



15 tips for giving a presentation, lecture or workshop

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Introduction

Giving a presentation, workshop or lecture is always exciting, especially when you have to speak a foreign language. At AEEE the conference language is English, although we have presenters and participants from many countries.

For most of them English is not their main language, so we do not expect that their English is perfect, we suggest you do not let your presumed lack of English stand in the way of sharing your knowledge.

Tips for giving a presentation, lecture or workshop (Entrepreneur Network, 2017)

In this document we will mention contribution when we mean presentation, lecture or workshop.

1. Preparation (before filling out the application)

Be aware of the audience you have. By answering the call for contributions carefully analyse for which participants group your contribution is meant. Choose also the right format (standard interactive presentation, straight lecture, workshop or “flipped marketplace”) for your contribution.

Another important part of your preparation is writing a solid and accurate description of your contribution. The more accurate your description is, the better other participants know whether your contribution fits their needs or not.

Do not rush through your application, take your time!



2. Preparation (after approval of your contribution)

Start writing an outline for your contribution. Appendix 1 shows a general outline format, that you can use. All great contributions have three things in common: research, quality and purpose. By creating an outline for your contribution you help yourself creating a great contribution based on your knowledge and passion

You can use PowerPoint to create your outline. Choose “View” in your menu and than “Outline View”. Here you will see all the text currently within your title and text placeholders in a document-style format that appears on the left side of the screen. This will allow you to go through all the text and edit it without having to locate your text boxes one by one, slide by slide (Shapechef, 2017).

Appendix 2 shows a general checklist for preparing your contribution.

Make last minute changes only of that change really contributes to your contribution!



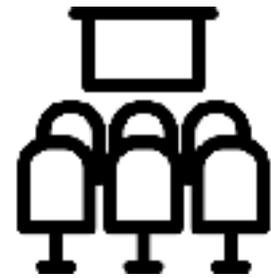
3. Recognize that the space is part of your contribution

Every space is different. Each room has its own energy, illumination angle, seating formation, stage etc.. Be sure that you know where you are presenting, so that you can adjust your contribution to the possibilities, or maybe better adjust the possibilities to your contribution.

Every space has its own set of resources. Be aware that the used device can differ from the devices you are familiar with.

The above mentioned can create limitations in that specified space. Arrive early at the day of your contribution, so you can recognize and solve any room or space issues before your contribution starts.

The space is yours. You are in the lead. Don't feel a guest!



4. Start Strongly

The beginning of your contribution is crucial. You need to grab your audience's attention and hold it (Skillsyouneed, 2017).

Although participants sharing their knowledge with participants your audience want to be entertained. And you will only have a few minutes in which your audience decides whether you are entertaining or dull. And when they decide you are dull, you lose their attention and your valuable knowledge will not reach them. You can start with referring to an actual item, a compelling quote, a great story, a stunning statistic, a funny anecdote or even a (provocative) question. Whatever you do, be sure you get their attention.

And only when you have your audience's attention you can introduce yourself and your topic.

Referring to an actual item: A social or economic actual issue can draw the attention of your audience. Remember all participants have an economic background.

A compelling quote: Referencing the words and thoughts of an expert in relation to your message is useful for establishing an overarching theme or general idea about the topic (Bigfish Presentations, 2017).

A great story: We all have stories and therefore we like stories. By starting up with a story you connect with your audience.

A stunning statistic: Statistics can be boring. However, when used correctly, statistics can be very effective in illuminating your topic. The key is to use very clear, accurate and relevant information in order to truly engage your audience (Bigfish Presentations, 2017).

A funny anecdote: Humour is extremely powerful and is often used effectively. A good joke can loosen up your audience and make them more receptive to you as a person as well as to your message.

A (provocative) question: A question is an excellent tool for jump-starting audience engagement. A question makes the audience think for themselves about a topic that you control. When the question is provocative you will be directly into the minds of your audience. And a simple "How's everyone doing?" opens up a forum of sorts for the audience, empowering them and making them more receptive to your message.

Do not think that your audience automatically pays attention because they choose your contribution based on the subject!



5. Use PowerPoint properly

PowerPoint can be very powerful for your contribution when used to your advantage with automated timings and animations. However it can also be a trap in that it is easy to be tempted into becoming too flashy (Otago, 2017).

Tips for effective use of PowerPoint include:

- Using consistent colours and effect throughout the PowerPoint.
- Keep the font size above 30 points at all times. If your information won't fit at that size you are putting too much information on one page.
- Keep it simple.

Things to avoid:

- Being too flashy and distracting your audience from the message.
- Using PowerPoint as a way of giving yourself something to do.
- Overdoing the animation or the sound effects.
- Never read a slide word for word!



6. Create a conversation (not eligible to a lecture)

In many contributions the presenter is talking to the audience instead of with the audience. When you are designing your contribution point out a couple of points where you have interaction with your audience. That can be through questions, but also by facilitating a small discussion. This makes your contribution more interesting and attractive to the audience. A great side effect is that your status as an expert will be increased because you do not act like a robot presenting the same old story.



Do not tell the same old story you tell everyone. Adjust your contribution any time that you present it.

7. Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core Message

Carefully define what you really want to say by using the outline you created. Your key message consists out of three key points maximum. That is what you want your audience to take home. Check if you can write a key point onto a sticky note. If so than you know that you can communicate this point or message very briefly.

Ask yourself for every subpoint whether this will explain your key point(message) or whether this sub point complicates your key point (message). If you have the answer to that question, you know what to do.

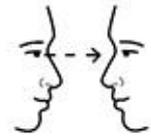
Stick to your own message. Distraction is killing for your contribution!



8. *Smile and Make Eye Contact with your Audience*

This sounds easy, but many presenters fail to do it.

Some will be prevented from smiling because of their nerves, or because they are not confident. Determine your withhold for smiling and practise your smiling (e.g. for your own mirror).



The old paradigm of “when you are nervous, look to a point in the back of the room above your audience” has learned many of us to avoid making eye contact during our contributions. But if you smile and make eye contact you are building rapport which helps the audience to connect with you and your subject. It also helps you connecting with your audience so that your contribution is not about talking to complete strangers, but to human individuals. It also helps you to feel less nervous.

Do not fall into the trap of turning the light so low that only your screen can be seen!

9. *Tell Stories*

Stories can captivate the attention of the audience. Stories also help us to pay attention and remembering things. So using stories in your contribution will help your audience more engaged and also help them remember your points afterwards. Check Appendix 3 for story telling tips.

Do not tell a story just for stories ‘sake!



10. *Use your Voice Effectively*

Your voice is not the most efficient tool in communication. However not paying attention to the way you speak can be dramatic for your contribution. Varying the speed at which you talk, and emphasising changes in pitch and tone all help to make your voice more interesting and hold your audience’s attention.

Checkout Appendix 4 for more information about using your voice.

Visual aids can prevent you from paying attention to the use of your voice!



11. *Use Body Language*

It has been estimated that a great part of communication is non-verbal.

A very import form of non-verbal communication is body language.

Body language may reveal more than our carefully chosen words, and sometimes be at odds with them. Since much if not most of the

nonverbal signalling and reading of signals is automatic and performed outside our conscious awareness and control, through our nonverbal cues we unwittingly communicate a great deal of information about ourselves and our state of mind. The gestures we make, the position in which we hold our bodies, the expressions we wear on our faces and the nonverbal qualities of our speech – all contribute to how others view us (Mlodinow, 2017). Make sure that you are giving the right messages: body language to avoid includes crossed arms, hands held behind your back or in your pockets, and pacing the stage.



Make your gestures open and confident, and move naturally around the stage, and among the audience too, if possible!

12. *End strongly*

Finishing your contribution is just as important as starting your contribution. People tend to have two things in top of mind about your contribution: the start and the end. You can give the best contribution ever, but with a lousy start or finish the appreciation for your contribution will decline. Use the tips mentioned at point 4 (Start strongly) to end strongly too.

End with a bang, not with a whimper!



13. *Create question time*

Instead of fearing questions see them as a great opportunity to ensure your message has been understood (Otago, 2017, p. 19). Always reserve sufficient time for at least three questions to be asked.



Tips for handling questions

- Ensure you address your answer to the person asking the question and the wider group as often others will be interested in the answer. In a large audience repeat the question to be sure everyone has heard the question.
- If someone asks a question which requires a long and involved answer that probably does not relate to others in the audience, ask them to come and see you afterwards to discuss it one-on-one.
- If an audience member argues with your answer, say "I don't want to focus too much on that, perhaps we can discuss it afterwards".
- If one person is dominating the question time, ask "does anyone else have any questions".

When you really want questions ask always "who has the first question?"!

14. *Relax, Breathe and Enjoy*

If you find presenting difficult, it can be hard to be calm and relaxed about doing it. If you can bring yourself to relax, you will almost certainly present better and even enjoy presenting more. If you can actually start to enjoy yourself, your audience will respond to that, and engage better. Your contributions will improve exponentially, and so will your confidence.



It is entirely natural to feel nervous before making a contribution. Many presenters feel nervous beforehand despite having given hundreds of presentations. Being nervous is not a problem or a weakness, you just need to channel your nervous energy wisely. On the other hand, being over-confident and not nervous could be a weakness! Appendix 5 helps you to cope with these nerves.

You are the specialist, the audience comes to linking themselves to your knowledge!

15. *Get some coaching*

Many professional speakers use a professional coach at some point to help with presentation skills. This document can help you developing your presentation skills. Find out if your organization offers training for presentation skills or attend a presentation skills class somewhere in your community. You can also use a private coach to help you polish your skills.



All these things help you getting amazingly better results because you've had someone give you feedback in an objective way on what you do well, and what you need to improve on. Most members of the board are experienced presenters and are willing to help you preparing your contribution.

If you think coaching can help you, mark that on your application form!

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Appendix 1: General outline for an oral presentation

Source: University of Hawaii (2017)

Introduction

- I. Attention-getting statement - gain the attention of the audience by using a quotation, telling a brief story or humorous anecdote, asking a question, etc.
- II. Thesis statement - state the specific purpose of your presentation here.
- III. Preview statement - overview of all of your main points.

Body

- I. First main point
 - A. Subpoint
 - i. Sub-subpoint
 - ii. Sub-subpoint
 - B. Subpoint
 - i. Sub-subpoint
 - ii. Sub-subpoint
 - iii. Sub-subpoint
- II. Second main point
 - A. Subpoint
 - i. Sub-subpoint
 - ii. Sub-subpoint
 - B. Subpoint
 - i. Sub-subpoint
 - ii. Sub-subpoint
 - iii. Sub-subpoint
 - C. Subpoint

Note: The number of main points, subpoints and sub-subpoints you use will vary depending on how much information you have to convey and how much detail and supporting material you need to use. Subpoints and sub-subpoints are comprised of the supporting material you gather in your research.

You should rarely have more than five main points in any presentation.

Conclusion

- I. Summary statement - review all of your main points.
- II. Concluding statement - prepare a closing statement that ends your presentation smoothly.

Appendix 2: General checklist for preparing your contribution

(Otago, 2017, p. 20)

Check	✓
Have you identified the aim of your presentation?	
Have you thought about the audience?	
Do you know how much time you have?	
Is your presentation set out in a logical manner?	
Have you rehearsed your presentation?	
Have you anticipated and prepared for questions?	
Are any aids clear and legible?	
Have you checked for spelling and grammar?	
Are your handouts clear and legible?	
Do you have enough copies of the handouts?	
Are you using technology?	
If you are using technology, have you arranged to visit the room?	
Do you have a contingency plan if the technology breaks down?	
Have you built in time to warm up and calm your nerves?	
Have you arranged for time notification?	

“People trust you to give them the information they need. Enjoy the opportunity to build knowledge together.”

Appendix 3: Story Telling Tips

(Nuts & Bolts Speed Training, 2017)

1. Find Your Characters And Make Them The Focal Point Of Your Contribution
2. Set The Stage By Describing Where You Are Now And Where You Want To Be In The Future
3. Describe What Needs To Be Overcome And Highlight Why This Will Be Difficult
4. Emotionally Invest Your Audience In The Struggle (Define Failure Or The Status Quo)
5. Emotionally Invest Your Audience In The Outcome (Define What Success Looks like)
6. Challenge Your Audience's Assumptions By Adding A Twist
7. Onboard Your Audience With An Interesting Metaphor THEY Can Relate To
8. Show Your Audience Exactly What You Are Talking About
9. Highlight The Important By Cutting Out The Unimportant
10. Use Sound Effects To Anchor Important Details In Your Contribution
11. Use Silence To Create Emphasis And Draw Your Audience Into Your Story
12. Create A Warm Fuzzy Feeling By Sharing A Personal Or Vulnerable Experience
13. Pace Out Your Story To Allow Your Audience To Breathe
14. Turn Your Important Data Points Into Memory Glue
15. End Your Story With A Bang And Then Shut Up

We choose to write down the headlines of the tips only. But you can check out the detailed tips at <https://nutsandboltsspeedtraining.com/storytelling-tips/>

Appendix 4: Using your voice

The following three core elements of vocal production need to be understood for anyone wishing to become an effective speaker (Skillsyouneed, 2017):

- **Volume** - to be heard.
- **Clarity** - to be understood.
- **Variety** - to add interest.

Volume

This is not a question of treating the voice like the volume control on the TV remote. Some people have naturally soft voices and physically cannot bellow. Additionally, if the voice is raised too much, tonal quality is lost. Instead of raising the voice it should be '*projected out*'. Support the voice with lots of breath - the further you want to project the voice out, the more breath you need.

When talking to a group or meeting, it is important to never aim your talk to the front row or just to the people nearest you, but to consciously project what you have to say to those furthest away. By developing a *strong voice*, as opposed to a loud voice, you will be seen as someone positive.

Clarity

Some people tend to speak through clenched teeth and with little movement of their lips. It is this inability to open mouths and failure to make speech sounds with precision that is the root cause of inaudibility. The sound is locked into the mouth and not let out. To have good articulation it is important to unclench the jaw, open the mouth and give full benefit to each sound you make, paying particular attention to the ends of words. This will also help your audience as a certain amount of lip-reading will be possible.

Variety

To make speech effective and interesting, certain techniques can be applied. However, it is important not to sound false or as if you are giving a performance. Whilst words convey meaning, how they are said reflects feelings and emotions. Vocal variety can be achieved by variations in:

- **Pace:** This is the speed at which you talk. If speech is too fast then the listeners will not have time to assimilate what is being said. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to vary the pace - quickening up at times and then slowing down – this will help to maintain interest.
- **Volume:** By raising or lowering volume occasionally, you can create emphasis. If you drop your voice to almost a whisper (as long as it is projected) for a sentence or two, it will make your audience suddenly alert, be careful not to overuse this technique.
- **Pitch - Inflection - Emphasis:** When speaking in public, try to convey the information with as much vocal energy and enthusiasm as possible. This does not mean your voice has to swoop and dive all over the place in an uncontrolled manner. Try to make the talk interesting and remember that when you are nervous or even excited, vocal chords tense and shorten causing the voice to get higher. Emphasise certain words and phrases within the talk to convey their importance and help to add variety.
- **Pause:** Pauses are powerful. They can be used for effect to highlight the preceding statement or to gain attention before an important message. Pauses mean silence for a few seconds. Listeners interpret meaning during pauses so have the courage to stay silent for up to five seconds – dramatic pauses like this convey authority and confidence.

Appendix 5: Coping with nerves

Do not fixate on the contribution delivery at the expense of good preparation. Spend time preparing, good preparation, knowing your subject well and knowing what you are going to say and how you are going to say it will boost your confidence and help reduce your nerves. Think of a contribution like an iceberg what your audience sees - the delivery - is a small percentage of the whole. What goes on, out of sight, the planning and preparation should make up the bulk of the work (Skillsyouneed, 2017).

When you feel nervous before a contribution, the following strategies and exercises should help you:

Practice Deep Breathing

Adrenalin causes your breathing to shallow. By deliberately breathing deeply your brain will get the oxygen it needs and the slower pace will trick your body into believing you are calmer. This also helps with voice quivers, which can occur when your breathing is shallow and irregular.

Drink Water

Adrenalin can cause a dry mouth, which in turn leads to getting tongue-tied. Have a glass or bottle of water handy and take sips occasionally, especially when you wish to pause or emphasize a point. Take care not to take large gulps of water.

Chew Gum

Chewing gum before a contribution may help you to feel more relaxed. Research has shown that the act of chewing can increase your alertness and help to reduce anxiety. It is usually best to get rid of the gum when you start your contribution.

Smile

Smiling is a natural relaxant that sends positive chemical messages through your body. Smiling and maintaining eye contact also help you build rapport with your audience.

Use Visualization Techniques

Imagine that you are delivering your contribution to an audience that is interested, enthused, smiling, and reacting positively. Cement this positive image in your mind and recall it just before you are ready to start.

Self-Massage

Press and massage your forehead to energize the front of the brain and speech centre.

Pause

Just before you start talking, pause, make eye contact, and smile. This last moment of peace is very relaxing and gives you time to adjust to being the centre of attention.

Slow Down

Speak more slowly than you would in a conversation, and leave longer pauses between sentences. This slower pace will calm you down, and it will also make you easier to hear, especially at the back of a large room.

Move Around

Move around a little during your contribution as this will expend some of your nervous energy. However, try not to pace backwards and forwards or rock on your heels as these activities can be distracting to your audience.

Stop Thinking About Yourself

Remember that the audience is there to get some information and that it is your job to put that information across to them. Try to put your nerves aside and think about communicating your message as effectively as possible.