# Panel vs. Roundtable

The distinction between panel and roundtable is not that critical. Both are composed of 3-4 presenters with a moderator. But for HWGSEC the focus of a panel is on the presentations (with maybe 1/3 audience participation), while a roundtable has less speaker preparation and is more focused on the audience participation. You don’t need to be precise, but using these terms will help manage audience expectations.

Note that this may be different than any official INCOSE definition.

## What is the same?

* 3-4 presenters plus a moderator. Moderator can be a presenter…moderation and a good topic differentiates a good panel or roundtable from a less interesting one
* Ideally both would start with a page introducing the presenters and a page introducing the topic
* Both would allow time for audience participation…more for the panel
* Both would typically be an hour (maybe longer if you have 5 panelists/presenters)
* Ideally the moderator would have 1-3 pages stating the problem (why is it important?) and summarizing areas where the panelists agree and where there will be contrasts
* The presenters should have areas of agreement (feel like one team) but areas of contrast (clearly different approaches or even polite disagreements)…you don’t want to hear one thought 4 times

## What is special about a panel?

The focus on the panel is on the presenters. Typically 2/3 presentation, 1/3 Q&A. Typical timing (for 60 minutes) is:

* Introduction (of speakers, of the topic) – Moderator, 3-5 minutes
* Each panelist – 3 or 4 x 7 minutes (typically 3-5 slides, fewer can be better)…20-30 minutes
* Summary and prompting questions – Moderator, 3 minutes (summarize areas of agreement, but more importantly areas of contrast. Post a leading question or two)
* Audience Q&A – Moderator, 20 minutes

Each talk is a really focused mini-presentation, so good focus and preparation is important.

## What is special about a roundtable?

The focus on the roundtable is on the dialog. Typically 1/3-1/2 presentation, the rest Q&A. Typical timing (for 60 minutes) is:

* Introduction (of speakers, of the topic) – Moderator, 3-5 minutes
* Each panelist – 3 or 4 x 3-5 minutes (can be no slides, but a single slide summarizing the points might be better)…15 minutes
* Summary and prompting questions – Moderator, 3 minutes (summarize areas of agreement, but more importantly areas of contrast. Definitely post a leading question or two)
  + Note: supplying a survey and discussing the results could be very interesting. The conference can help collate the answers while the panelists talk.
* Audience Q&A – Moderator, 40 minutes

Here preparation is less important, but a good moderator, a good topic, and good panelists are. I would highly encourage at least the moderator ensure both agreement and contrast. Even more than in a panel you don’t want totally unrelated thoughts nor duplication (fine to have agreement on some consensus topics, but the moderator should identify important areas of contrast and summarize in the conclusion are so a lively dialog is ensured).