How to Give a Great Technical Presentation

Behnaam Aazhang
Rice University
and
University of Oulu
Objective
Objective

- Convey your contributions
Objective

• Convey your contributions
  • Job interview
  • Conference
  • Public relation
Objective

• Convey your contributions
  • Job interview
  • Conference
  • Public relation
• Half an hour to leave a long lasting impression
A Great Talk!
A Great Talk!

• You know it when you hear it
A Great Talk!

- You know it when you hear it
  - James Massey
  - Ezio Biglieri
  - David Tse
  - ...

Sunday, May 10, 2009
A Great Talk!

- You know it when you hear it
  - James Massey
  - Ezio Biglieri
  - David Tse
  - ...

- You know it when you give it!!
Great Speakers
Great Speakers

- A gift?
- Effort?
Great Speakers

- A gift 10%
- Effort 90%
Ideas

- Principles
- Slides
- Delivery
- A few do’s and don’ts
Ideas

• Principles
• Slides
• Delivery
• A few do’s and don’ts

Great Content--Technical Results
Principles I

• Know your audience
  • Adjust the objective of the talk
Principles I

- Know your audience
- Adjust the objective of the talk
- One technical question
- Motivate the question
Principles I

• Know your audience
  • Adjust the objective of the talk
• One technical question
  • Motivate the question
• Your answer
  • Show the effectiveness of your answer
Principles 2

• Start by outlining the story
Principles 2

- Start by outlining the story
- Tell one story
  - Carry the audience through the story
Principles 2

- Start by outlining the story
- Tell one story
  - Carry the audience through the story
- Self contained
  - No additional references
Slides I

- To enhance spoken words
Slides I

• To enhance spoken words
• Pictures, figures, plots
• To enhance spoken words
• Pictures, figures, plots
• Reminder of the next point
Slides I

• To enhance spoken words
  • Pictures, figures, plots
  • Reminder of the next point
  • Context to bring the audience back when they drift away
Slides 2

• The problem 20%
  • Motivation
  • Relevance
Slides 3

- Minimally define the system 20%
Slides 3

- Minimally define the system 20%
- Model
- Assumptions
- Formulation
Slides 3

- Minimally define the system 20%
  - Model
  - Assumptions
  - Formulation

Relevant to the story
Slides 4

• Prior work 5%
• Prior work 5%
  • Only those relevant to the story
  • No need to bash others to justify your work
Slides 4

- Prior work 5%
  - Only those relevant to the story
  - No need to bash others to justify your work

Relevant to the story
Slide 5

- Your approach and your solution 50%
Slides 5

- Your approach and your solution 50%
- No unnecessary details
Slides 5

• Your approach and your solution 50%
  • No unnecessary details
  • Simplify the complicated process
Slides 5

• Your approach and your solution 50%
  • No unnecessary details
  • Simplify the complicated process
  • No chronological order
Your approach and your solution 50%
- No unnecessary details
- Simplify the complicated process
- No chronological order
- The beauty and effectiveness
• Your approach and your solution 50%
  • No unnecessary details
  • Simplify the complicated process
  • No chronological order
• The beauty and effectiveness

Relevant to the story line
Slides 6

- Block diagram--used again and again
Slides 6

- Block diagram--used again and again
- Examples
Slides 6

- Block diagram--used again and again
- Examples
- Figures and plots
Slides 6

• Block diagram--used again and again
• Examples
• Figures and plots
• Animation
Slides 6

• Block diagram--used again and again
• Examples
• Figures and plots
• Animation
• Videos/Demos
Slides 6

• Block diagram--used again and again
• Examples
• Figures and plots
• Animation
• Videos/Demos

Useful to tell the story
Slides 7

• Final thoughts 5%
  • Future directions
Slides 7

- Final thoughts 5%
- Future directions
- More philosophical
Slides 7

- Final thoughts 5%
- Future directions
- More philosophical
- Take home message
Delivery I

• Energy
Delivery I

• Energy
• Conscious of time
Delivery 1

- Energy
- Conscious of time
- Practice, practice, practice
Delivery I

- Energy
- Conscious of time
- Practice, practice, practice
- Prepare the environment
Delivery I

- Energy
- Conscious of time
- Practice, practice, practice
- Prepare the environment
- Get comfortable
Delivery 1

• Energy
• Conscious of time
• Practice, practice, practice
• Prepare the environment
• Get comfortable
• Read the audience
Delivery 1

• Energy
• Conscious of time
• Practice, practice, practice
• Prepare the environment
• Get comfortable
• Read the audience

Enjoy the story telling
Delivery 2

• Speak clearly
• Authoritatively
• Project your voice and energy
Delivery 2

• Speak clearly
• Authoritatively
• Project your voice and energy
• No apologies
Delivery 2

- Speak clearly
- Authoritatively
- Project your voice and energy
- No apologies
- Sincere about the contributions
Do’s and Don’ts

• Do not use “the paper” as the starting point of your slides
Do’s and Don’ts

• Do not use “the paper” as the starting point of your slides

• From scratch

• Start to prepare with a story
Do’s and Don’ts

- Do not use “the paper” as the starting point of your slides
- From scratch
- Start to prepare with a story
- Simplify but remain technical
Do’s and Don’ts

- Do not use “the paper” as the starting point of your slides
- From scratch
- Start to prepare with a story
- Simplify but remain technical
- Look at the audience not the slides
Do’s and Don’ts

- Do not use “the paper” as the starting point of your slides
- From scratch
- Start to prepare with a story
- Simplify but remain technical
- Look at the audience not the slides
- Use technology
Final Thoughts

• Time to impress the audience--enjoy
Final Thoughts

• Time to impress the audience—enjoy
• Know your objective and audience
Final Thoughts

• Time to impress the audience—enjoy
• Know your objective and audience
• Prepare and practice
  • Efforts—90%
• Energy!