

The Dos and Don'ts of Successful Presentations at InfoComm

Introduction

- ❖ The focus of this tutorial is to help those conducting courses, seminars, and workshops at Infocomm to become the most effective presenters possible.
- ❖ We will concentrate on the 4 Ps of successful presenting:
 - Plan
 - Prepare
 - Practice
 - Present



The Key Concept

- ❖ You should be concerned only with one thing when presenting to an audience.

"Has the audience come away from this with information that was in-line with the original point of the presentation? If people leave your presentation armed with confusion and wonder, your presentation has failed."

Planning your Presentation

Planning

- ❖ Planning your presentation means thinking ahead.
- ❖ Here is where you begin the task of organizing your presentation and preparing visual aids.
- ❖ The important aspects of your presentation include:
 - Objectives
 - Audience
 - Content
 - Organization
 - Visuals
 - Setting
 - Delivery

Planning

❖ Objectives

- You may have many objectives in a presentation, but you will always two main goals:
 - Purposes
 - Desired Outcomes
- What is the purpose / outcome of the presentation?

To inform?
To persuade?
To report back?
To enlist support?
Decision to act?

Planning

❖ Audience

- Aside from knowing your subject matter, nothing is more important than knowing your audience.
 - Who are they?
 - What are their interests, needs and requirements?
 - What “language” do they speak (sales, marketing, production, manufacturing, finance, or literally another language)?
 - What do they value?
 - What is their role in the industry?

Planning

❖ Critical Content Issues:

- The relevance and usefulness of the content to the audience.
- The relevance and usefulness of the content to your objectives.
- Other factors will include types of content (e.g., financial figures, cost-benefit comparisons, product comparisons, product or engineering specifications, etc.).



Planning

❖ Organizing Your Material

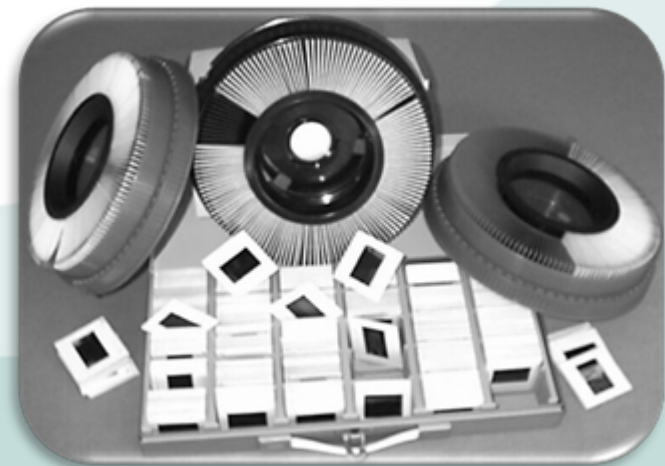
**"Tell them what you're going to tell them;
Tell them;
Tell them what you told them."**

- This recognizes the importance of reinforcement
- It completes the communication for the listener
- It recognizes the importance of organization, highlighting, and summarizing for the audience
- It restates and clarifies main themes at the end of the presentation.

Planning

❖ Organization

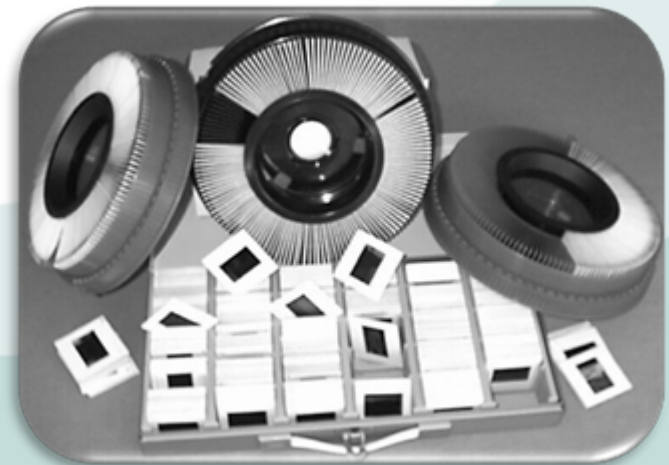
- In general, your presentation will consist of an opening, a main body, and a closing.
- The opening will usually consist of two slides: a title slide and an overview slide.
- The main body of your presentation will have as many slides as necessary to illustrate and support the points you are trying to make.



Planning

❖ Organization

- Like the opening, the closing will typically consist of two or perhaps three slides:
 - A summary or recap slide
 - An action slide (e.g., ask for the order or propose a next step)
 - A contact slide (i.e., a slide indicating how your audience can contact you).



Planning

❖ Organization

- The organization of the main body of your presentation should follow with the sequence of the points you wish to make.
- To decide on the best way to organize, consider these options:
 - Chronological
 - Logical
 - Flow or steps in a process
 - Event-related



Planning

❖ Setting

- Some of the more common factors to consider here include:
 - Seating arrangements
 - Lighting and heating
 - Size of the room
 - Number of people in attendance
 - AV Equipment (Display, sound reinforcement, computers, etc.)



Planning

❖ Considerations for Delivery

- The pace and organization of the presentation
- Points of emphasis
- Time frames and allocations
- Portions that can be cut if necessary
- The roles of the presenters if more than one presenter is involved
- Provisions for practice

Planning

- ❖ Start with the end in mind.
 - Before you even open up PowerPoint , sit down and think about the real purpose of your talk.
 - What does the audience expect?
 - What are the most important parts of your topic for the audience to take away from your presentation?
 - Even if you've been asked to simply share information, rarely does the audience want you to just transfer that information to them. They want more, and in a good presentation “more” relates to the presenter.

Planning

❖ Plan in “analog mode.”

- Rather than diving right into PowerPoint, the best presenters often scratch out their ideas and objectives with a pen and paper.
- This means you can step back from what is sketched out and see how it might flow logically.
- You may deliver using digital technology, but speaking and connecting to an audience — to persuade, sell, or inform — is very much analog.



Planning

- ❖ Good presentations include stories.
 - The best presenters illustrate their points with the use of stories, most often personal ones.
 - The easiest way to explain complicated ideas is through sharing a story that underscores the point.

If you want your audience to remember your content, then find a way to make it relevant and memorable to them, through good, short, interesting stories or examples to support your major points.

Planning

❖ Set Your Goal and Keep It Before You

- Decide what it is you would like to happen as a result of your presentation.
- The four main goals of any communication are:
 - To inform
 - To request an action
 - To persuade
 - To build relationship.

Decide which of these goals you are planning to achieve.

Planning

❖ Set Your Goal and Keep It Before You

- Let your listeners know what you want them to do near the beginning of your talk, and again at the end.
- Present your basic idea and give them an outline of your presentation that would lead you and your audience to the desired result.



Planning

- ❖ The best speeches tell your audience things they didn't know and / or give them insights they didn't have.
 - To provide the audience with fresh knowledge, research some salient, accurate and up-date facts and figures.
 - To provide the audience with unique insights, look at the subject differently - think 'out of the box'.



Preparing to Present

Prepare

❖ Keep it simple.

- PowerPoint was designed as a convenient way to display graphical information that would support the speaker and supplement the presentation.
- The slides themselves were never meant to be the “star of the show.”
- People came to hear you and be moved and informed by you and your message.
- Don't let your message or ability to tell a story get derailed by slides that are unnecessarily complicated, busy, or full of “junk”.

Prepare

❖ Keep it simple.

- Nothing in your slides should be superfluous, ever.
- Your slides should have plenty of "white space" or "negative space."
- Do not feel compelled to fill empty areas on your slide with your logo or other unnecessary graphics or text boxes that do not contribute to better understanding.
- The less clutter you have on your slide, the more powerful your visual message.

Prepare

❖ Keep it simple.

- Focus on one main idea per slide. Complicated slides with lots of different data, may be better to break up into 2-3 different slides
- Stick to three, or at the most, four points about your topic and expound on them. The audience will be more likely to retain the information.

***“Simplicity is the ultimate
sophistication.”
— Leonardo da Vinci***



Prepare

❖ Using Visual Aids

- Visual aids add impact and interest to a presentation, helping you reach your objectives, by providing emphasis to whatever is being said.
- Clear pictures multiply the audience's level of understanding of the material presented, and they should be used to reinforce your message, clarify points, and create excitement.



Prepare

❖ Using Visual Aids

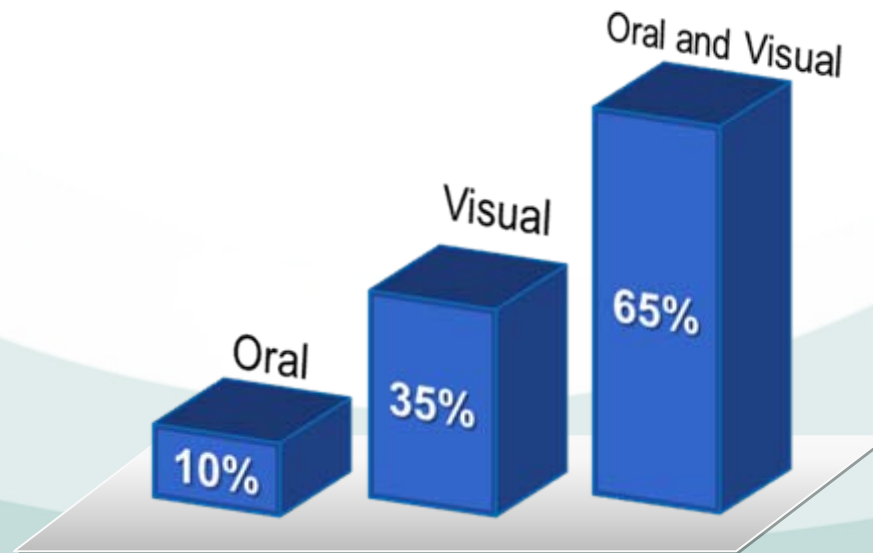
- Visual aids involve your audience and require a change from one activity to another: from hearing to seeing.
- They appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thereby increasing the audience's understanding and retention level.
- Using visual aids tends to encourage gestures and movement by the presenter, and reinforce control over the presentation.
- The use of visual aids benefit both the audience *and* the presenter.

Visual aids help keep the audience from finishing their job, before you finish yours!

Prepare

❖ Using Visual Aids

- In studies, psychologists and educators have found that retention of information three days after an event is six times greater when information is presented by visual and oral means than when the information is presented by the spoken word alone.



Prepare

❖ Using Visual Aids

- The use of visual aids, then, is essential to all presentations.
- Without them, the impact of your presentation “may leave the audience shortly after the audience leaves you.”

By preparing a presentation with visual aids that reinforce your main ideas, you will reach your audience far more effectively, and, perhaps, continue to "touch" them long after the presentation ends.

Prepare

❖ Text

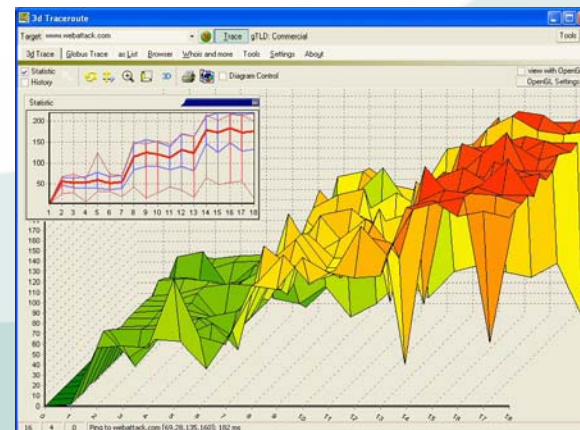
- The best slides may have no text at all.
- Even the best PowerPoint slides will be virtually meaningless without your narration.

Remember, the slides are supposed to support/supplement the narration of the speaker, not make the speaker superfluous.

Prepare

❖ Text

- Remember that 50% of statistics are meaningless.
- Some well-chosen figures can add credibility and authority to your arguments – If you use them, be sure that you understand them, that they are meaningful, and that they are both reliable and up-to-date.
- Be ready if questioned, to support and source your statistics and supply the full context.



Prepare

❖ Text

- Do not read the text word for word off the slide. Audiences can read, so why does the presenter need to read text to them?
- It is very difficult — if not impossible — for the audience to read a slide and listen to someone talk at the same time.



Prepare

❖ Text

- Why all the text on slides these days?
- One reason may be that it is convenient for the speaker when organizing the presentation to write out his/her thoughts one bullet point at a time.
- Speakers also may be thinking that their wordy slides will make for better handouts. However, the confining, horizontal orientation of a slide makes for difficult writing and reading.

Prepare

❖ Text

- Written documents (research papers, handouts, executive summaries, etc.) are for the expanded details.
- Audiences will be better served with a detailed handout from the presentation, rather than a copy of your PowerPoint slides.
- Remember:
 - Your slides should contain only a minimum of information
 - Your slide notes will contain far more data
 - Your handouts will have still far more data and detail.

Prepare

❖ Font Choices

- Having 35 fonts does not mean that you are required to use them.
- A single font throughout an entire presentation is usually quite sufficient. Use bold, italic, underline, quotations and/or color changes to emphasize or subdue key points or words.
- Stick to easy to read fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman.
- Avoid script type fonts which are hard to read on screen.
- Use no more than two different fonts and no less than a 30 pt font for easy reading.

Odd font choices can make *things hard* to read!

Prepare

❖ Text guidelines

- “Generally” no more than 7 words a line
- “Generally” no more than 7 lines a slide
- Avoid long sentences
- Larger font indicates more important information
- Font size generally ranges from 18 to 48 point

18 20 24 28 32 36 40 44 48

Prepare

❖ Text guidelines

- Be sure text contrasts with background
- Fancy fonts can be hard to read
- Use UPPER and lower case. Words in ALL CAPS are harder to read.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms
- Limit punctuation marks

Where possible, break lines into naturally spoken phrases.

Prepare

❖ Color Choices

- You might love bright, dramatic colors. Audiences don't.
- Avoid unusual color combinations. (e.g. orange on blue)
- 10% of adults are color blind. They can't see red or green well.



ORANGE ON
BLUE



Green on Red

Prepare

❖ Color Choices

- Good contrast with the background is essential to make your text easy to read.
- Dark text on a light background is best. Use beige or another light background color that will be easier on the eyes than the typical white.
- Dark backgrounds are very effective, if the text is light for easy reading.
- Patterned or textured backgrounds make text hard to read.

Background

Colors

Matter!

Prepare

❖ Color Choices

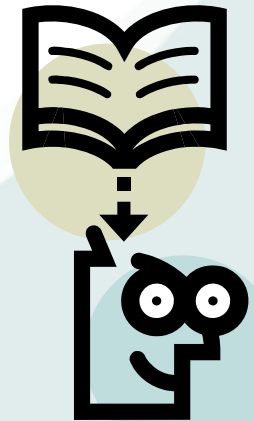
- Keep the colors to a minimum.
- A single background color throughout a presentation lends an air of continuity.
- You can separate broad sections of a presentation by changing background colors, but keep the changes to a minimum.
- Unless your purpose is to shock or grab serious attention, try to keep all background colors within the same color family.

What would you want to read?

Prepare

❖ Graphics

- Avoid using PowerPoint Clip Art or other cartoonish line art.
- If it is included in the software, your audience has seen it a million times before.
- It may have been interesting in 1992, but today the inclusion of such clip art often undermines the professionalism of the presenter.
- There are exceptions, of course, and not all PowerPoint art is dreadful, but use carefully and judiciously.



Prepare

❖ Graphics

- Use high-quality graphics including photographs.
- You can take your own high-quality photographs with your digital camera, purchase professional stock photography, or use the plethora of high-quality images available on line.
- Never simply stretch a small, low resolution photo to make it fit your layout — doing so will degrade the resolution even further.

Be Cautious of Copyright Issues!

Prepare

❖ Graphics

- Photos and graphs should only illustrate key points:
- No one wants to waste their time sitting through a presentation with no substance. Overuse of photos and graphs will remove substance.
- Use photos, charts and diagrams *only* to illustrate key points of your presentation, adding breaks and enhancing your oral presentation.

If an image has no specific place or purpose in a presentation other than "it is pretty", it should probably be removed.

Prepare

❖ Graphics

- Images not clearly seen by the entire audience add confusion and distraction.
- If you have to say "I know you can't read this but.....," why include the visual at all?
- While straining to read the visual, they cannot be expected to be paying full attention to what is being said.



Prepare

❖ Graphics

- More images with fewer ideas in each are better than a few images which are complicated or difficult to understand.
- A single idea or set of facts per image, timed to the speaker's pace will add punch and emphasis to each important idea assuring maximum retention.

Most people are easily bored, one rule of thumb states that if an image remains on the screen longer than 7 to 10 seconds, you begin to lose viewer attention.

Prepare

❖ Animations

- You found all the “really cool” animations, and used 85% of them in your presentation to impress everyone!
- Now the audience doesn't know where to look, and have totally lost the message of your presentation.
- Animations, used well, can heighten interest, but don't distract the audience with too much of a good thing.
- Design your presentation with the "less is more" philosophy.

Don't let your audience suffer from animation overload.

Prepare

❖ Video and Audio

- Use video and audio when appropriate
- Video or audio clips not only will illustrate your point better, it will also serve as a change of pace thereby increasing the interest of your audience.
- Avoid “cheesy” sound effects that are included in PowerPoint.
- The use of superfluous sound effects attached to animations is a sure way to lose credibility.

Prepare

❖ Slide Count

- Ensure your audience stays focused by keeping the number of slides to a minimum, yet insuring the topic is adequately covered, in the time allotted.
- Typically 10 to 20 slides is sufficient for a one hour presentation.
- Some concessions can be made for slides containing a photo “album”, since most pictures will be on screen for only a short time.



Giving the Presentation

Practice

- ❖ Polishing a presentation and avoiding errors.
 - Rehearsing your presentation in front of a full-length mirror, will help you perfect your delivery, and will also help you avoid a whole raft of common mistakes. For example:
 - **Don't** drop your head when reading a speech.
 - **Don't** turn your back on audience.
 - **Don't** play with a pen or pointer.
 - **Don't** grip table or lectern.
 - **Don't** bend towards microphone (adjust its height).
 - **Don't** stare at notes or visual aids.
 - **Don't** fidget: Touching your face, tie, lapel, etc.

Practice

❖ “Practice makes perfect”

- Practice alone for the purpose of getting familiar with the visuals and the content.
- Practice with others if the presentation involves more than one presenter. This will help ensure smooth handoffs.
- Practice with an audience to help identify the kinds of questions and issues that might surface during the actual presentation.



Present

- ❖ Check how you look.
 - Dress appropriately, and be well groomed, so you feel comfortable and smart.
 - Dressing professionally also helps the audience feel you've taken trouble for them and that they are respected.
 - Don't let the excesses of dress become distracting. Stay conservative.



Present

❖ The Room and Equipment

- Expect a visit from Murphy. He goes to a lot of presentations!
- Check all the equipment and rehearse your presentation, using this projector long before your time to present.
- Check the lighting in the room, making sure you know how to dim the lights if the room is too bright.

MURPHY'S LAW

What can go wrong, will go wrong.

Essentially, the laws of nature always work, whether we are paying attention or not.

(Equipment blows to protect fuses.)

(Interchangeable parts aren't & fail-safes don't.)

(The more you know, the more you realize it's the only law you can't avoid.)

Mrs MURPHY'S COROLLARY

Murphy is too much of an optimist.

Present

❖ The Room and Equipment

- If you are speaking in a meeting room or a classroom, the temptation is to turn the lights off so that the slides look better.
- Turning the lights off puts all the focus on the screen, causing the audience to focus on the screen, and not the presenter.
- Keep the lights on in the room if at all possible.



Present

❖ The Room and Equipment

- Check the temperature in the room before presenting. A comfortable audience will be more likely to pay attention.
- Set the thermostat to a very cool temperature, if possible, as a large amount of warm bodies will cause the room to heat up considerably.



Present

❖ The Room and Equipment

- Use a remote-control device to advance your slides. A handheld remote will allow you to move away from the podium. This is an absolute must.
- Make sure that you test and use the voice reinforcement provided in the room.
- Some people think that they don't need it due to voice or theater training, but in the back of a large room, your message may go unheard.



Present

❖ Opening Nerves

- Here are some techniques that will help you feel more comfortable and relaxed when you start.
 - Greet people as they enter the room. This creates “friends” out of strangers.
 - Before you go on, chat with people in your audience, to create a warmer, more friendly atmosphere.
 - Use names whenever possible, establishing a bond between the speaker and the audience.
 - To help relax from head to toe, take three deep slow breaths before you begin.

Present

❖ Opening Nerves

- You will not be introduced at InfoComm, so don't wait for the formality.
- When starting, pause for 1-2 seconds to establish yourself.
- Stand upright and relaxed, then smile and pleasantly acknowledge a friendly face nearby.
- Speak in a conversational tone, about relevant experience, years in the business, or special accomplishments, that qualify you as someone to be listened to, on the topic at hand.
- Try and keep “credentialing” to the necessary minimum.

Present

❖ Delivery Tips

- Speak as if the audience likes and appreciates you—and they will!
- Project energy and conviction and sustain it from start to finish.
- Show the audience you are passionate about your topic. They will sense any insincerity.
- Highlight your notes so you can emphasize key words and ideas.
- Vary your speed, volume and tone to hold attention.
- Don't apologize for your nervousness or your material. That calls attention to it and makes the audience feel sorry for you.
- Make a dramatic opening to seize the audience with the very first words, but beware a question that invites a cynical answer

Present

❖ Delivery Tips

- Remember this is “business theater”. Your purpose is to educate-- not to entertain, but it’s still show business



Present

❖ Delivery Tips - Humor

- Be careful: humor can backfire. What you think is funny someone else finds offensive.
- Short (appropriate) pithy quotes are usually safe. Don't overdo it and cite your source if possible.
- Self-deprecating humor can work well when not carried to excess. If you put yourself down too much or too often the group will wonder why they should bother listening to you.

Present

❖ Delivery Tips - Pace & Pause

▪ Pace:

- Don't rush, particularly when you start.
- Speak fast enough to keep people from becoming bored and slow enough for people to absorb.
- Slow down to emphasize and reinforce your key ideas.
- Vary your pace to inject excitement or gravity.
- Change the pace and rhythm of your delivery between topics/paragraphs.

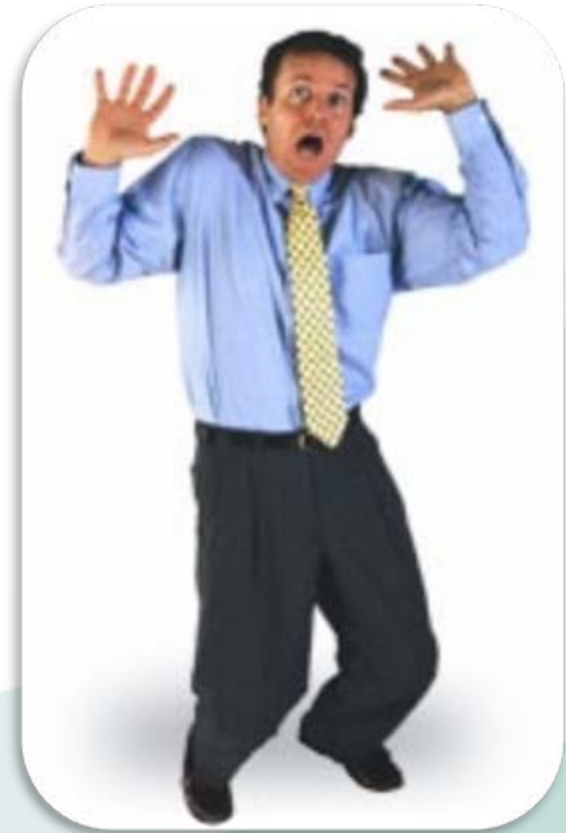
Present

❖ Delivery Tips - Pace & Pause

- Pause:
 - Pause to set up an important point.
 - After that important point, pause to add emphasis.
 - Pause to allow the point to sink in.
 - Don't pause long enough to look pompous or disconnected.

Present

- ❖ Delivery Tips - Body Language
 - 60% of communication is non-verbal. Use this to your advantage
 - Keep your gestures natural and comfortable. They will be natural if you speak with conviction.
 - Keep movements “contained” rather than wild and uncontrolled.



Present

❖ Audience “Management” and Contact

- The group expects you to lead. Do it.
- Ask the group to turn off cell phones before you start.
- Maintain eye contact and “triangulate” your eyes around the room.
- Engage with animated listeners - but don’t relinquish control.
- Move away from the lectern to connect with your audience.
- Walk into the audience to make a stronger connection and draw them in as active participants.
- If you want questions and interaction, say so. Encouraging participation gives the audience a stake in your success

Present

❖ Answering Questions

- Most INFOCOMM presentations are largely one-way lecture because of time constraints, but participation is still possible and desirable.
- Anticipate questions the group might ask, and plan your answers.
- Be sure you understand the question before you respond: paraphrase or repeat it if necessary.
- Don't allow questions to take you off point. Deal with them and get back on track quickly.
- If you can't answer a question, say so, and/or turn to the audience for an answer.

Present

❖ Answering Questions (continued)

- Beware “loaded” questions: if you detect one, refer it back to the person who asked it for an answer and/or refer it to the group
- Keep control. Deal with hecklers off-line and remind them of your purpose and of time constraints. Don’t trivialize the question or ridicule the questioner, but don’t use too much time to deal with it



Present

❖ Asking Questions

- Avoid rhetorical or hypothetical questions. They make the group feel patronized and manipulated.
- Ask questions of fact to the group and questions of opinion to individuals. This avoids embarrassment.

**Questions invite participation—
which takes more time. Watch and
control your time aggressively.**

Tips for Presentation Success: Summary

- ❖ If you really want to learn it, *teach* it!
 - Know your material “cold”, and remember, this is necessary but not sufficient!
 - More presenters fail on poor delivery, than on lack of content knowledge.
 - Don't try to memorize a presentation. It limits your ability to adapt.
- ❖ It's hard to be over prepared: rehearse thoroughly.
- ❖ Pace yourself.
- ❖ Know the room and equipment.
- ❖ Use a remote control and a microphone.
- ❖ Do not read your slides to the audience.
- ❖ Learn to navigate your presentation
- ❖ Start and stop on time.