



Crafting and delivering a good presentation: A quick guide

Networking with other scientists is crucial to the successful pursuit of a scientific career. It will bring you into contact with potential collaborators and get your name out there, which is an unfortunate prerequisite for publishing well. Do not underestimate the importance of being known! Given the sheer amount of competition, you should grab any chance to stand out from the crowd.

In turn, presenting well is one of the most important skillsets for networking efficiently. Other scientists probably won't remember the exact content of your presentations, but they will remember the level of professionalism and competence you project when you present. It is therefore in your own interest to learn to present effectively.

Watch these videos, which cover some bare-bones dos and don'ts of presenting.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S5c1susCPAE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i68a6M5FFBc>

Here are 5 tips for presenting well. Please make sure you follow this checklist.

Don't assume you are talking to experts

- Give a simple overview of the field, then zoom in on your own specific area (provide context)
- Explain the motivation behind and significance of your work
- Explain jargon (technical terms and abbreviations)
- Ideally, a complete layman should be able to get the gist of your presentation
- REMEMBER: If you are presenting original data, you are the best-informed person in the room

Use visuals well

- Visuals should support, not carry, your presentation. Your presentation should still work if PowerPoint were taken away.
- If you decide to use images, make sure they add value to your presentation and don't overwhelm the audience. Do not use unnecessary images.
- Use text very sparingly. If the audience wanted huge blocks of text, they would go read the literature rather than listen to you. People cannot both read walls of text and listen to you.
- **Format consistently within and between slides (font size and color, paragraphing, spelling, etc.)**
- Avoid typos
- Avoid overly bright colors; stick with plain and professional color-schemes
- Make sure slide and font color complement each other (text must be clearly legible)
- REMEMBER: You are the presenter, not PowerPoint. Don't defer your job to technology.



Understand your own content

- Make sure you know *why* you did your work, as well as what the data may mean. Have your own opinion about the results and be prepared to defend it against questioning from the audience.
- REMEMBER: If you are confused, everyone else will be, too.

Engage the audience

- Speak to the audience directly. Make eye contact and draw listeners in. Don't throw more than a quick glance or two at your slides.
- Speak loudly, clearly, and assertively. Don't speak too quickly and avoid a monotone drone. However brilliant your work is, no one will ever know if they can't understand you or are too bored to listen.
- Do NOT read from slides. This looks very unprofessional and will instantly cause your audience to mentally check out. You should know your content well enough to not need your slide text as a crutch.
- Tell a story – take your audience by the hand and lead them through your work in a manner that is logical and easy to follow. Note that this may not necessarily be in chronological order.
- Keep it short and sweet. Humans have a limited attention span. You want your audience to walk out excited and invigorated, not half asleep.
- REMEMBER: If you are not excited about your work, there is no reason why anyone else should be, either

Practice

- Practice alone and with an audience (ask your friends) to get the hang of speaking smoothly and confidently, as well as becoming comfortable in front of an audience
- Make sure you are making reasonable use of the time limit provided – don't go over, but don't go too far under, either
- REMEMBER: You *cannot* wing a scientific presentation. Everyone in the room will know you're doing it.



Checklist to avoid boring MIRA

- Title is informative
- Presentation is dated, pagination also preferred
- Graphical abstract or minimum ultra short summary
- Sufficient intro into the topic (30% of talk)
- Background and landscape is given
- Hypothesis and/or scientific question is stated
- Experimental approach is well explained both in rationale and design
- Results are given in logical order with excellent Figures
- Discussion gives well reasoned attempt to explain results
- Conclusion is sound and future work is sketched out *including time line (look up what a Gantt chart is)*
- Stick to your deadlines

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