

CHEM 400 Effective Presentations in Chemistry



Preparation – Approach



determine level of knowledge of audience

start slightly below level

teach them so they leave with **greater** knowledge

you are there to *inform*, not to *impress*

minimize technical terms, unfamiliar symbols and jargon

keep it simple, not simplistic

tell a clear, meaningful **story**

eliminate all that is unneeded or detracts or over embellishes

Preparation – PowerPoint®



slide **order** should be **similar** to a paper

introduction why was work performed?
mention other investigators if possible
expand audience if possible - be multi-disciplinary

hypothesis clearly stated

experimental only major features or failings of experiments

conclusion clear re-emphasis of initial problem or hypothesis

since presentation is organized **you do not need an outline slide**

Preparation – PowerPoint®



font

should be readable – 24 to 28 point is usually good

also applies to reproduced text!

be consistent throughout talk; **change only for emphasis**

background/background art

high contrast is best, **avoid** textured

grammatical style

slides are a '**prop**' for your talk, they are **not** your talk

use **words** rather than sentences

keep to less than **6** talking points per slide

organization

use alignment tools

Preparation – PowerPoint®

slide transitions

remember simplicity, do not use blinds, dissolves, spins, etc.

animation

use PowerPoint® features to illustrate or make a point

figures, tables, graphics

be **consistent** with **chemical structures and equations**

size, spacing, style

avoid too many cells in a **table**, minimize clutter

caption all graphics briefly

references

all text or graphic not yours

small footnotes at bottom of slide or in caption

J. Org. Chem. 2002, 56, 2992-2998

Delivery



before your talk

practice, practice, practice entire performance

know your slides; use as **cues**

check for **typos** and **animation** functioning as intended

test on different computer; have backup **email, flashdrive**

if using your own computer,

use wall power, shut off all screensavers, and
remove **personal** items from desktop and wall paper

prepare **yourself**

know dress code

talk about presentation with friends and colleagues

if possible, mingle and get to know audience

Delivery

before your talk



prepare room (if you can)

visit beforehand

locate a **time-keeping** device

erase boards even if not using

reduce **clutter** around presentation area

check controls, lighting

have **proper pointer** or presenter

Delivery

the talk

let audience know who you are, where you are from and how happy you are to be speaking to them

allow audience to get to know your personality and style
don't be **bland**

first impressions are important
start with a **story**, a **question** or **application**
do not read slides!

body language

move: toward audience to focus on your words
toward the screen to focus on content

minimize or hide any nervous habits

make **eye contact**, focus on people who look interested

speak **loudly**, deliberately and clearly to the person in back row



Delivery

body language



vary your tone and pace for emphasis
use **pauses** for dramatic or rhetorical effect

enthusiasm and **energy** will set you apart!
avoid speech mannerisms (okay? uh, I mean, ya know...)
be comfortably **aware** of time

do not turn your back to audience
avoid hugging podium

interact with audience if only rhetorically – converse!
repeat main reason/hypothesis/goal of work often with variation
redefine unfamiliar or difficult terms often in order to **teach them**

Delivery

closing the talk



end with a **finale**

audience should not be wondering if talk is over
remind audience that you did what you set out to do

thank audience!

invite **questions** if appropriate

Delivery

question and answer



move toward questioner and make eye contact
repeat and, if necessary, summarize question for audience
if you don't know the answer, use your expertise to make an educated guess – just tell the audience you are doing so!
remain after the talk

Advanced Topics

modules

divide the latter part of a talk into sections or **modules** that can be discreetly skipped if time is an issue
do not advertise that you are doing this!
conclude with the same conclusion regardless

extra slides

anticipate questions!
prepare slides strictly for Q&A for obvious questions

