Survival Guides

How to Survive…..
Seminar Presentations

Some people make it look easy – but putting a good seminar together can be a tricky process. If you think of a really good talk YOU have seen – it’s likely that it:
• Was well planned
• Had an easy to follow structure
• Used the visual aids well
• Contained relevant material
• Had a confident and entertaining presenter…..

Love it or hate it, PowerPoint® is a major (and often expected) feature of seminar presentations. Even if you are using overhead transparencies, you need to give careful consideration to how you display your material.

Diagrams (or photos) are much more effective than words

Keep it simple – for everyone’s benefit

Omit unnecessary details
Use less than 7 words a line, less than 7 lines a page (aim for 24 point font)

To script or not to script…..

It might seem like a good idea to write out your talk as you prepare it. But it really isn’t – the written word is completely different from the spoken word; it contains too much detail and it’s easy to lose your place.

Instead, use your slides to help guide you, focus on your message and remember the key points. The best way to avoid reading from a script is to never write one in the first place!

CS 2.2
Handy hints – Surviving the presentation

- Know more than you say – but don’t say everything!
- When it’s over, get honest feedback from someone in the audience
- First 30 seconds is crucial – your audience needs reassurance you know what you’re doing!
- The speaker is the least important person in the room
- And finally….there is no substitute for practicing in front of an audience – there really isn’t!

It’s not what you say...

Something worth thinking about is the way the audience receives your message. The words you use account for only 7% of your effectiveness. Much more important are the way you use your voice (38%) and the visual impression you create (55%).

It’s not over yet....

'Question time' can be a particularly nerve-wracking part of the presentation – but there are things you can do to prepare AND to handle any question with confidence:

- Refer to your presentation – flick back to the relevant slide and elaborate
- Don’t be afraid to say you don’t know
- Remember, not all questions people ask are relevant – don’t get drawn into their area of interest just to keep them happy (restate your focus if necessary)

Other useful resources:

Other Survival guides – “Speaking to an Audience”

BOOK Lethbridge (1991) Successful seminars and poster presentations Resource Area CS200
BOOK Moss (1994) Persuasive Presentations LL&RS Resource Area CS200

http://www.studentservices.uwa.edu.au/learning
Email: study.smarter@uwa.edu.au
Ph: (08) 6488 2423
Fax: (08) 6488 1119
Visit Student Services – 2nd Floor Guild Building

UWA Student Services welcomes your feedback on the information contained in this publication and on any service provided. Please contact study.smarter@uwa.edu.au

LS.016.2005 CRICOS Provider Code: 00126G