

## Preparing Your Presentation

- When preparing (and giving) your presentation, think of it from the audience's point of view: What's in it for them? You might mention possible applications of your work, whether direct or indirect, especially as they relate to other papers at the meeting. (Most of the preparation for cross-referencing you'll have to do while listening to other papers at the meeting.) Also, remember that not all members of your audience will be familiar with the questions you're working with.
- In your introduction, emphasize why the work was done. Key results, conclusions and recommendations can go into your summary at the end.
- Have additional slides ready to answer likely questions or to use if time allows.
- Rehearse your presentation enough to make sure that you can finish in your allotted time. Allow 5 minutes for questions and answers.

## Presenting your paper

Program time is limited; therefore, every word must count. Organizing and writing an oral presentation can be more demanding than preparing a paper for publication. The listener must keep pace with you, rather than concentrate on the written word at leisure. Your presentation should be carefully planned and each step properly coordinated with visual aids.

Avoid highly specialized vocabulary and unfamiliar abbreviations. An informal, first-person style is most effective. The following suggestions will help to ensure a successful presentation of your paper:

1. Practice ahead of time.
2. Number the sheets.
3. Have slides/transparencies numbered and in proper order.
4. Coordinate your talk with your visual aids.
5. Make sure you can be heard.
6. Use simple, direct gestures to underscore important points.
7. Train yourself to avoid filler sounds such as "uh," "ah," "ok," "you know," etc. A pause is preferable.
8. Vary your voice tone and rate of speech.

When answering questions:

- Listen to and look at the person asking the question.
- Repeat or rephrase the question to make sure everyone heard it and understood it.
- Recognize a talkative or argumentative questioner and politely agree to handle "off line."
- Answer briefly, and don't be afraid to say "I don't know."
- Don't forget to retrieve your slides at the end of your presentation.

Some Additional Information...

- Talk to your audience and not to the screen - be sure to face them whenever you're speaking. If you need to point at something on the screen, stand beside the screen

while facing the audience and point with your hand nearer the screen. You can also use a pen to point at a transparency on the overhead projector.

- Don't blast your audience with the light from an overhead projector with no transparency on it. Put the first transparency on the projector and then turn the projector on. When you're ready for the next transparency, hold it just above the first one, pull the first one out from under the next one, and then lay the new transparency on the projector. Repeat this for all your transparencies. Finally, turn the projector off before removing the last transparency.
- During other presentations, note any points related to your presentation.
- During your talk, you can make any appropriate comments related to the other presentations.
- Plant a question or two with a colleague in the audience to get the Q&A started just in case.

### **Effective visual aids**

A good presentation successfully combines words and illustrations to tell a complete story. Slides, overheads or other visual aids should clarify and expand upon the spoken word, not duplicate it.

*For any visual aid, remember - keep it simple!*

Adapted from <http://www.aiche.org/conferences/guidelines/styleman.htm>