

Summary of: How to Give a Presentation

Douglas R. Tree, ChEn 391 – Career Skills 2

I. The Basics

- Along with written reports, oral communication is one of the main outlets you have as an engineer for making an impact
- There are five steps in preparing an oral presentation:
 1. Preparation – What you do technically or businesswise before you present.
 2. Planning – This is the stage where you strategize about what to say
 3. Logic – This is how you lay out the basic logical structure of your presentation
 4. Slides – Building your slide deck
 5. Delivery – How you give your presentation

II. Preparation and Planning

- Technical mastery of an interesting subject is *necessary, but not sufficient* to give a good presentation.
- When planning consider:
 - *Who* is your audience?
 - *What* is your message?
 - *Why?* What is your purpose?
 - *When and Where?* What are the constraints?

III. Logic

- Using a traditional logical structure organizes your presentation so others can follow
- Lay out the logic in figures before you write the report

Technical Reports

- Communicate technical information to scientists, engineers and technicians
- *IMRaD format*
- *Introduction* – Funnel in from big picture
- *Methods* – Need to know only
- *Results and Discussion* – Use figures liberally. Pick only 2 or 3 results to share.
- *Summary and Future Work* – Connect back to the intro to resolve the story

Business Proposals

- Persuasive proposal or recommendation to managers and decision makers
- *Pyramid principle*
- *Introduction* – Show you know core needs
- *Proposal* – Get there in 3 slides or less.
- *Tasks and Reasons* – Organize according to MECE (exclusive, exhaustive)
- *Conclusion* – Highlight the benefits to the decision maker.

IV. Slides and Delivery

- Go for a *high signal-to-noise ratio*.
- Good slides take effort. Remember: one message, remove clutter, reduce text, consistent font.
- A good delivery takes practice. Remember: professional appearance, filler words, eye contact and *always end on time*.