

Speaker Presentation Guidelines

American Society of Civil Engineers

Congratulations on your acceptance to give a presentation at the **2003 World Water & Environmental Congress**. This is an excellent opportunity for you to share knowledge and information with your colleagues.

It is important that you prepare an interesting and informative presentation for the congress, rather than just reading your paper. The following guidelines will assist you in doing this.

PREPARING YOUR TALK:

1. **TOPIC:** be sure your audience is fully aware of your goals.
2. **PRESENTATION STYLE:** Consider, if you were sitting in the audience, how you would like the information presented.
3. **OBJECTIVE:** Choose main points and objectives and elaborate on them.
4. **TIME LIMIT:** 25 minutes, including the time for your introduction and for you to walk to the lectern. If there are fewer than 4 papers in your session there may be extra time at the end of the session. This can be used for additional questions, as designated by the moderator.
5. **AUDIO-VISUAL:** Each room will be equipped with an LCD projector and screen for a PowerPoint presentation. Each room will also have a microphone. If you need other equipment, please advise the Conference Department by May 23 so that the equipment will be available for you. Other equipment that can be used: overhead projector, 35 mm slide projector, VCR (you must specify the format).

Presentations can generally be divided into three main parts:

1. **Introduction/Opening**
 - State your goal or ideas in general terms.
 - Share a relevant story, anecdote, or quote, or utilize a metaphor to set the theme.
 - Use humor very carefully; it can be powerful and engaging, but jokes, as a particular form of humor, are risky and difficult to use successfully.
2. **Body**
 - Discuss your main idea(s) in detail.
 - Use supporting examples
 - Use visual aids to reinforce specific examples or main themes. But do not use visual aids that simply repeat what you are saying in your talk.
 - Reiterate your points.

- Develop a theme.

3. Closing

- Summarize your main points, restating them in a memorable way.
- Explain the value of your discussion.
- Reiterate the plan of action or any future plans.
- Return to the opening theme or story.
- Share another relevant story, anecdote, or quote.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING YOUR VISUAL AIDS:

Once you have prepared your talk, you may then decide to incorporate visual aids into your presentation. Remember, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” A Harvard University study reveals that individuals comprehend about 7% of information they obtain verbally. They comprehend 87% when information is delivered both verbally and visually. This works best when your visual aids are interesting or dramatic.

- No matter what types of visual aids you choose, remember the acronym KISS (Keep it Short & Simple) and the old saying “Less is More.”
- Choose your visual aids carefully and make each one count.
- Determine if the information really needs visual representation – will it really help to explain your point? Too much information may overwhelm an audience.
- It is also important to prepare your visual aids so that everyone in the audience will be able to see the information. There is nothing worse than telling an audience, “Those in the back of the room won’t be able to see some of the information on this slide, so I’ll explain...”
- Before you finalize your presentation, try it out at your office or home. Stand at least 30 feet away to see if all elements are visible.
- The Speaker Preparation Room will be available throughout the Congress. Please see the Congress schedule for times.

PowerPoint, Slides and Overheads

- Use only one (1) idea per slide or overhead
- Keep it bold, simple, uncluttered and colorful.
- With color copy, never use black type on a dark-colored background or white letters on a light-colored background.
- Use large, (18+ point size) simple block letters; the best type font is a bold sans serif (e.g. Arial).
- Use upper and lower case letters.
- Use only vertical, not slanted (italic) letters
- For graphs and charts, use heavy lines for curves and use a minimum of lightweight grid lines. No more than two curves or bars on a graph.
- Space between lines should equal the height of the letters.
- Use only horizontal lettering unless absolutely necessary (such as on graphs); other lettering is difficult for the audience to read, especially at longer distances.
- Remember, **If you are making a computer-generated presentation, you MUST bring your laptop with you. ASCE will not be able to supply any laptops for your use. If you do not have a laptop computer, please discuss alternatives with your session moderator.**

- Please understand that your presentation time begins when you are introduced. To maximize your presentation time, please make sure any computer-based presentations are pre-loaded on your computer and ready to go when you arrive at the session room. You may take advantage of the Speaker Preparation Room for this purpose.
- Begin and end the presentation with a thematic logo slide.
- If you anticipate the need to stop for discussion during the slide presentation, insert a logo or black slide so that you won't have a slide up that has outlived the interaction.

Special for **35 mm slides**:

- If you refer to a particular slide twice during your presentation, make two copies of the slide and place them in the appropriate sequence, this will allow your presentation to flow smoothly.
- Check and double-check your carousel. There is a Caramate slide viewer in the Speaker Preparation Room.

Special for **Overheads**:

- DO NOT simply photocopy a page, as it will usually not be easy to read as an overhead.
- Organize your projection table with plenty of "feeding" space on one side and "discard" space on the other – transparencies love to slide to the floor, especially during presentations.
- You may use a sheet of paper to cover portions of information until you want the audience to see them, that way you can use one overhead for a broader range of ideas.
- If you refer to a transparency more than once during your presentation, make two copies of that transparency.
- Arrange your transparencies prior to your presentation; hunting for transparencies will interrupt the flow of your presentation.

Special for **Video**:

- Show only top quality tapes, never those that have been copied over and over.
- Review your tape ahead of time, make sure the video and sound quality are good from the beginning to end.

Special for **Exhibits**:

- There may be times when you will be able to actually use what you are talking about as a visual aid – make sure that everyone can see it.
- This is best done with a small group.

The Final Step:

- Practice, Practice, Practice!
- The presentation should be well rehearsed, as papers should not be read, but rather a presentation prepared.
- As you practice, be extra conscious of such things as elocution and time constraints.
- If you have practiced your presentation and are comfortable with your material and visual aids, then you will be more relaxed and an effective speaker.

BEST OF LUCK ON YOUR PRESENTATION!