Oral Presentation Guidelines and Advice

Guidelines

Time: 12 min for presentation, 3 min for questions.

Visuals: Presentation should be in a format compatible with PC software. (PowerPoint.)

Content: Your presentation should provide an overview of your project(s) and research with your public land agency.

Criteria: GSA Annual Meeting Presentation Criteria

10 Tips for an Effective Oral Presentation

1) **Keep your presentation organized:**
   Have an: Introduction, Your Message, Body (supporting points), Conclusion. Make sure that there are connections between your ideas.
2) **Work out your timing:**
   Plan your presentation and its content according to your allotted time. Good rules of thumb: Two minutes per slide, one main idea per slide with three to six supporting points.
3) **Have your presentation finished early:**
   It is essential that you have a chance to check that your slides function properly on the presentation computer. Presenting to a friend, colleague, or mirror ahead of time is also helpful.
4) **Be heard:**
   Project your voice. You need to be heard in the back of the room.
5) **Be aware of your body language and how you use your notes:**
   Face forward, and don't hide behind your notes. Avoid reading your notes word for word at all costs! Notes with prompts, instead of a script, can be a great help.
6) **Visual materials should supplement, reinforce and aid your presentation:**
   Images should illustrate or highlight points and be high quality. Graphs should be easy to read. Limit text on slide to titles, or no more than 6 lines with 6 words per line.
7) **Use easy to read and widely supported fonts**
   Some unique fonts are hard to read and are not supported on different platforms. Examples of Best Fonts: Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, Verdana.
8) **Keep slides uncluttered and simple**
   Make sure everything can be seen and read clearly. Limit logos and other acknowledgements to Cover or Thank You slides.
9) **Make your slides cohesive**
   Use the same background for all of your slides, and use the same one or two (at most) fonts for all of your slides.
10) **Be prepared for questions**
    Questions after your presentation are a good sign – they show interest. Take time to think about what questions you might ask yourself about your work.

Additional Resources on Effective Presentations:

- No More Lousy PowerPoint Slides, a GSA Today "Groundwork" article by Eric S. Cheney
- Making Effective Scientific Presentations by Gary Lewis