How to Give an Effective Presentation

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Why Does It Matter?

- There are many opportunities to present information – class, meetings, conferences, to your colleagues, papers, grant proposals.
- The ability to communicate your message and ideas clearly and effectively, hold your audience’s interest and attention, and be persuasive are key to the success of your career.
- Everyone can learn to be a good presenter!
Know your **Purpose**

Think about your **Message**

Remember your **Audience**

Select your **Visuals**

Pay attention to your **Delivery**
  - Verbal Communication Strategies
  - Nonverbal Communication Strategies
  - What to do if you are Nervous!
Know your Purpose

Why are you making this presentation?

What are your communication goals?

- Persuade?
- Inform and educate?
- Both?

How do these mesh with your larger goals? those of your audience, your sponsor, your boss?
Think about your Message

- Start with your overall theme, your motivation and your goals
- Select ~5 key points for your audience to take away
- Use the Rule of 3:
  - Tell them what you are going to tell them
  - Tell them
  - Tell them what you told them
- Make sure your talk has a logical flow
  - Introduction, Body, Summary
Remember your Audience

Who are they? What is their background? Level of understanding? Interest in the topic? How many people will be there?

- Consider the points they want to hear.
- Identify details they are likely to challenge.
- Be aware of aspects that may upset them.
- Anticipate the questions they are likely to ask.
- PLAN FOR EACH OF THESE.
Select your Visuals

- Use a standard template (use standard fonts, font sizes, color schemes, etc.)
- Limit information on each slide (use key words, bullet points, graphics)
- 7 lines per slide; 18-48 point font
- Limit use of color, boldface, underlining, italics
- Avoid chaotic slide entrances
- Use a professional tone and grammar
- Proofread! Have someone else proofread!
Pay Attention to your Delivery

- Dress appropriately & professionally.
- Don’t read your presentation! Know it...talk to your audience, not the screen.
- Engage your audience – include opportunities for participation (questions, reflection, sharing).
- **Time your presentation.**
- **Practice multiple times – repeat and polish segments as needed.**
- Prepare two backups (thumb drive, extra computer, online access, overheads).
Verbal Communication Strategies

- Make sure everyone can hear you.
- Watch your speed (not too slow, not too fast).
- Linger on each slide/idea so people have time to think about/absorb your message.
- Be enthusiastic and interested in your topic.
- Avoid jokes....
- Avoid artificial fillers (Um, Uhh, Like, Well) ... most people have unique fillers they overuse!
Nonverbal Communication Strategies

- Recall: 55% of content is delivered nonverbally (facial expressions, posture, hand gestures).
- Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart (control, relaxed, confident), but *not* in front of your slides!
- Move around, if possible.
- Make eye contact (3 – 5 seconds) to make your audience feel included.
- When your audience stops looking, they’ve stopped listening.
What to do if you are Nervous!

- Recognize and accept it!
- It will diminish after you get started.
- Know your content and practice ahead of time to lessen nervousness.
- Remember that your audience trusts that you are qualified to deliver this material.
- Speak with a few people one-on-one before you begin.
- Look at a friendly face for assurance.
- Assume a confident body posture, hold your own hand.
Summary

- Good presentation skills are important and can be learned!
  - Know your **Purpose**
  - Think about your **Message**
  - Remember your **Audience**
  - Select your **Visuals**
  - Pay attention to your **Delivery**

- Don’t overlook Verbal/Nonverbal Communication.

- Preparation combats Nervousness!

Questions?

COES Graduate Seminar website:
http://www.coes.latech.edu/owise_seminar.php