EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

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E25-143G

GECD Office E39-305, 617-715-5329
http://web.mit.edu/career

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MIT Career Services for Postdoctoral Scholars

In collaboration with the GECD and the Office of the Vice President for Research, our mission is to provide current MIT Postdoctoral Scholars (Postdoctoral Fellows and Associates) initial guidance and encourage self-management of career exploration including job search strategies for both industry and academic tracks.

Career Appointments (45 Minutes)

• Please schedule an appointment for CV/Resume review, interviewing strategies, and other career related topics such as career exploration, job search strategies, networking and considering job offers. Please note that Postdocs are not eligible for Drop-In services.
• To make an appointment, login to CareerBridge
  – https://www.myinterface.com/mit/student/
• Find the link "Make an Appointment" on the left side of the page,
• Select “Postdoc Appointments” in the drop-down menu
• Select “Filter by Date Range”
• Postdoc appointments are with Bob Dolan in E25-143G
Career Resources

MIT Career Development Center – E39-305
617- 715 - 5329  http://web.mit.edu/career/www/
Postdocs see Bob Dolan in E25-143G

We offer…

• One on One counseling
• Mock Interviews (behavioral based)
• Resume/CV and Cover Letter reviews
• Job/Internship Search tips
• Negotiating Job Offer advice
• General and Tailored Workshops
• Prehealth Advising
• Daily Drop-In hours…generally 11:00am-4:00pm (sorry, no postdocs)
• Plus a lot of other wicked good stuff !!!

Take Advantage of these Resources…We Work for You
Upcoming Events – Nov 2014

- **What Every International Student Should Know About U.S. Employment**  
  Nov 4\(^{th}\) 2:00 – 3:30pm

- **Negotiating Job Offers**  
  Nov 5\(^{th}\) 2:00 – 3:30pm  E39-040

- **Life in the Age of the App: Move Beyond Burnout & Create a Career You Love**  
  Nov 6\(^{th}\) 1:00 – 2:00pm  1-190

- **LinkedIn Lab**  
  Nov 6\(^{th}\) 2:00 – 3:00pm  56-169

- **Now, Discover Your Strengths**  
  Nov 6\(^{th}\) 7:00 - 8:15pm  66-144

- **Duke University School of Medicine Admissions Information Session**  
  Nov 12\(^{th}\) 1:45 – 2:45pm  5-234

- **2014 Engineering Boutique Night**  
  Nov 19\(^{th}\) 4:00 – 6:00pm

- **Plus many more in the works**

http://gecd.mit.edu/calendar
EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

Intended Outcomes from today’s workshop:
We Will Cover

• Self Evaluation…What type of speaker are you?
• Facts and Fears of Public Speaking
• Presentation Blueprint
  • Structure, Body Language, Verbal Delivery
• Tips and Tricks
  • Myths and Facts
  • Personal Appearance
  • How to Reduce Anxiety
  • Common Mistakes
## EVALUATE YOURSELF

### What Category Best Describes You As A Speaker?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avoider</td>
<td>You do everything possible to escape from having to get in front of an audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resister</td>
<td>You have fear when asked to speak. May not be able to avoid speaking, but you never encourage it. When you do speak, it’s with great reluctance and pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepter</td>
<td>You’ll give presentations but don’t seek those opportunities. Sometimes you feel good about a presentation you gave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeker</td>
<td>Looks for opportunities to speak. Finds the anxiety a stimulant which fuels enthusiasm during a presentation. Self-confident.</td>
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</table>
FACTS

Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

• Almost every organization lists communication skills as one of their most critical issues…and presentation skills are a large component of communications
• Presentation skills are crucial to almost every aspect of academic/business life, from meetings, interviews, conferences, to trade shows/job fairs
• Often times leadership and presentation skills go hand in hand
FACTS...cont

Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

• Information by itself is boring, unless it’s startling. Conveying it through stories, gestures and analogies makes it interesting

• A large portion of the impact of communications rests on how you look and sound, not on what you say

• Having good presentation skills allows you to make the most out of your first impression
  • Especially at conferences and job interviews
FEARS
Why Are Presentation Skills Important?

- Public speaking is considered the number one fear of most people
- People are caught in the crossfire between their fear and the fact that many employers expect them to demonstrate good verbal communication skills
- Most interviews by PhD’s have a presentation component
- Academic interviews always have a presentation/chalk talk
- If your job doesn’t demand presentation skills, odds are good that you’ll need them in your next job
PLAN YOUR PRESENTATION

Put yourself in the shoes of the people who will be listening to your presentation

Analyze The Audience

• **Values**…What is important to them?
• **Needs**…What information do they want?
• **Constraints**…Understand their level of knowledge on the subject and target them appropriately
• **Demographics**…Size of audience and location may influence the presentation

3 Key Components of a Good Presentation

• Structure
• Body Language and Movement
• Verbal Delivery
Good Presentations Consist of Three Key Components

- **Structure**
  - Introduction
  - Body
  - Conclusion
  - Smooth flow from one topic to next

- **Body Language & Movement**
  - Comfort
  - Deliberate gestures
  - Use of visual aids

- **Verbal Delivery**
  - Pace
  - Volume
  - Use of full vocal range

Clear components

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

Smooth flow from one topic to next
Structure

**Introduction**
- Build Rapport with Audience
- State preference for questions - during or after?
- Set stage: provide agenda and objective
- State the bottom line and your key supporting points

**Body**
- Deliver your message logically and structured
- Use appropriate anecdotes, examples
  - illustrate key points
  - establish credibility
  - connect with audience

**Conclusion**
- Restate bottom line and key supporting points
- For Q&A: “Who wants more details?” (not, “any questions?”)
- Prompting for questions: “A question I often hear is…”
INTRODUCTION: Start With The Objective

Who am I?
Provide name, role, function

Why am I here?
Declare objective, set expectations

Why is this important - WII-FM: What’s In It For Me (for the audience)?
Give audience a reason to listen; make an explicit benefit statement

How will I accomplish my objective?
Lay a road map; set the agenda; provide an outline of what will be covered and when
BODY: Structure the Presentation to Maximize Delivery

- **Deliver the Main Idea**: Tell audience what you’re going to tell them…and tell them again.

- **Transition Well**: Move through presentation by using phrases such as; “now we will review…” or “if there are no more questions, we will now move onto…”

- **Be Flexible and On Course**: If needed, use examples not in presentation to emphasize a point, but don’t get side-tracked. Stay On Course by using phrases such as “let’s get back to…”

- **Review Benefits and Main Idea**: Make sure you have delivered your message and emphasized the main idea or benefit to the audience.
Provide Content When Introducing the Next Topic

Set the stage:

- This project was very collaborative and was a cross lab initiative, this is what we did…
- The project was multi-disciplinary and we worked with several engineers and scientist, the work focused on…
- I led this project and had three Chemist working with me on my team. We….
- I Led this project team which created a model to calculate the diffusion coefficients and Brownian dynamics of DNA origami structures in collaboration with researchers from MIT and Harvard

For Interviewing Interviews
CONCLUSION: Revisit the Objective and...Provide Structured Closing

- **Review**: Summarize main elements of presentation as they relate to the original objective.
- **“Especially” statement**: If applicable, highlight a key point or crucial element for audience to take away.
- **Next steps/call to action**: Signal the end is near...”to wrap up” or “to sum up”. Clearly articulate the next step, action, or practical recommendation.
- **Questions/closure**: Thank the audience; solicit questions...ask open ended questions...“who would like more details?” or “a question I often hear is...”
Body Language and Movement

Feet/Body
- Stand firmly and move deliberately. Do not sway or shift
- Move at appropriate times during presentation (e.g. move during transitions or to emphasize a point)
- Stand where you can see everyone
- Do not block the visuals/screen

Hands
- Decide on a resting position for hands (should feel and look comfortable)
- Gestures should be natural and follow what you are saying
  - Hand movement can emphasize your point
- Make gestures strong and crisp…try to use only one arm/hand
- Keep hands away from face
- When pointing to the screen, do so deliberately. Do not wave
- Use 3-T’s Method… Touch-Turn-Talk
Body Language and Movement

Eyes

- Look at audience’s faces, not above their heads
- If an interview or business meeting…look at the decision makers (as well as everyone else)
- Look at faces for 3-5 seconds and then move on to the next person
- Do not look away from audience for more than 10 seconds
- Looking at a person keeps them engaged
Verbal Delivery

Common Faults of Five Critical Elements of Verbal Presentations

1. **Volume**
   - Speaking too quietly

2. **Speed**
   - Speaking too quickly hinders the audience comprehension

3. **Variety**
   - Monotone, lack of expression can create “dull” delivery with little animation

4. **Fillers**
   - Hesitation, excessive pauses, using distracting fillers (“um”, “ah”)

5. **Emphasis**
   - Stress on unimportant words clouds meaning
   - Poor phrasing, putting pauses in the wrong places

Tips for Speaking to an Audience

- Use spoken rather than written English
  - Use active rather than passive verbs
  - Avoid technical terms, unless you know the audience is familiar with them
  - Always use your own words and phrases
  - Cut out jargon

**Look at your audience**

- Use vocal techniques to catch their attention
  - change pace or volume
  - use a longer than normal pause between key points
  - change pitch or inflection
  - sip water to force yourself to pause
- Audience is a group of individual people
  - address them as if they were a single person
# Myths about Giving Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Fact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good speakers are born, not made</td>
<td>Good speakers take more time preparing and practicing than ineffective speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I follow what someone else says and does, I will be as effective as that person</td>
<td>Other people’s styles are useful, but you must present in the way that feels most comfortable for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who speak and look confident are not nervous inside</td>
<td>Most speakers experience some type of nervous energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have enough chances to practice, so I will never feel confident</td>
<td>If you really want to practice, you can find the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before I get up to talk, I feel physiological reactions - my heart beats faster and my breathing gets quicker. Those sensations mean fear.</td>
<td>These reactions signal that you are energizing yourself (these are typical of Olympic athletes before they compete). They are normal. You can draw on them to energize you, not immobilize you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Organize

• Knowing that your presentation and thoughts are well organized will give you confidence

Visualize

• Imagine delivering your presentation with enthusiasm and leaving the room knowing that you did a good job

Practice

• All successful speakers rehearse their presentation. Practice standing up as if the audience was in front of you. Practice again
Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Breathe

• Inhale deeply several times to stay loose. When your muscles tighten, you feel nervous and it’s more difficult to breathe

Focus on Relaxing

• Try to clear your mind. Breathe and tell yourself to “relax”

Release Tension

• In a quiet area, do an isometric exercise. Starting with your toes, and working up your body, tighten all of your muscles including making fists. Then release all tension while taking a deep breathe
Tips for Reducing Anxiety

Move
• Speakers who stand in one spot experience tension. In order to relax, release tension and flex your muscles, move in a purposeful manner and use upper body gestures to make points.

Eye Contact
• Make your presentation a one-on-one conversation. Build rapport by making it personal and personable. Use words such as “we”, “our”, “us”. Eye contact helps you relax because you become less isolated from the audience.
Tips for Personal Appearance

Women

- Clothes should fit well, not too tight. If wearing a skirt, hemline should be appropriate for the audience. Generally longer sleeves present a more professional business-like appearance.

- Find 2-3 colors that work well for you. Wear good fabrics and make sure they don’t make noise when you move. Generally, try to avoid bright reds and oranges, and blacks and whites, since these tend to draw attention away from your face.

- Avoid jewelry that sparkles, dangles or makes noise. Use subtle accessories to compliment your outfit. Earrings, broaches and bracelets can distract the audience.
Tips for Personal Appearance

Women

- Makeup should be simple and compliment the wearer. Makeup that is well done can control oily areas of the face that might reflect light, and enhance natural features, presenting a more relaxed look.

- Hair should add to a positive overall appearance and should not be a dominant feature of the face

“Underscored Elegance”
Tips for Personal Appearance

Men

• Suits should be well tailored. Generally, dark blues, grays and blacks in current styles are the safest bet. Depending upon the audience, a sport coat and well-matched dress slacks are fine.

• Men’s suits are designed to be buttoned, whereas most women’s coats are not. Depending upon the level of formality, you may wish to button the jacket, unbutton it, or remove the coat altogether.

• Shirts should fit well and the color should not be too bright. Wear a cotton T-shirt and a white dress shirt if you’re worried about perspiration.
Tips for Personal Appearance

Men

• If wearing a tie, it should compliment the color of your eyes and face. A “power tie” may not work in many settings. More low tones and subtle colors may work better.

• Shoes should be appropriate, comfortable and well shined. Socks should match and cover the bare leg when you sit down.

• Hair (if any) should frame your face. Beards and mustaches should be well trimmed and above the lip line.
Tips for Personal Appearance

Wearing Glasses

• If you need glasses to read the visual aides or to see the audience, wear them. If you don’t need them, or wear contact lenses, leave them off. Glasses sometimes reflect light and the audience won’t be able to see your eyes.

• Do not wear tinted glasses to avoid reflections. If need be, use an anti-reflective coating which eliminates reflection and glare.
Common Presenting Mistakes

• Talking too fast / lack of pauses
• Reading slides verbatim
• Hovering over the projector / facing the screen
• Standing between the projector and the screen
• Speaking during a transition
• Responding to a question by shuffling through a disorganized pile of slides/papers
• Failing to introduce or summarize the presentation
• Not reminding the audience why they should be listening
Tips and Tricks – Visual Aids

Ensure adequate preparation
• Be completely familiar with the aids, the equipment, and their use
• Be certain everyone can see/hear the aid
• If using transparencies make them readable, brief, simple

Don’t overload your presentation
• Rough rule of thumb 2-3 visual aids per 10 minutes

Match your performance to your preparation
• Explain your slides
• Use a pointer rather than your finger
• Never stand between any member of the audience and the screen
• Avoid turning towards the screen to explain a point
• Speak as much as possible to your audience rather than to the aid
• Turn off the projector when the visual is no longer required
The Visuals…continued

• Do not talk during transitions
  • Will end up talking into the projector
  • Brief silence allows audience time to think

• Keep slides neat and in sequence
  • Will need to refer back when someone asks a question

• Do not be a slave to the slide presentation
  • If instinct tells you to change the order of your presentation
    or skip some information - do it
The Visuals…continued

The Slides Are...

• A useful way to focus the discussion
• Visuals to support your key points
• Handout so participants remember the presentation
• A set of back up data to support recommendations and answer questions

Therefore...

• Deliver your opening, closing, and key points
  - as soon as they become clear
  - before slides are finished
• Choose slides to support your key points (not vice versa)
  - different audiences call for different slides
  - primary focus should be you and your message, not the slides
Managing Your Preferences

EXAMPLE: Allison dislikes/is uneasy with spontaneous questioning
  • IDEA: She writes out and practices responses to potential questions. She asks listeners to write down their questions so she can answer them during Q&A time

EXAMPLE: Kathy feels uneasy not knowing her listeners
  • IDEA: She can greet people as they enter. If that is not possible, she can ask questions by a show of hands to assess people’s interests and expectations

EXAMPLE: Chris is easily distracted from his central points
  • IDEA: He can ask listeners to hold their questions and comments to the end of his talk. Or, he can answer questions between each of his major points
Last Minute Checklist

• Is the room set up properly?
  • Seating - can everyone see the screen?
  • Equipment - do you know how to operate it? Have you checked the focus?
• Are your visuals and other supplies ready?
• Are your notes (if any) ready?
• Have you checked your clothing?
  • appearance, taken change out of your pockets, zippers in closed position, etc.?
• Do you know what to say in the opening?
• What are your key points?
• Do you know how you will close?
EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION SKILLS

Final Q&A

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us”

Oliver Wendell Holmes