

Effective Presentations Checklist Quick Reference Card

Prepare

- Know your audience. What is their focus? What is their knowledge level?
- Get their attention with the introduction, establish credibility and preview the main points.
- Conclude your presentation by summarizing your key points and restating your message.
- Finalize the content well in advance to allow time to think through and rehearse delivery.
- Include key talking points in your speaker's notes.
- Anticipate questions and incorporate addressing them into your presentation.
- Scout out the room to confirm room size, layout and available equipment.
- Test all technology you plan to use, including microphones, computers and projectors.

Practice

- Conduct an initial trial to become comfortable with the content.
- Conduct a second rehearsal to time the presentation, practice your movements/gestures and practice answering questions.
- Conduct a final run-through to become poised and confident in delivery.
- Use your hands — gesture naturally but expressively.
- Pause to reference your notes as needed.
- If there is a podium, keep your hands off of it. Stand away from it to gesture and move around the space.
- Stand on both feet — do not sway, lean or rock.
- Look up and smile to show the audience that you are happy to be there.
- Make eye contact with different audience members throughout your presentation, and keep your eye contact with each person you encounter for one complete thought.
- When using a microphone, speak in a normal voice over the microphone (not into it).
- When speaking without a microphone, project your voice into the audience.
- Look for cues that the audience cannot hear you, or ask, "Can everyone hear me okay?"
- Practice answering potential questions.
- Time your presentation and ask for feedback from a colleague.

Use visuals

- Visuals should be simple, to the point and relevant to what you are saying.
- Do not stand in front of your visuals.
- Use a wireless mouse or clicker to advance through the slides. If a teammate is advancing the slides for you, simply nod to them and do not say, "next slide."
- Introduce your visuals, but do not read from them.
- Consider using handouts if your audience would want to review content afterwards.

Answer questions

- Listen actively. If you are unsure, say, "Let me be sure I understand what you are asking."
- If you do not know the answer, say so. Offer to follow up with the answer at a later time.
- Respond directly and simply.
- Do not use negative body language, such as crossing arms or putting your hands on your hips.
- Disagree agreeably: say "It has been my experience that ..." or "In my opinion ..."
- Look at the person asking the question; don't look at the clock or your notes.