

Establish Rapport with the Audience

- Connect with your audience
 - Tell a joke or a story to break the ice
- Make the talk accessible to the audience
 - The beginning of the talk, at least, should be understandable to anyone in the audience
- Talk to the audience
 - Don't read from your paper or your notes
 - Speak so that you can be heard
- Be cognizant of the audience's concerns

Tips on Giving Talks

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1

3

Be Professional

- Be honest
- Acknowledge the work of others

Some Obvious Recommendations

- Make sure you have something to say
- Try to make the talk interesting
- Tailor the talk to the expected audience
- Organize, organize, and organize

2

4

Use Slides

- Keep the number of words to a minimum
 - One line phrases are best
 - But always be precise
- Consider using “landscape” slides
- If possible, have a paper or “annotated slides” ready to hand out at the end of the talk
- Have a concise conclusion slide

Do not Depend on Special Facilities

- Avoid using computers and computer networks
 - If it is necessary, bring your own equipment
- Make no assumptions about the arrangement in the room

Use Notation, Tables, and Diagrams

- Explain what your notation, tables, and diagrams mean
 - Use traditional notation when available
 - Introduce new notation if necessary
 - Practice good abuse of notation
 - Keep tables and diagrams simple
 - Cartoons can be very effective

Use the Talk to Sell the Paper

- Avoid technical details unless they are crucial
- Repeat key points several times

5

7

6

8

Handle Questions with Care

- Questions and comments can be very helpful
- Use questions to gain feedback from the audience
 - Before the talk, think about the most likely questions and how you would answer them
 - You might want to prepare slides for these questions
 - Use color with great care
 - Use sound effects and animation very sparingly
 - Cut off long-winded comments

Manage Your Time

- Finish when your time is up
- Have some material that can be deleted and some material that can be added
- Don't "flash" slides
- If necessary, delay questions to the end of the talk

Be Conservative

- Use simple slides
- Avoid nontraditional presentations
 - Don't be flippant, cute, or fancy
 - Don't use lots of fonts
 - Use color with great care
 - Use sound effects and animation very sparingly

9

11

Keep control of the talk

- Don't allow talking in the audience
- Deflect hostile questions
 - Don't argue with members of the audience during the talk
 - Don't let someone else hijack your talk

10

12

Some Special Tactics

- In some cases, it helps to make the audience feel that they are smart
- Make a “mandated” talk your own talk
 - Only talk about what you really understand
- Try to have your talk scheduled in the early part of a conference or meeting
 - Not first thing in the morning
 - Not immediately after lunch
 - Not at the very end

Final Tip

- Choose a simple, proven format for your talk
- But put most of your creativity into the content of your talk, not into the format

13

15

Practice

- Practice but do not let your talk become stiff
- Give a “dry run” of your talk before a real audience
- Solicit criticism from your colleagues

14