

Tips on Presentations

When you work on a project all summer, you are deeply familiar with it. However, think back to when you were first assigned the project. Did you immediately understand the problem's scope and how to approach it? No! You probably received a good description and asked clarifying questions before you dove into your assignment and as you made progress on it. Presentations are tricky because you are allotted only 10-20 minutes to summarize the work you did over a few months. Due to your limited time, you need to simplify your summary down to the bare essentials. Also, if your work is fairly technical or uses many acronyms, be sure you dumb down your presentation and spell out terms unique to your work and immediate organization because you should not expect your audience to be familiar with the context of your work.

Simplify the Message

The best way to present your work is to follow the popular behavioral interview style, CAR: Context, Action, and Result. Provide background for your project and the purpose in how it relates to improving the business. Then, explain how you went about addressing the problem. Conclude with the recommendations you made and its impact on the company's financial situation, productivity, or other concern. When possible, quantify the exact dollar savings or timesaving you expect to generate once your recommendations are implemented. You can work with your supervisor or team members on calculating this number. Explain that you want to tag a value to the work you performed over the summer and that you could use some guidance in calculating that number.

Simplify the Visual Aid

When designing the power point presentation, keep it simple. Aim to spend one minute per slide, but do not overload the slide with words. Begin with a descriptive title, a topic sentence, and provide a few supporting bullet points. When appropriate, put in pictures to support the message in your slide or ideas you are trying to convey in your presentation.

Organize the Content

The following is the typical format of an end-of-summer presentation:

Title Page

Presentation Agenda

Introduction To You (introduce yourself in terms of where you go to school, your class level, and your major)

Introduction To Your Organization (very brief description of your organization's purpose within the business)

Project 1 (use CAR)

Project 2 (use CAR)

Project 3 (use CAR)

Summary of Accomplishments

Lessons Learned

Suggestions To Internship Committee (what could they do better for next time? Keep it diplomatic).

Acknowledgements (thank your boss, buddy, and anyone else who helped you during the internship)

Plan Ahead

I loved my last summer internship so much that I really wanted to make a strong impression for my presentation. I spent nearly 20 hours on the power point two weeks prior to my scheduled presentation date. I finalized the presentation the week before and did several practice runs with some friends to get feedback. My presentation received very high remarks on most fronts. However, I unintentionally offended some people by trying to be funny. You should be careful about using humor because it may be misinterpreted. Feedback upfront is helpful in making sure people get the message you are trying to deliver. The three things to keep in mind for the presentation are to keep it simple, be prepared, and keep it positive. You want to set a tone that you really enjoyed your experience and that you would love to return. Employers want to see how you were successful because that suggests you would be successful as a full-time employee.

Polish the Delivery

Practice your speech and make sure it is delivered within the allotted time. Resist the temptation to read off your presentation. The slides are there only as an outline for you. If you have 10 minutes, I would suggest spending no more than two minutes on the background of the presentation, yourself, and the organization. Spend the bulk of your time (five minutes) on explaining your projects. In the remaining three minutes, close your talk by highlighting your key accomplishments, lessons learned, and the people who contributed to your success. At the end of your presentation, you can invite questions.

I'm sure you've heard that you want to tell them what you will tell them, tell them, and then tell them again. Begin with the agenda of your speech. Tell them that you will be introducing yourself and your organization, provide a summary of your work, and conclude with some takeaways. Proceed with introductions. When you start talking about your projects, you may want to tell them that you are going to share three projects with them. Then start with the first. As you continue with the speech, use good transition phrases to cue the audience that you are moving to the next point. For example, you can say something as simple as "For my second project, I was asked to..."

Rest up and Dress up for Delivery Day

Try to get a good night's rest before your presentation day. Dress the part. Look sharp and professional. Dress more formally than you do usually. A full suit is not necessary unless mandated, but try to be on the formal-side of business casual if that's your company's regular dress policy. Perhaps, practice once more the day of the event so your ideas are fresh in your head, and just take a few deep breathes prior to the delivery.

Note:

After the book publication, she also collaborated with Scott Fable on their series of articles for the Tau Beta Pi magazine “The Bent”, an example of which is <http://www.google.com/cse?cx=015567125086544241013:akb-nvozkb&cof=FORID:0&q=word+search+Liang>