

Making the most of your presentations

Jennifer Doup
Academic Advisor
Agricultural Communication

Points for effective communication

- Effort required for comprehension
- Length of time attention is needed
- Listener's motivation

Preparing for public speaking

- Know your audience
- Define and simplify your purpose/objective
- Check with the organizer to confirm his/her expectations
- Time limit
- Room setup
- A/V, technical, electrical situation

Preparing for public speaking

- Be confident and natural to gain credibility and rapport
- Use eye contact
- Wear appropriate attire
- Interact with the audience, ask questions
- Keep track of time on a wall clock
- Be prepared for problems
- Use humor when appropriate

The speech

- Educate, explain and entertain
- High touch, low tech or high touch, high tech
- Hook your listeners in the first few seconds
- Outline your speech at the beginning
 - Most important information first
- Active verbs, simple and direct sentences/words
- Visuals, examples, analogies

The speech

- Reiterate what you say in different ways for different learners
- Write, edit and cut
- Practice

Presenting as a team

- Select a leader
- Evaluate team members' strengths and weaknesses, personality traits and overall skills
- Each presenter should have their own agenda and responsibilities for the presentation
- Timeline-anticipate extra preparation time

Presenting as a team

- Bringing it all together: introduction, conclusion, transition between parts
 - Consistent look, feel, format and vocabulary
 - Questions from audience
 - Listen and deliver team assistance
- Practice, practice, practice
- Communication
- Dress rehearsal

How to support what you say

- Handouts
- Videos
- Audio
- Props or visuals
- PowerPoint

PowerPoint: The basics

- Talking points, clear, concise
- “Tool” to supplement what you say
- Size: 44 points for titles, around 30 points for text
- Fonts: easy to read, 1-2 fonts (serif and sans serif), compatible across platforms
- Colors: appropriate for speech and audience
- Remain consistent

PowerPoint: Beyond the basics

- Transitions
- Links to Web pages
- Pictures
- Video and sound

Reference

- “The Communicator’s Handbook: Techniques and Technology,” Agricultural Communicators in Education.
- Brody Communications Ltd.
- Center for Business Communication, Carnegie Mellon University