Building Better Presentations - Checklist

Prepared by Todd Reubold, Director of Communications

University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment

reub0002@umn.edu | 612.624.6140 | www.slideshare.net/treubold | Twitter: @treubold

PREPARING THE TALK:

___ Can I summarize the talk in one sentence? What's the main takeaway message?

_____

_____

___ Do I need slides for this presentation or would a talk without visuals have more impact?

___ Do I know the audience? Who are they? _____

_____

___ What does the audience know about my topic? What are their biases? Why should they care about the presentation? _____

_____

_____

___ Does the talk have an overall structure (chronological, problem-solution, sequential, climatic, etc.)?

___ Have I sketched out the talk based on this structure?

___ Does the talk explain why I care about this topic?

___ Does the talk help people understand "what is" and "what could be"?

DESIGNING THE TALK:

___ Does each of my slides convey a single, strong message

___ Have I removed all the non-essential information (background images, logos, etc.) from my slides?

___ Do my slides have bullet points?

___ Can I present the same information without bullets points?

___ Do I have a good mix of photo, text, illustration and data slides?

___ Am I only using one or two fonts?

___ Are the fonts visible from the back of the room where I'm presenting?

___ Have I reduced the amount of text on my slides to just essential information?

___ Can the information on my slides be processed effectively in a few seconds?

___ Am I using a simple background for my slides (plain white, black, gray, etc.)?

___ Am I using just one background color for my entire presentation?

___ Am I using a consistent color palette throughout the talk with 3-4 colors max?

___ Does my text, images, etc. standout from the background enough? Is there enough contrast on the slides?

___ Am I using consistent placement of design elements and text throughout?

___ Are my photos and text properly aligned throughout?

___ Does my presentation include photos, illustrations, etc?

___ Are all of my photos clear and in focus?

___ Do I have any clipart in my presentation?

___ Have I specifically selected colors that relate to my presentation or topic?

___ Have I simplified data slides as much as possible while retaining meaning?

___ Does each of my data slides focus on one main message?

___ Have all of my slides been simplified for maximum impact and clarity?

___ Do all of the slides reinforce or connect to the main message in some way?

___ Have I included breaks or changes of pace at roughly ten-minute intervals? (Such as asking questions; showing short video clips; etc.)

___ Do I have a S.T.A.R. moment – Something They'll Always Remember?

DELIVERING THE TALK / RE-CAP:

___ Have I practiced my talk – out loud and standing up – at least five times?

___ Did I practice in front of others?

___ Did I feel relaxed before and during my talk?

___ Did I take steps to calm my pre-talk jitters (if applicable)?

___ Did I feel prepared during my talk?

___ Did I stay within my allotted time?

___ Did I begin my talk with a memorable quote, story, fact, etc.?

___ Did I avoid "throat clearing" and really engage the audience during the first 30-60 seconds of my talk?

___ Did I avoid "fillers" like ummm, uhhh, etc.?

___ Did I avoid reading my slides word for word?

___ Did I use a remote and move away from the podium / engage with the audience?

___ Was my voice audible throughout the room/hall?

___ Did I avoid skipping or apologizing for slides?

___ Did I include soundbytes and tweetable information or comments?

___ Did I pace/sway/move too much during my talk?

___ Was I too still or motionless during my talk?

___ Did I vary the tone, tempo and volume of my voice?

___ Did I include a bit of humor (if applicable)?

___ Did I feel "authentic" while presenting?

___ Did I feel "present" in the moment?

___ Was my talk inspiring/motivating/engaging/surprising/etc.?

___ Did I restate my main point at the end of the Q&A?

___ Did I ask my audience to take an action or change a behavior?