

Tips on how to create and deliver a better presentation

Learn about the four steps that will improve your presentation.

Whether you're working on your first presentation or are already a seasoned speaker, take a look at these proven techniques to create engaging and effective lectures.

Step 1) Plan the Content

Step 2) Design Effective Slides

Step 3) Prepare your Talk

Step 4) Make it Interactive

Let's go through each step:

Step 1: To plan the content, you have to find out what your audience wants or needs to know about the topic you're presenting. How do you find out? Ask the congress' scientific committee: what's the goal of your session, what's the audience level of expertise and what issues may be on their mind.

Once you know the content to be covered, create an outline of your talk. Include your key points, data to support those points and a summary. People will only remember a few points so it's best to focus on a couple of take-home messages.

Begin with a compelling opening (for example, a great anecdote) and end with a strong closing that includes a summary of your talk.

And don't forget to include cases to illustrate your key points: your audience will be more likely to pay attention if you tell them stories!

Step 2: Now comes the fun part, how to **design effective slides!**

Will participants be viewing your presentation on their work laptop, a smartphone, tablet or other mobile device? The majority of virtual congress audiences join via computer; however, having the right balance is important for your presentation to display well on other devices and be as accessible as possible.

Remember that a slide is not your lecture notes, so here are some good guidelines to follow:

- Give each slide a **unique title** using large bold font
- **No more than 5-7 lines per slide**
- **No more than 7 words per line**
- Choose a **single sans serif font size 20-point and up** to ensure your slides easy to read
- Increase the spacing between lines to enhance readability as on-screen reading is more work for our eyes
- Make sure to **add pictures and graphs** that illustrate your key points and stories
- Think about **colors**: the **best for backgrounds** are **blue, black and white**.

- **Use Contrast.** For text, white and light grey are good with dark backgrounds, and black or blue text for white backgrounds. Avoid red and green, because they are difficult for the colorblind.

- **Keep graphics simple.** Because of bandwidth, some images may appear grainy and pixelated online, and gradients can become blurred, or animations freeze up. Keeping your graphics simple will increase the likelihood that any graphics or animations applied will run smoothly.

Accessibility

> Video Captioning. Pre-recorded videos will be made more accessible to hearing-impaired users and non-native English speakers with the addition of ASR (automatic speech recognition) generated captions. The words spoken or shown on-screen will be indexed so users can easily search for content within the video.

> A unique slide title will help with navigation allowing the video captioning to function better and will allow viewers to be able to easily skim the content to get to the right information.

> Using a large sans serif font (such as Arial or Calibri) and sufficient white space will make your presentation more accessible for people who have dyslexia or low vision. Avoid using all capital letters and excessive italics or underlines.

> Using strong contrast for text and background will help people with low vision be able to read your content. White and black schemes make it easier for people who are colorblind to distinguish text and shapes.

> Avoid flashing content. Do not use videos that have more than three flashes within a period of 1 second, as this can provoke seizures in some users with seizure disorders.

Step 3: Prepare for your talk. The main thing to remember is that you should talk to the audience, not to the slides! Rehearse and learn the talk well enough that you don't have to read. Be sure to memorize the first few slides! Starting strong will make you relaxed and your audience engaged.

To connect with the audience: smile, show enthusiasm, and look at the camera. If you are joining a live session or a live Q&A, make sure to attend a technical brief or rehearsal session, so you know what to expect.

Step 4: The last step is making your presentation more interactive. Leave time for audience discussion. If you have the opportunity to use polling or other interactive tools in your session, make use of them. These elements add to your presentation and make it more memorable. Have you ever heard someone complain that a talk was too short? Leave your audience wanting more!

Join the conversation! Head to the virtual networking lounge after your presentation to continue the discussion.