How to Make An Effective Presentation in 20 Minutes

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Presentation Goal

The purpose of this presentation is to provide practical advice for presentation of research papers at seminars or conferences.

- Most seminar and conference presentations have to be presented in 20-30 minutes.
- How do you present months of research and a 10,000 word research report in 20 minutes?

Presentation Outline

- Pre-presentation Preparation
- Presentation Content
- Presentation Style
- Open Forum

Pre-presentation Preparation

To contact the presenter: d.viehland@massey.ac.nz

Initial Preparation

- Who is the audience?
  - Peers? Superiors? Third party? Experts?
- What is the purpose?
  - Inform? Convince? Entertain?
- Where is the presentation?
  - Exact location? Facilities? Equipment?

Initial Preparation

- When is the presentation?
  - Start time? How much time?
- How will the presentation happen?
  - Who will introduce? How many participants? Dress code?
  - What happens before? What happens afterwards?
**A Presentation Kit**

- Double backup copies of presentation
  - PowerPoint in current and earlier versions
  - Files on at least two media
  - Carried separately to presentation
- Handouts
- Clock or watch
- Whiteboard markers and eraser

**Arrival at Venue**

- Arrive in plenty of time to set up and test your presentation.
- Distribute handouts
  - Before presentation for the audience to take notes.
  - After presentation to hold audience attention or if surprise or suspense is a factor.
- Acquire a glass of water at room temperature.
- Leave as much room light on as possible.
- If appropriate, greet individuals as they arrive.
- Start on time.

**Presentation Content**

**Structure of the Presentation**

These three make up the introduction, body, and conclusion of any great presentation:

- Tell them what you are going to tell them
- Tell them
- Tell them what you told them

**Presentation Outline**

- Title slide
- Purpose of presentation slide
- Presentation outline or agenda slide
- Presentation slides
  - Use transition slides to break up presentation
- Summary slide
- Questions and discussion slide
- References slide
- About the presenter slide (if appropriate)

**Title Slide**

A title slide is a mini-record of the presentation. It includes:

- The title of the presentation
- Who the presentation is for (the audience)
- Who is presenting (you)
- The date
Introducing the Presentation

- The first content slide describes the presentation's goal or purpose (e.g., "to present the results of a study.").
- The next slide is an overview or agenda (i.e., "tell them what you are going to tell them").
- If more than one presenter, introduce the presenters with the agenda.
- Indicate whether questions should be asked during the presentation or at the end.
  Note: This slide illustrates one way to build the slide content.

A Dramatic Beginning!

If appropriate, begin with a powerful presentation opener -- a startling statistic, a story, a dramatic quotation, an engaging question, meaningful humour, a confession, etc.

- New Zealand has the highest rate of EFTPOS terminals in the world -- 78 persons per terminal.
- Once upon a time……
- Competition in 2006 is not business versus business, but supply chain versus supply chain!
- How many of you have purchased something over the Internet? What was it? How did you pay for it?

Emphasise Results

A presentation for a completed study should emphasise results. For example, in a 20-minute presentation:

- Introduce the presentation: 1-2 minutes
- Introduction and background: 3-5 minutes
- Literature review: 0-2 minutes
- Methodology: 1-3 minutes
- Findings and discussion: 7-10 minutes
- Summary: 1 minute
- Questions and discussion: 2-5 minutes

Emphasise What You Will Do

A research-in-progress presentation should emphasise what you intend to do. For example, for a 20-minute presentation:

- Introduce the presentation: 1-2 minutes
- Introduction and background: 3-5 minutes
- Literature review: 0-2 minutes
- Methodology and intent: 7-10 minutes
- Summary: 1 minute
- Questions and discussion: 3-8 minutes

Audience Considerations

Consider the expertise of your audience
- Explain technical terms in language or demonstrations they can understand.
- Avoid TLAs (e.g., ASP, SLA, SMS, VPN).
- Consider audience demographics and mindset in analogies, stories and language.
- Recognise that a conference audience or examination committee will have a higher level of expertise than a multi-disciplinary or general audience.

Making Effective Transitions

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Note: One form of transition slides is illustrated in this presentation, these three slides illustrate an alternative format.
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Graphics in Presentations

Use graphics, but make sure the graphics:
- Are appropriate graphics.
- Are legible graphics… especially charts and graphs that illustrate your results.
- Do not distract from the presentation or the content (e.g., avoid animation graphics like this).

(For more hints, attend “Making an Effective Presentation” in the SLC Postgraduate Seminar Series.)

Concluding the Presentation

- At the end, summarise the key points (i.e., “tell them what you told them”).
- Finish on time
  - Leave time for questions and discussion.
  - If necessary, ask for “last question please”.
- If an external audience (e.g., an academic conference) invite joint research opportunities through the “About the Presenter” slide.
- Thank the audience for their time and attention.

Questions and Answers

- During question time, repeat questions from soft-spoken people or people in the front of the room so the audience know what is the question before you give the answer.
- If you aren’t sure of an answer to a question, don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know” and promise to get back to them with an answer.

Presentation Style
Slide Formatting
- Use large fonts; 24 point is minimum size for text; a title should be 36 point or larger.
- For emphasis, use bold, italic, ALL CAPS, or a different colour but never more than one at the same time.
- Use no more than 36 words per slide.
- Use bullet points as “talking points” and avoid paragraphs.
(For more hints, attend “Making an Effective Presentation” in the SLC Postgraduate Seminar Series.)

Presenter Talking
- Don’t read your material from the slides.
- Don’t read from the slides notes (having notes is okay, just don’t read from them).
- Don’t talk to the screen, talk to the audience with only occasional glances at the screen.
- Make eye contact with areas of your audience on a regular basis (follow the 3-second rule).

Presenter Actions
- Don’t use stick pointers or mouse pointers.
- Use a laser pointer selectively, and put it down when it isn’t being used.
- Dress to meet the audience’s expectations, and slightly more formal than them.
- Use your hands and arms for gestures to describe, emphasise and make natural movements.
(For more hints, attend “Making an Effective Presentation” in the SLC Postgraduate Seminar Series.)

Top Ten Tips for an Effective 20-Minute Presentation
- Arrive early and be prepared.
- Start on time.
- Use handouts.
- Tell them…. Tell them…. Tell them.
- Use graphics wisely and appropriately.
- Timing counts!
- Top three tips for making an effective presentation: practise, Practise, PRACTISE.

Open Forum
- Questions?
- Comments?
- Discussion?