



AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE ECONOMICS PROFESSION Top 10 List



Giving an Effective Presentation

Congratulations! Your paper has been selected for presentation at the ASSA (or some other wonderful conference). Now how do you avoid diminishing that success by making a poor or ineffective presentation? Here are some important tips from those who have been there.

- 1. Identify your main point (finding, opinion, etc.) and state it succinctly up front.** The conference presentation is an opportunity to sell your paper and entice others to read it. You can not relay all the details of your paper in 15-20 minutes so try to convince the audience that it will be worth their while to read the full paper or, better yet, talk to you about it. (This approach facilitates networking!)
- 2. Repeat your main point (or summarize your findings) at the end of your presentation.** It is important to help people remember what was important and what you concluded.
- 3. Speak clearly and loudly.** If you have a soft voice, use the microphone and ask someone in the audience to change slides for you. Do not apologize for the topic, the range of the analysis, the minor difficulties, etc.
- 4. Know your audience.** Determine the level of the audience – especially the technical level and fit your presentation to that level.
- 5. Do not show your back.** Never turn your back to the audience and talk to the screen. Do not get in the way of the projector light. Use a pointer if necessary to identify the important parts of the slide rather than turning to face it.
- 6. Stick to your time limit.** Find out how many minutes are allocated to your presentation. Do not try to fit your hour long presentation into 15 minutes.
 - If you do not have enough time to get through all your slides, skip enough so that you do not have to rush through them.
 - Limit the time you spend talking about other's research. Focus on your own contribution.
- 7. Practice before you present.** Never give a presentation without practicing at least once to be sure that it will fit into the time frame and that you know how to move from one point to the next. Include your visual aids in your practice.

8. Prepare your visuals to be a POSITIVE, not a Negative.

- **Use a large font size on visual aids.** A font size of 28 or higher will ensure that the audience will be able to read your slides. Use a large font size for mathematical notation and empirical results, as well as for text.
- **Never cut and paste a table from your paper onto a slide.** These tables are never easy to read and only irritate your audience. Instead, choose a few results that you want to highlight and present them on a slide in no smaller than 28 font.
- **Do not put too much information on any one slide.** Use visual aids that reinforce what you say in order to keep the audience focused.
- **Use bullet points instead of complete sentences on your slides.** Do not write out everything that you will say and then read them to your audience.
- **Find out what AV equipment will be available to you and prepare accordingly.** Do not bring a Power Point presentation if the conference does not have the facilities to project from your computer.
- **Do not include information on visual aids that you do not intend to discuss.** Extra information on visual aids distracts the audience from your message.



9. Be kind to your discussant. This is your opportunity to begin to build a relationship with someone else interested in the same topic. These networking relationships are important. Get a version of your paper to your discussant at least two weeks prior to the conference. Ask the discussant if they need anything else or want to talk to you before the session. (They probably will not have time but if they talk to you it may change some of your presentation!) If you are unable to get your paper to your discussant ahead of time you need to send a draft copy of your slides so that the discussant has some idea of what you are doing. NOTIFY your discussant if anything is going to be late.

10. Do not get bogged down with questions. Answer questions of general interest that further your presentation. Respond to questions that are of interest to only one person by suggesting you discuss it after the presentation. If there are too many questions tell them that you have a few more points to make and then will get back to the questions (or ask them to save them for a later discussion).

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