May 2025

INCOSE International Symposium Guidelines for Speakers and Session Chairs

Contents

Introduction

This document provides guidance for speaking and managing sessions at the Annual INCOSE International Symposium. These guidelines address all types of sessions and presentations, including papers, paperless presentations, panels, tutorials, and posters.

This document includes: guidelines for managing a session, panel, or tutorial; guidelines for presenting a paper or paperless presentation; information about preparing and presenting posters; and suggestions for how to maximize the impact of a presentation. Reading this document does not eliminate the need for all speakers and session chairs to attend the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast at 07:00 on the morning of their session or presentation. General instructions and venue-specific instructions will be provided at the breakfast. Additionally, attendance will be taken at the breakfast to determine which backup session chairs and backup speakers need to be deployed.

All speakers, session chairs, and conference attendees are reminded that the Symposium is a professional and educational event focused on sharing systems engineering ideas, knowledge, and practices in a positive way. Presentations, attendee questions, and resulting discussion must not promote or voice an opinion on politics, religion, race, or gender, and further must not include derogatory statements about any people, groups, or organizations. Additionally, all presentations and discussion should uphold the INCOSE Code of Ethics, which is available at the following link: *https://www.incose.org/about-incose/leadership-organization/code-of-ethics*.

Additional Support

Prior to the Symposium, use the email addresses below for help addressing any issues related to your session or presentation. For assistance during the Symposium, contact information will be provided at the Speaker and Session Chair Breakfast.

- Technical Program Chair – for session or presentation-related assistance
  Email*: symposiumTPC@incose.net*

- Conference Management – for A/V, signage, or room-related assistance
  Email: symposium@incose.net

- INCOSE Administrative Office – for general INCOSE information
  Tel: +1 858-541-1725
  Email: *info@incose.net*

Guidelines for Session Chairs

This section is intended for the session chairs assigned to each paper / paperless presentation session.

Instructions

By managing an INCOSE International Symposium session, you help ensure that speakers and conference attendees get the most out of our exciting technical program. Additionally, we hope that your interest in the subject matter will make this a fulfilling experience for you.

Session chairs are required to attend the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast on the morning of their assigned session. The breakfast begins at 07:00 local time; please be punctual since a backup may be asked to take your place if you are late. The breakfast is an opportunity to meet with the speakers in your session, ensure that all speakers are present, and collect any additional information needed to manage the session. Critical instructions, venue-specific information, and last-minute changes will be communicated during this time.

The important responsibilities of managing a session should not be taken lightly. INCOSE speakers and attendees have come to expect engaging sessions that run smoothly and according to the scheduled program. Please contact Symposium management immediately if circumstances prevent you from performing this essential duty.

Follow the guidelines below to manage your session:

Preparation

- Email your cell phone number to the Technical Program Chair at the address provided above so the technical program staff can contact you if necessary during the Symposium.

- Familiarize yourself with the content (for example, papers) for your session and be prepared to ask questions to stimulate audience participation if necessary.

- Upon arrival at the conference, locate the posted room for your session and the Speaker Ready Room.

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

- The breakfast will start promptly at 07:00 local time in the Speaker Ready Room. Plan to arrive at least 5 minutes early and sit at the table with your session number.

  Note: Table numbers include the session number and track assignment in the format *Session*.*Track*. For example, the table for Session 1, Track 5 is labeled "1.5".

- Contact each speaker in your session and make sure that all speakers have loaded their presentations either on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room or via the conference platform. Volunteers will be present to assist with this task. Presentations must be correctly identified to ensure they are available in the correct room.

- Remind the speakers that they must start and stop promptly and that you will provide them with signals for time remaining and when to stop.

- Agree on a short introduction (1 or 2 sentences) for each speaker and confirm the proper pronunciation of each speaker's name.

- If any challenges occur, such as a speaker being absent, contact the appropriate resource for assistance as directed at the breakfast.
- A few of the presenters are going to be remote. If this is the case, use the zoom session at the breakfast to coordinate with the presenter.

During the Session

- Arrive in the room for your session at least 5 minutes before the session is scheduled to start.
- Before the session begins, check that all presentations for the session are loaded on the computer and ready to be presented.

  Note: Do not use a USB stick on the session room computer unless approved by Symposium staff. In the past there have been many issues with session room computers becoming corrupt during the Symposium due to viruses on USB sticks. If you find that a presentation is not properly loaded on the computer, immediately contact Symposium staff for technical assistance.

- The session must start promptly, and each presentation must also start and end promptly according to the published session schedule and the time management guidance below. Do not start a presentation early. (Exact timing is important because some attendees may change sessions during the 5-minute break between presentations.)
- Briefly introduce each speaker using the introduction agreed to at the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast.
- If necessary, ask your prepared questions to stimulate audience participation if no one from the audience initially poses questions. Give the audience questions priority.
- Ask attendees to use the Symposium app to leave feedback on each presentation and thank them for making this extra effort to provide input on the conference.

Time Management

- Each 3-paper session is allocated a total of 130 minutes. Each 2-paper session is allocated a total of 85 minutes.
- Each speaker is assigned a maximum of 30 minutes for their presentation; the remaining time (at least 10 minutes) is allocated for introduction of the speaker and questions and answers. The 5-minute period between presentations allows attendees to switch sessions if desired.
- Signal the speaker when their allotted time is coming to an end (5 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute remaining) and when to stop. Placards will be provided in each room for this purpose for in person presenters; use the zoom chat to signal remote presenters. If the speaker does not stop shortly after being signaled to do so, it is your responsibility to politely interrupt, end the presentation, and transition to Q&A. The 30-minute period for presentations must be strictly enforced to be fair to other speakers and attendees.

Session Chair Checklist

The checklist below summarizes the key points to remember as a session chair.

Preparation

☐   Read the content for the session.

☐   Prepare a question to ask each presenter.

☐   Upon arrival at the conference, locate the posted room for your session and the Speaker Ready Room.

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

☐   Arrive by 06:55 local time and sit at the table with your session number.

☐   Bring any unresolved issues and questions for the session to the attention of the Technical Program Chair or Co-Chair.

☐   Report any missing speakers immediately to the Technical Program Chair or Co-Chair.

☐   Ensure speakers have uploaded their presentations to the computer at the event or via the conference platform.

☐   Remind speakers that you will indicate when time is running out and that they must stop on time.

☐   Agree to introductions and confirm pronunciation of names for speakers.

During the Session

☐   Arrive at least 5 minutes before the session is scheduled to start.

☐   Confirm that all presentations are queued-up on the session room computer.

☐   Briefly introduce each speaker before they start their presentation.

☐   Ask your prepared questions if there are no initial questions from the audience, remote (if applicable) or in-person.

☐   Ask attendees to use the Symposium app to leave feedback on each presentation.

Time Management

☐   Strictly manage times to allow 30 minutes for the presentation, 10 minutes for Q/A, and 5 minutes between presentations.

☐   Signal each in person speaker when the remaining time for their presentation is 5 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute and when to stop.

Guidelines for Paper and Paperless Presentations

This section is intended for all speakers presenting a paper or paperless presentation.

Instructions

By presenting a paper or presentation in one or more INCOSE International Symposium sessions, you will help INCOSE and conference attendees get the most out of our exciting technical program this year.

Presenters are required to attend the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast on the morning of their assigned session. A zoom link will be provided for remote presenters. The breakfast begins at 07:00 local time; please be punctual since a backup presenter may be asked to take your place if you are late. The breakfast is an opportunity to meet with the session chair and other speakers in your session. Critical instructions, venue-specific information, and last-minute changes will be communicated during this time.

The responsibility for presenting at a session should not be taken lightly. INCOSE attendees have come to expect engaging sessions that run smoothly and according to the scheduled program. Please contact Symposium management immediately if circumstances prevent you from performing this important duty.

Follow the guidelines below to facilitate your presentation:

Preparation

- Use the template for presentation slides available from the Downloads section of the INCOSE IS website: *http://www.incose.org/symp2025/Downloads*.

- Review the presentation best practices offered in this document.

- Presentations <u>must not</u> be used for the promotion of any commercial product or interest, and further <u>must not</u> promote or voice an opinion on political or religious matters.

- If you have special movies or presentations designed for an Apple computer, it is recommended that you bring your own laptop in case your special presentation will not work on the Windows-based laptop provided. The electronic projectors provided will have XVGA capability.

- Upon arrival at the Symposium, locate the posted room for your session and the Speaker Ready Room.

- Upload your presentation to the presentation portal. If you have not done so before arriving, you can upload your presentation on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room between 14:30 and 18:00 the day before your scheduled presentation.

- Presentations will be rated by attendees based on the following characteristics:
  - presentation skills
  - scientific contributions
  - industrial relevance
  - question and answer session

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

- The breakfast will start promptly at 07:00 local time in the Speaker Ready Room; plan to arrive at least 5 minutes early and sit at the table with your session number.

    Note: Table numbers include the session number and track assignment in the format *Session.Track*. For example, the table for Session 1, Track 5 is labeled "1.5".

- Meet and discuss your presentation with the session chair.

- If you have not already done so, load your presentation on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room. Volunteers will be present to assist with this task. Presentations must be correctly identified to ensure they are available in the correct room.

During the Session

- Arrive in the room for your session at least 5 minutes before the session is scheduled to start. For remote presenters, please log into the zoom session at least 5 minutes before the session.

- Before the session begins, check that your presentation is loaded on the computer and ready to be presented.

    Note: Do not use a USB stick on the session room computer unless approved by Symposium staff. In the past there have been many issues with session room computers becoming corrupt during the Symposium due to viruses on USB sticks.

- The session must start promptly, and each presentation must also start and end promptly according to the published session schedule. (Exact timing is important because some attendees may change sessions during the 5-minute break between presentations.)

Time Management

- Each speaker is assigned a maximum of 30 minutes for their presentation; the remaining time (at least 10 minutes) is allocated for introduction of the speaker and questions and answers. The 5-minute period between presentations allows attendees to switch sessions if desired.

- Follow the signals from your session chair. You will be signaled when your allotted time is coming to an end (5 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute remaining) and when to stop. The 30-minute period for presentations must be strictly enforced to be fair to other presenters and attendees.

Paper and Paperless Presentation Checklist

The checklist below summarizes the key points to remember as a presenter.

Preparation

☐   Use the INCOSE template for your slides.

☐   Use the presentation best practices and resources noted to make your presentation engaging.

☐   Upon arrival at the conference, locate your assigned room and the Speaker Ready Room.

☐   If you have not uploaded your presentation to the presenter portal already, upload your presentation on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room between 14:30 and 18:00 the day before your scheduled presentation.

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

☐   In person presenter, arrive at 06:55 local time and sit at the table with your session number. Remote presenters, log into the zoom session at 6:55 local time.

☐   Meet and discuss your brief introduction and confirm the pronunciation of your name with your session chair.

☐   Ensure that your presentation has been uploaded to the computer and associated with the correct room.

During the Session

☐   Arrive at least 5 minutes before the session is scheduled to start.

☐   Ensure that your presentation is queued-up on the session room computer.

☐   Presentations must start and end according to the schedule. No overruns are allowed.

Time Management

☐   Allow 30 minutes for your presentation, 10 minutes for Q/A, and 5 minutes between presentations.

☐   During your presentation, the session chair will signal you when the remaining time for your presentation is 5 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute and when to stop.

Guidelines for Panels and Tutorials

This section is intended for the moderator and all panelists involved in a panel and all tutorial instructors. The panel moderator or primary tutorial instructor is responsible for managing their panel / tutorial and ensuring these guidelines are followed by all participants.

Instructions

By facilitating an INCOSE International Symposium panel or tutorial, you will help ensure that speakers and conference attendees get the most out of our exciting technical program this year.

All panelists and tutorial instructors are required to attend the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast on the morning of their panel or tutorial. The breakfast begins at 07:00 local time, please be punctual. The breakfast is an opportunity to ensure that all panelists or tutorial instructors are present. Critical instructions, venue specific information, and last-minute changes will be communicated during this time.

The important responsibilities of facilitating a panel or tutorial should not be taken lightly. INCOSE speakers and attendees have come to expect engaging panels and tutorials that run smoothly and according to the scheduled program. Please contact Symposium management immediately if circumstances prevent you from performing this important duty.

Follow the guidelines below to facilitate your panel or tutorial:

Preparation

- Panel moderators and primary tutorial instructors are asked to email their cell phone numbers to the Technical Program Chair at the address provided above so the technical program staff, chairs, and backups can contact them if necessary during the Symposium.

- Use the template for presentation slides available from the Downloads section of the INCOSE IS website: *http://www.incose.org/symp2025/Downloads*.

- Review the presentation best practices offered in this document.

- Presentations <u>must not</u> be used for the promotion of any commercial product or interest, and further <u>must not</u> promote or voice an opinion on political or religious matters.

- If you have special movies or presentations designed for an Apple computer, it is recommended that you bring your own laptop in case your special presentation will not work on the Windows-based laptop provided. The electronic projectors provided will have XVGA capability.

- Upon arrival at the Symposium, locate the posted room for your panel or tutorial and the Speaker Ready Room.

- Upload your presentation through the presenter portal. If you have not done so before the event, you can upload your presentation on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room between 14:30 and 18:00 on the day before your scheduled panel or tutorial.

- Panels and tutorials will be rated by attendees based on the following characteristics:
  - presentation skills
  - scientific contributions
  - industrial relevance

– question and answer session

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

- The breakfast will start promptly at 07:00 local time in the Speaker Ready Room; plan to arrive at least 5 minutes early and sit at the table with your session number.

  Note: Table numbers include the session number and track assignment in the format *Session*.*Track*. For example, the table for Session 1, Track 5 is labeled "1.5".

- Ensure that all panelists or tutorial instructors are present or accounted for.

- If you have not already done so, ensure your presentation has been loaded on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room. Volunteers will be present to assist with this task. Presentations must be correctly identified to ensure they are available in the correct room.

- Panel moderators should agree on a short introduction (1 or 2 sentences) for each panelist and confirm the proper pronunciation of each panelist's name.

- If any challenges occur, such as a speaker being absent, contact the appropriate resource for assistance as directed at the breakfast.

During the Panel / Tutorial

- Panelists should arrive in the room for their panel at least 5 minutes before the panel is scheduled to start.

- Tutorial instructors should arrive in the room for their tutorial at least 15 minutes before the tutorial is scheduled to start.

- Check that your presentation is loaded on the computer and ready to be presented.

  Note: Do not use a USB stick on the room computer unless approved by the Symposium staff. In the past there have been many issues with computers becoming corrupt during the Symposium due to viruses on USB sticks.

- If tutorial handouts are intended to be provided to attendees, ensure the handouts are available in the tutorial room and a sufficient number of handouts are provided for all attendees.

- Panel moderators should briefly introduce each panelist using the introduction agreed to at the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast.

- Ask attendees to use the Symposium app to leave feedback on the panel or tutorial, and thank them for making this extra effort to provide input on the conference.

Time Management

- Each panel is either 85 minutes or 130 minutes long. In either case, half the time should be used for the question and answer session with the audience (about 40 minutes for shorter panels and 65 minutes for longer panels).

- Each tutorial has published start and stop times including accommodations for Symposium break times and lunch. The tutorial should allow for these scheduled breaks so all attendees can take advantage of INCOSE refreshments, the INCOSE luncheon, and poster presentations that will be provided only during these designated times. If you overlap a break or lunchtime, ensure that all participants agree to the schedule change and are aware that refreshments will not be available outside these designated times.

Panel / Tutorial Checklist

The checklist below summarizes the key points to remember for facilitating a panel or tutorial.

Preparation

☐   Use the INCOSE template for your slides.

☐   Use the presentation best practices and resources noted to make your presentation engaging.

☐   Upon arrival at the conference, locate your assigned room and the Speaker Ready Room.

☐   If desired, upload your presentation on the computer in the Speaker Ready Room between 14:30 and 18:00 the day before your scheduled panel / tutorial.

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

☐   Arrive at 06:55 local time and sit at the table with your session number.

☐   Bring any unresolved issues and questions to the attention of the Technical Program Chair or Co-Chair.

☐   Report any missing speakers immediately to the Technical Program Chair or Co-Chair.

☐   Ensure that your presentation has been uploaded to the computer and associated with the correct room.

☐   Panel moderators should agree to introductions and confirm pronunciation of names for panelists.

During the Panel / Tutorial

☐   Panelists should arrive at least 5 minutes before the panel is scheduled to start.

☐   Tutorial instructors should arrive at least 15 minutes before the tutorial is scheduled to start.

☐   Ensure that your presentation is queued-up on the room computer.

☐   If necessary, ensure tutorial handouts are available in the tutorial room and a sufficient number of handouts are provided for all attendees.

☐   Panel moderators should briefly introduce each panelist.

☐   Ask attendees to use the Symposium app to leave feedback on the panel or tutorial.

Time Management

☐   For panels, allow half the total session time for Q/A.

☐   For tutorials, be sure to observe scheduled breaks and lunch.

Guidelines for Posters & Key Reserve Papers

This section is intended for all speakers assigned to present a poster.

Instructions

The Symposium Poster Session will start on Monday at 09:30 and end on Thursday at 12:00. You will be able to access the poster boards as early as 14:00 on Sunday to display your poster. The maximum poster size is A0 Portrait (841 x 1189 mm / 33.1 in x 46.8 in) and you must use the poster template available from the Downloads section of the INCOSE IS website: *http://www.incose.org/symp2025/Downloads*.

Your poster is scheduled to be presented on an assigned day during the Symposium Poster Session and your paper presentation is considered a key reserve on that day. On your assigned day, you are expected to:

- Attend the Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast at 07:00.
- Present your poster during the entirety of each break (9:30-10:00 and 15:00-15:30).
- Present your poster at 12:30-13:30, after you eat a quick lunch.
- Be ready to present your paper in a session at a moment's notice.

The Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast begins at 07:00 local time; please be punctual. The breakfast is an opportunity to meet with the session chairs and other speakers and offer your cell phone number to the INCOSE staff in charge of the program. Critical instructions, venue-specific information, and last-minute changes will be communicated during this time.

You are welcome to present your poster on other days and times in addition to the schedule outlined above. You do not need to present your poster every minute of the entire Symposium, but you should leave the poster up throughout the Symposium.

The best time each day to present your poster is during breaks. Please keep your presentations short (about 5 minutes) since groups of attendees will be coming and going. It is recommended that you have copies of your paper or presentation materials available; your paper also will be published in the Symposium eProceedings and will be part of the permanent proceedings. When leaving your poster, post a note indicating when you will return so any attendee interested in your poster can arrange to talk to you.

You should also prepare a 30-minute paper presentation and bring it to the Symposium on a USB stick. You may be asked to make a full-length presentation in the event of a cancellation. Symposium Management will inform you as soon as possible if a cancellation occurs; this could be any time during your assigned day. For additional information, refer to the *Presentation Best Practices* and *Guidelines for Paper and Paperless Presentations* sections in this document.

Poster / Key Reserve Paper Checklist

The checklist below summarizes the key points to remember for posters and key reserve papers.

Preparation

☐ Use the INCOSE template for your poster.

☐ Prepare a 30-minute paper presentation and bring it to the Symposium on a USB stick. Use the presentation best practices and resources noted to make your presentation engaging.

☐ Upon arrival at the conference, locate the Speaker Ready Room.

Speaker & Session Chair Breakfast

☐ Arrive at 06:55 local time and sit at the table reserved for poster presenters.

☐ Offer your cell phone number to the INCOSE staff in charge of the program.

Presenting Your Poster

☐ Present your poster during each break (9:30-10:00 and 15:00-15:30) and lunch (12:30-13:30).

☐ Keep your presentations short (about 5 minutes).

☐ When leaving your poster, post a note indicating when you will return so any attendee interested in your poster can arrange to talk to you.

Presentation Best Practices

Presentation best practices have been assembled to help you prepare and deliver a successful presentation. These suggestions have been organized into the following categories:

- defining the content of your presentation
- designing presentation slides
- preparing to present
- delivering an effective presentation

For additional information, you are encouraged to explore the following resources:

Knight, S (2015). The Seven Rules to Successful Presentations. *INSEAD Knowledge Blog*. Available at: *https://knowledge.insead.edu/blog/insead-blog/the-seven-rules-to-successful-presentations-3868* [Accessed 5 Nov. 2018]

Morgan, N (2010). Two Rules for a Successful Presentation. *Harvard Business Review*. Available at: *https://hbr.org/2010/05/two-rules-for-a-successful-pre* [Accessed 12 Oct. 2018]

Russell, W (2018). The 10 Most Common Presentation Mistakes. *Lifewire*. Available at: *https://www.lifewire.com/most-common-presentation-mistakes-2767429* [Accessed 12 Oct. 2018]

Sherman, R (2001). The 10 Biggest Public Speaking Mistakes. *Toastmaster Magazine*.

Toastmasters. Speaking and Leadership Tips from Toastmasters International. Available at: *https://www.toastmasters.org/~/media/D29E9E9B74AE4ED6BDBD1D38E9C2B5FE.ashx* [Accessed 12 Oct. 2018]

You can find examples of inspiring presentations by some of the world's best presenters at: *https://www.ted.com/talks*

Defining the Content of Your Presentation

The first step in preparing your presentation is to define the content to be included. Presentation specialists universally stress the importance of knowing your audience and tailoring your presentation to address their interests. Keep in mind the following guidelines:

- **Assess the audience for your presentation, preferably weeks ahead of the event.** Find out who your audience is and what they will be expecting from you. Then you can fine-tune your presentation to make sure you hit the right notes. (Knight)

- **Presentations are about the audience, not the speaker.** Before you write down any ideas, or commit anything to a PowerPoint slide, give some thought to your listeners. Think about the implications of the answers to such questions as, what time of day am I speaking? How many people will be in the audience? Will they just have eaten, or will they be looking forward to a meal? Will they have heard several other presentations already that day? The answer to each of these questions should affect the style and content of your presentation. (Morgan)

- **Understand the emotions of your audience.** The really interesting questions to consider about audience members are: What do they fear? What are their dreams? Where do they want to be led? And what have they had recent cause to like or dislike? Only once you understand the emotional state of the audience are you ready to begin to design a presentation for them. Far too many speakers make the mistake of believing that one size fits all. (Morgan)

- **Consider the diverse ways people learn as you define the content of your presentation.** Some members of your audience will prefer more generalized information and others will prefer detailed examples; a mixture of approaches will balance the needs of your audience.

- **Knowing your audience can be difficult at a conference like the International Symposium since participants come from academia, industry, and government agencies.** Focus on the common interests that connect conference attendees to INCOSE, their passion for Systems Engineering, as well as the central theme of your session and presentation.

Designing Presentation Slides

As you start to design the slides for your presentation, consider the following guidelines for focusing the content of your slides:

- **Your presentation should tell a story.** Your story should come first and your slides should be prepared in support of your story, not the other way around. The presentation should help the audience understand the message quicker and retain the information for longer. (Knight)

- **Use your own stories for your presentation.** It is acceptable to use brief quotes from other sources, but to connect with the audience, you must illustrate your most profound thoughts from your own life experiences. If you think you do not have any interesting stories to tell, you are not looking hard enough. (Sherman)

- **Focus your presentation on a single idea.** State this single idea in a simple declarative sentence to keep in front of you as you prepare your presentation. When defining the content for your presentation, ruthlessly eliminate all content that does not support that central idea, no matter how beautiful the slide where it appears. (Morgan) Focus on a message that is relevant for everyone who will attend your session, and then plan to inspire your audience to read the details in your paper, to ask questions during the allotted question and answer period, or to contact you for follow-up after your presentation.

- **Resist the urge to tell your audience everything you know about the topic of your presentation.** Far too many speakers perform a data dump on their audiences. Remember that people can hold no more than 4 or 5 ideas in their minds at once. (Morgan)

- **Avoid death by PowerPoint.** Do not use a standardized deck of slides without regard to context and audience. Keep your audience in mind as you design your slides. (Knight)

As you refine the appearance of your slides, follow these guidelines to maximize their impact:

- **Choose a presentation design appropriate for the audience.** A clean, straightforward layout is best for business presentations. Use a consistent color scheme. Dark text on a light background is best. Use slide animation and sounds sparingly so they do not distract from your content. (Russell)

- **Make your presentation slides clear and concise.** (Knight) Then plan your comments to elaborate on your slides. Studies show that people remember only a small percentage, around 10 to 30 percent, of what they hear. (Morgan) Use your slides to emphasize the key points you hope your audience will take away from your presentation. Target no more than 6 lines per slide. Keep the number of slides to a minimum. (Russell)

- **Presentation slides should be visually interesting and entertaining.** (Knight) Stimulating slides will help keep your audience engaged. However, use photos, charts, and diagrams only to emphasize key points; illustrate rather than decorate. (Russell)

- **Address the diverse ways people absorb information.** Some members of your audience will prefer words over graphics; others will quickly absorb information from graphics while ignoring the words.

- **Use fonts and font sizes that make it easy to read your slides.** Use easy to read fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman and a font size of at least 30 pt. Ensure that even audience members in the back of the room can read your presentation. (Russell)

- **Proofread your presentation carefully.** Your presentation should be free of spelling and grammatical errors to reinforce your professional image. It is recommended that you ask a friend or colleague to proofread for you.

Preparing to Present

Once you have developed your presentation slides, you are ready to prepare to present:

- **Know your material.** Write a keyword outline to serve as speaker's notes so you will not be tempted to read your presentation to your audience. (Sherman) Plan to use personal stories, humor, and conversational language in your presentation. This will help you to not forget what to say. (Toastmasters)

- **Practice, practice, practice!** Practice your presentation out loud with all of the equipment you plan to use. Revise your presentation as necessary. (Toastmasters) Your reputation is at stake every time you face an audience; rehearse sufficiently to ensure that you will leave a good impression! (Sherman) It is especially important to rehearse your presentation if you are presenting slides that you did not author.

- **Rehearse your presentation with an audience.** Consider making your presentation to a colleague. Not only will this help you evaluate the response of an audience to your presentation, but it may yield other insights about how to improve your presentation.

- **Reinforce techniques to stay relaxed and not rush.** Pause and breathe as you practice your delivery. Also, control filler words such as "um", "ah", "basically", "what I'm trying to say", and so forth. Practice with a timer and allow time for the unexpected. (Toastmasters)

- **Remember that public speaking is an acquired skill, honed by experience.** Effective executives learn how to present in the same way they learn to use other tools to operate their businesses. (Sherman) Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking. A Toastmasters club can provide the experience you need in a safe and friendly environment. (Toastmasters)

Delivering an Effective Presentation

Refer to the following guidelines for ideas about readying yourself to present:

- **Visualize yourself giving your presentation.** Imagine yourself speaking, your voice loud, clear, and confident. Visualize the audience applauding – it will boost your confidence. (Toastmasters)

- **Use relaxation techniques to prepare for speaking.** Do whatever it takes – listening to music, breathing deeply, shrugging your shoulders – to relieve nervous tension. (Sherman)

- **Know the room.** Arrive early, walk around the speaking area, and practice using the microphone and any visual aids. (Toastmasters) Check all equipment before the start of your presentation. Make sure you know how to dim the lights if they are too bright. (Russell)

- **Greet your audience as they arrive.** It is easier to speak to a group of friends than to strangers. (Toastmasters). If you do not take time to mingle before the presentation, you lose an opportunity to enhance your credibility with your listeners. (Sherman)

- **Realize that people want you to succeed.** Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, informative, and entertaining. They are rooting for you. (Toastmasters)

The following guidelines can help you deliver an effective presentation:

- **Relax as you start your presentation.** Begin by addressing the audience. It buys you time and calms your nerves. Pause, smile, and count slowly to three before saying anything. Transform your nervous energy into enthusiasm. (Toastmasters)

- **Start with a bang and not a whimper!** For example, do not start with "Thank you for that kind introduction." Present a startling statistic, an interesting quote, or a news headline – something powerful that will get the audience's attention immediately. (Sherman)

- **Project a good stage presence.** Use your body language, eye contact, and movement around the room (rather than standing behind a lectern) to command the attention of your audience. (Knight) Speak with passion to maximize the likelihood your audience will act on your suggestions. (Sherman)

- **Remember that you and not your slides are the main attraction.** Keep the audience focused on you and not your presentation. Speak to the audience and not the screen. (Russell) In addition to projecting a good stage presence, take small breaks from your slides to share a short anecdote, describe an example, or pose a rhetorical question before continuing.

- **Be authentic.** Do not attempt to imitate other speakers. Authenticity is lost when you are not yourself. (Sherman)

- **Avoid apologizing for any nervousness or minor problems that come up.** Your audience probably will not notice these issues if you do not call attention to them. Focus your attention on your audience and message rather than your anxieties, which in turn will focus your audience's attention on your message. (Toastmasters)