

# How to make an effective presentation

8 July 2009

2:00pm-4:00pm



# How to make an effective presentation: SUMMARY

1. The presentation should be about the audience, not about you.
2. Design the presentation to persuade your audience to take some action.

# How to make an effective presentation: PREPARATION

1. Your preparation should be good enough so that you can speak through your entire presentation from memory while getting dressed during the morning of the presentation.
2. Take control of the physical environment of your presentation space.
3. Give a written introduction to the person who will introduce you.
4. Make certain you test all audio visual equipment at least 1 hour before your presentation.
5. Learn the name and location of the audio-visual person.

# How to make an effective presentation: CONTENT

1. Use the well tested formula of: a) telling the audience what you will tell them, b) tell them it, and c) tell them what you told them.
2. Your presentation is an advertisement.
3. You should never be in the position to say “I have too much information, so I’ll just go really fast”.
4. Your first and last slides should have logos to acknowledge your funding agencies.

# How to make an effective presentation: TIME

1. Running over time dooms any presentation.
2. It is good to present less information than what you have, in order to allow time for the audience to ask questions for additional depth into their interests.
3. Learn how to finish the presentation quickly. If your proctor says that there are only X more minutes, then finish within X minutes.

# How to make an effective presentation: AUDIENCE

1. There is never a reason to tell the audience whether you are nervous or flustered. If you are not nervous, then you are probably not taking the presentation seriously.
2. Every questioner is an angel.
3. When entertaining questions, you should give a clear answer in the first 10 seconds of your response, then you can elaborate if necessary.
4. Do not attempt to respond to a question that you do not understand.
5. Assume there is at least one person in the audience who is a step ahead of you, because it is probably the case.
6. Plant one well constructed piece of humor in your presentation, and practice the timing of the delivery of it.
7. Leave your audience an action to take at the end of the presentation. For example your last slide should give them a citation to read, a URL to visit, or your email address to write. Leave this last slide viewable while you entertain questions.

# How to make an effective presentation: LANGUAGE

1. Make the first words out of your mouth count.
2. Avoid the word “just” because it destroys the power of all words near it in the sentence. Usually the word “only” can be eliminated; if “only” is used, it should appear near the word it modifies.
3. Use a better attention getter than “OK so”.
4. Know each term that you use in your presentation.
5. Assume that 10 percent of your audience does not understand English very well.

# How to make an effective presentation: VISUALS

1. Your PowerPoint file should be less than 10MB.
2. Carry your PowerPoint file as one file on a USB. Put your PPT on the web.
3. Show a relevant slide while responding to questions.
4. Put automatic slide numbers on the lower right of each slide.
5. Use animation, color, and sound only if it conveys information.
6. For maps, use a scale bar.
7. Each slide should be constructed so that the presenter could say “This slide shows that ...” as soon as the slide appears.
8. Every bit of ink on the figure should communicate information.
9. Present quantitative information as figures rather than tables of numbers.
10. When explaining a plotted figure, first define the axes.
11. Every projector is slightly different, so use high contrast on the slides.
12. Use grammatically correct short complete sentences. If you use bullets, then practice good parallelism.
13. Usually less than 20 words per slide.
14. Be prepared to have the audiovisual equipment fail.

# How to make an effective presentation: TANGIBLES

1. Dress appropriately to bring respect to your work and to your audience.
2. Bring your own water and have it nearby, with a closed lid.
3. Smile and make the presentation enjoyable.
4. After every presentation, read this list to give yourself an evaluation with the goal of improvement for next time.

# How to make an effective presentation: SUMMARY

1. The presentation should be about the audience, not about you.
2. Design the presentation to convince your audience to take some action.
  1. Down load from [www.clarku.edu/~rpontius](http://www.clarku.edu/~rpontius) and read the following files:
    1. HEROeffectivePresentations1.pptx
    2. ClarityInOralForm01.doc
  2. Watch the Robert Pontius Jr video at  
<http://www.csis.msu.edu/snowbird.htm>,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Password: snowbird  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Password: Hiddenpeak!

