▶ Remember that no one style is necessarily the right style, consider the pros and cons of using mediums such as power point or overhead projection. Decide which format will be appropriate for you.
- ▶ Make a basic plan and stick to it. If you digress you might go over time and miss out on articulating valuable information:
 - Tell the audience what the presentation is about; explain the key points and then repeat them in your conclusion.
- ▶ Identify your key messages:
 - think about the key messages you wish your presentation to convey
 - get to the point early
 - look at interesting ways to emphasise these points.
- ▶ Prepare notes or cue cards so that you can speak freely. If you are going to be using slides, do not read directly from them.

I always try to identify one audience member that I know will be supportive of me. That way during my presentation, if I feel nervous, I can look at them and draw strength from their encouragement.

- ▶ Plan to get there early to meet and greet your audience as they enter the room. It can help to reduce anxiety and help create a positive relationship between you and the audience.
- ▶ Be aware of the room layout before the presentation and adapt the presentation to suit your environment.
- ▶ Having a warm drink to sip before you start (and during your presentation) will help warm up your voice. A cold drink can constrict your throat.

Rehearse

- ▶ Rehearse! Practice until your delivery is fluent and you are confident with your pronunciation.
- ▶ Gain feedback to improve the design, legibility and content of your presentation.
- ▶ Timing is essential. Aim to complete your presentation within a minute of the recommended length. Rehearsing your presentation is an excellent way of checking that your presentation runs to time.
- ▶ Tape your presentation and listen to yourself, it might be painfully embarrassing but it could prove invaluable.

I find the feedback I receive from colleagues invaluable. I always rehearse in front of them now!

Delivery

- ▶ Don't waste time early on. Use your opening line to get straight into your presentation.
- ▶ Don't read text verbatim, talk about your work and bring it to life. Use stories or examples to illustrate key points.
- ▶ Don't rush the delivery, instead speak clearly and slowly.
- ▶ Vary your pitch and tone to create interest.
- ▶ Avoid using words such as 'um' and any other word you might overdo when nervous. Make an effort to identify when you use these words and just pause instead.
- ▶ Laser pointers can be great. But if you are nervous and your hands shake the laser pointer will bring attention to this.

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Body language

- ▶ Smile!
- ▶ Be animated, but don't over do it. Pacing up and down, and a lot of hand movements can distract the audience.
- ▶ Maintain eye contact with the audience; talk to them, not the screen.
- ▶ When using visual aids, like slides, be careful not to block the screen. Stand next to it so the audience doesn't have to split its attention.
- ▶ Keep an eye on the audience's body language, it will let you know to move on or create more interest and excitement.

I like to start by introducing myself and welcoming the other people there. I find that it makes both me and the audience more comfortable.

Tips

- ▶ Relax. Taking regular, deep breaths will help you to avoid gasping for air at the end of paragraphs. In addition, deep breathing will aid in relaxation and help you to overcome nerves.
- ▶ Make yourself familiar with the equipment before your presentation.
- ▶ Number your cue cards in case you drop them.
- ▶ Be prepared for IT problems, always have a Plan B.
- ▶ Think about the best and worst presentations you have seen and try to identify the qualities you believe made the presentation interesting and memorable, or boring and forgetful, adapt your presentation with these issues in mind.
- ▶ Distribute handouts before or after the presentation, not during.

Thought

When using quotes in your presentation read them out loud, or pause long enough for the audience to read them.

Resources

Easton A & Easton G. (2007). Stand and Deliver. *BMJ Careers* 355:100-101. Retrieved 24 April 2009, from <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=2615>

PHC RIS infoBytes: Present your work – http://www.phcris.org.au/infobytes/present_work.php

PHC RIS infoBytes: Publish your work – http://www.phcris.org.au/infobytes/publish_work.php

PHC RIS infoBytes: Design and present posters for maximum impact – http://www.phcris.org.au/infobytes/poster_presentations.php

PHC RIS infoBytes: Design a great power point presentation – http://www.phcris.org.au/infobytes/pp_presentations.php

PHC RIS infoBytes: Get the most of conferences – http://www.phcris.org.au/infobytes/conferences_getthemost.php

A research guide for students – <http://www.aresearchguide.com/3tips.html>

University of Surrey: Communications: Oral presentations – <http://www.surrey.ac.uk/Skills/pack/pres.html>

Pacific Lutheran University: Designing presentation visuals – http://www.plu.edu/libr/media/designing_visuals.html

Details

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