

Giving Your First Conference Presentation: What No One Tells You (or When PowerPoint and Good Intentions Meet Reality)

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1. Remember that a presentation is not a lecture.
2. The arrangements
 - a. Make and double-check the arrangements for your presentation, including the printed session description.
 - b. Ask for the equipment and setup that you will require.
3. Own your space
 - a. Arrive early so you can understand (or modify) the space.
 - b. Be willing to use the entire space. Don't be afraid to walk around.
 - c. If the equipment you expected is not there, ask for it.
4. Your visuals
 - a. Use your slides as your guide and as a way of focusing your audience.
 - b. Without being misleading, limit the amount of text on every slide.
 - i. Use the 10/2030 rule of PowerPoint. (Alternatively, use only five ideas/words per slide.)
 - ii. Use images/graphics. Make sure any charts or visuals can be understood.
 - iii. Rather than having a lot of text on your slides, create a handout.
 - c. Save your presentation with the fonts and test it. Use basic, easy-to-read fonts.
 - d. Know that you don't have to have slides.
5. Your presentation
 - a. Do not cram your content. You cannot give a 40 minute presentation in 10 minutes.
 - b. Don't read your slides or script. Don't be monotone or monotonous.
 - c. Be willing to change your presentation to fit the current situation.
 - d. Be willing to show your personality and to make your presentation interactive.
 - e. Engage the people in the back row.
 - i. Have a conversation with them and make eye contact with them.
 - ii. Make sure that they can see and read your slides.
 - f. Be sure to leave time for questions.
6. The audience
 - a. Don't let the audience's activity distract you.
 - b. Know that not everyone is going to like you. Let superficial negative comments roll off your back.
7. You and your reputation
 - a. You are representing yourself and your organization (even when you say that you are not).
 - b. Don't take yourself too seriously.
 - c. Do not be afraid of failure.
 - d. If you mess up, know that every speaker does. (We proudly own our failures!)
8. Learn to improve
 - a. Have someone record you, and then listen to it or watch it. What do you need to do differently?
 - b. Talk to others that have given presentations. What has worked for them?
 - c. Go to other people's presentations and learn from what they do.

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