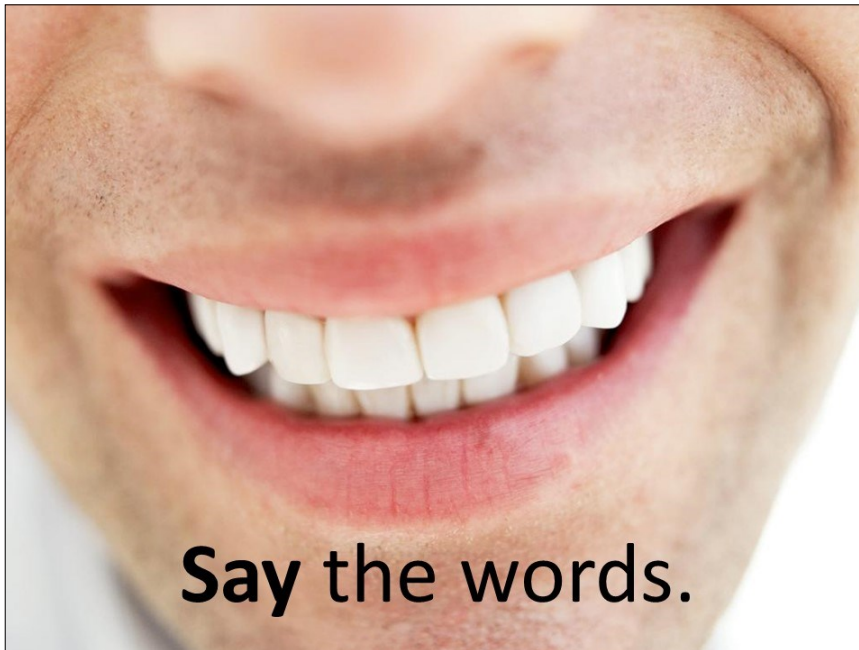


Three Simple Rules For Effective Presentations

Take a moment to reflect upon a recent presentation you attended: was the speaker engaging? Were the visuals appropriate? How was the pacing (too fast or too slow)? Did you have opportunities to engage with the speaker and fellow audience members? Hopefully you answered “yes” to most, if not all of those questions.

Now take a moment to reflect upon the last presentation **YOU** gave? Can you still answer “yes?” If not, don’t worry—read on for a simple three-step approach to help you deliver an effective presentation.



Have you ever heard someone say, “I’m going to a conference to watch someone show me some slides?” Of course not! What you do hear is: “I’m going to **hear** Jane Librarian speak...” or “I’m going to **listen** to a panel discussion.”

Your **WORDS** are the most important part of the presentation – a great one starts with a great script.

Start with an outline to organize your ideas, and identify the 3-5 key points for your audience to remember. Use your word processor (not PowerPoint) to write your script, keeping those key points in mind. Review, edit and revise as needed until you have a solid script to use.



While your audience primarily comes to hear you speak, using relevant images can make your presentation even more effective. Combining what you say with appropriate and engaging visuals helps your audience more effectively process and understand your content.

Not sure where to begin? You can borrow a technique from moviemaking and create storyboards to brainstorm ideas for your visuals. Take your script and identify concepts, facts, key data or other components that you want to support visually.

Draw out your ideas, then search image resources to find photographs that represent your concepts. Use the highest quality images you can find and do not use images that will appear pixilated when enlarged. Avoid clip art.



Resist the temptation to add lots of text to your slides—it does not support efficient learning as strongly as a combination of speech and visuals does. Instead of putting the text on a slide, can you simply say it instead? Can you represent that concept or data visually with an image instead of text? Is it “nice-to-have” information that is best included in a handout?

Your handout is an opportunity to provide additional resources such as more detail on your topic or a bibliography and should be an integral part of your presentation planning. It does not have to be a printed document—a well-crafted web page or blog post could work just as well.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

Practice is **required** to make your presentation a success. Practicing your presentation helps you to give a more relaxed and polished performance and helps you determine how much time you need to cover your key points. Try to speak for only 2/3 to 3/4 of the time allotted and use the remaining time for questions from your audience. *Remember: no one minds if you end early but everyone hates it when you run long.*

Resources

Hilyer, Lee Andrew. “Three Simple Rules for Great Presentations.” **TLJ** 86 (3): 87-90. Fall 2010. http://www.txla.org/sites/tla/files/pdf/TLJ86_3.pdf

Learn more about the three rules approach to presentations.

Scientific Presentations: The Assertion-Evidence Approach

<http://writing.engr.psu.edu/slides.html>

Presenting results from your research project? Developed by an engineering professor at Penn State University, this approach to slide layout can help you more clearly communicate the results of your research. Adaptable to nearly any presentation situation.

Slideshare

<http://www.slideshare.net>

Share your slide decks and get ideas and tips for better presentations.

Note & Point (“Killer Slide Decks”)

<http://noteandpoint.com>

Well-designed slide decks from around the web; great source for slide layout inspiration.

FreelImages.com (Formerly Stock Xchange)

<http://www.freeimages.com>

Great resource for royalty-free images for your presentations.

Creative Commons

<http://search.creativecommons.org>

Search for freely-usable images, music, and video clips all available under Creative Commons licenses.

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