How to Present at InfoShow and Beyond

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Keys to a Good Presentation:

Preparation

and

Practice

#InfoShow Formats

Presentation (10 minutes + Q&A)

Panel (30 mins. With 3-5 presenters)

Demo/Interactive (e.g., taking attendees through some experience)

Poster

Digital Object exhibition (e.g., UI, video)

Non-digital Object exhibition (e.g., artwork, materials)

Informally presenting your work

Posters & Exhibitions

1 Be Prepared

Prepare a short (~1 minute) overview of your work that you can deliver to anyone who is interested.

Yes, you will get sick of saying it! But remember: it's new to each person who stops by.

(and don't forget to practice it!)

2 Be There

Ideally, stand around (or near) your poster or exhibit for the entire session.

Yes, this is awkward! But if you're not there, people are unlikely to notice or care about your work.

3 Engage People

Don't be shy about talking to people; not everyone will come up and start asking questions

~60% will walk by your work without even looking at it
Don't be offended! Not everyone is interested in your work

~30% will briefly look at your work and keep walking
Give them some time to look it over, then ask if they have any questions

~10% will look it over and immediately ask questions
This is great! But, don't let one person dominate your time

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Sharing your expertise and your work

Panels and Interactive Demos

Have a Plan

Do. Not. Wing It.

For panels:
Who is moderating and what is their role?
Will panelists be giving opening statements? How long? What format?
Do you have questions prepared in case the audience is quiet?

For demos:
What is the structure of your demo? Write it down, step-by-step.
What do you want to say at each step?
What do you do/say if it doesn't work?

Panels: **Get everyone on the same page**

All the panelists need to know the plan and stick to it.

Don't just rely on the moderator to keep track of everything; be aware of what's going on.

Demos: Practice!

Run through your demo on your own - more than once! – until you feel comfortable doing it without a guide.

You'll feel way better going into a demo if you've already gone through it a few times.

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Formally presenting your work

Presentations

4 Steps

1. Preparation
2. Design
3. Practice
4. Delivery

Step 1: Preparation

Emotional/mental preparation

Acknowledge the *totally understandable* anxiety that goes along with standing in front of a group of people and asking for their undivided attention

Conceptual/intellectual preparation

Think about your topic and your audience, and consider how you want to convey your key message(s)

Emotional/Mental Preparation
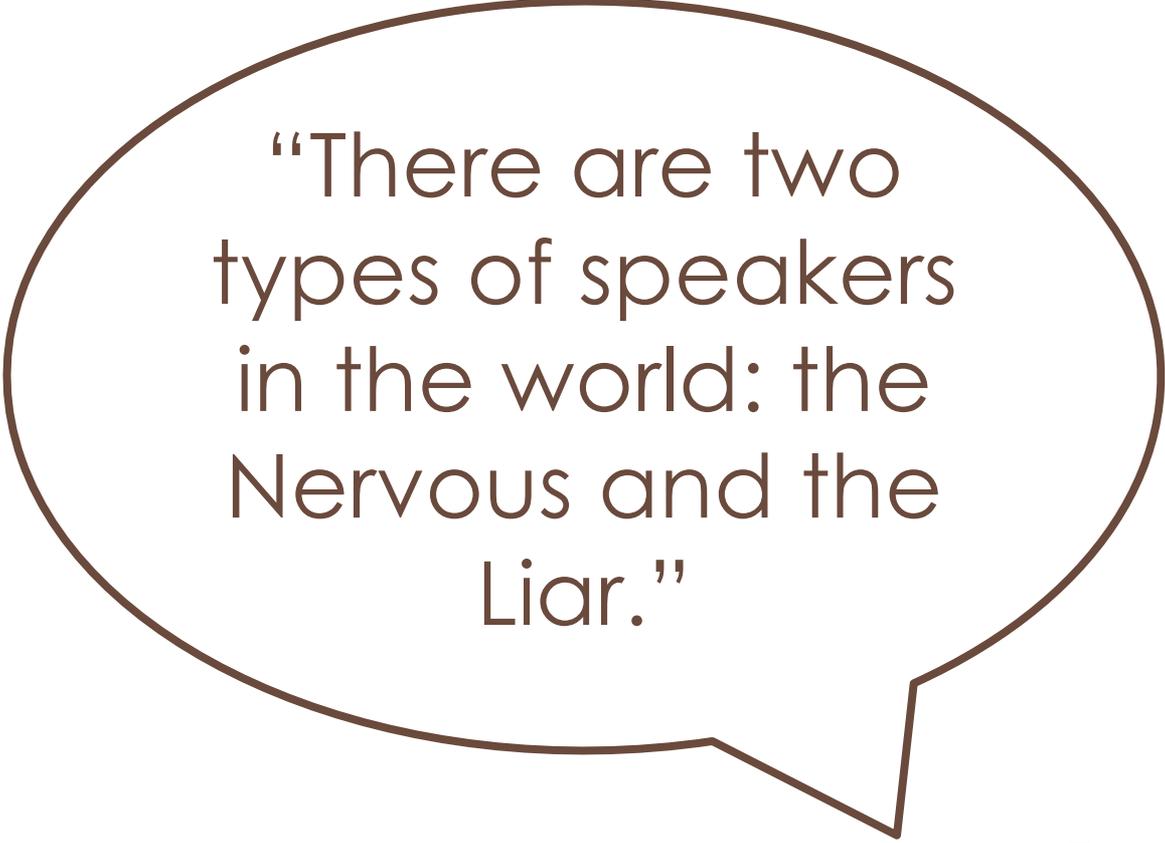
"There are two types of speakers in the world: the Nervous and the Liar."

Mark Twain

Podium Anxiety

Stage fright/public speaking anxiety is natural and very common

> At some level, all public speakers are nervous; the best public speakers develop an an ability to focus their nervous energy in productive ways

Some level of nervousness/fear is expected and can actually be a *good* thing

> At moderate levels, fear can actually help you focus!

The audience (probably) won't notice if you're nervous

Think about: what exactly are you afraid of?

Alleviating Podium Anxiety

Remember: you are the expert!
> The more you know, the more enthusiastic you will be

Practice (with a timer!) to boost your confidence

Accept that you will be nervous
> Many times, we get nervous about *appearing* nervous.

Be organized
> Arrive early, have your materials ready to go, and give yourself time to mentally prepare

Slow down, breathe, and make use of pauses

Tip: If possible, ask a friend/classmate to be your *presentation buddy* – someone to give you feedback/reassurance that you're doing fine or remind you to slow down if you're going too fast

Conceptual/Intellectual Preparation

Know your audience

When presenting to your class, you can assume everyone shares a common base of knowledge

When presenting to mixed audiences, you need to think about what people do/don't know about your topic

Plan your talk

Know the purpose the presentation

Know what message(s) you want to convey

Know how much time you have

Know the room (set-up, layout, technology)

Outline it

The first step of creating a good talk is **not** opening up PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides and designing your slides

Instead, start with an **outline**:
1) Map out the story at a high level
   - *What are the main points you want to make? In what order should they appear? Choose your storytelling structure (next slide)*
2) Add the plot points
   - *Within each section, what messages will you need to convey to tell your whole story?*
     – Write one sentence per line

Structure is Key

Organize your presentation in a logical way
> Your audience needs to be able to follow along, so make sure they have all the information they need at each step

Choose a specific way of organizing your presentation:

Chronological or sequential
- *Follow the steps of a process or sequence of events*

Three points
- *Break your topic into the three biggest points and describe each one*

Problem-cause-solution
- *Describe the problem, explain the cause, propose a solution*

Stories
- *Introduce the characters, give them something to do, provide a conflict/action, explain how they overcome it, explain what they learned (the lesson or moral)*

Structure: **Opening**

Sets the tone and gets the audience's attention

Types of openings:

    Preview

    Ask a question

    Pose a hypothetical situation

    Describe something new or dramatic

    Make a startling statement

    Tell a joke (risky)

Structure: **Middle/Body**

Present your main points one by one

Pause briefly at the end of each point

    Give people time to think about what you are saying; let it sink in

Make it clear when you move to another point

    "The next point is…"

    "Now I'd like to explain…"

    "However, it's important to realize that…"

Structure: **Ending**

The ending is what people will remember the most – make it memorable or impactful in some way.

Provide a memorable quote

Give an interesting or surprising finding/conclusion

Ask an intriguing question

Answer the question posed in the introduction

Offer a humorous anecdote or joke that relates to the topic

Step 2: Design

The best slide deck is one that **enhances** the presentation.

They should guide – not dictate – what you say

- *If you're reading off your slides, it's not a good slide*

They should support – not duplicate – what you say

- *Unless the point is super important, what's on the slide should be different than what you say*

Design the Slides

For each slide, think: what is **one key message** I want to convey?

Once you've figured that out, next ask: what is the **best way** to convey this message?

Text only? Visual only? Text + visual?

If you have multiple key messages on a slide, consider:

Splitting them into different slides OR

Using animation so they only appear one at a time

Avoid bullet points.

(they make people angry)

Use **consistent** styles.
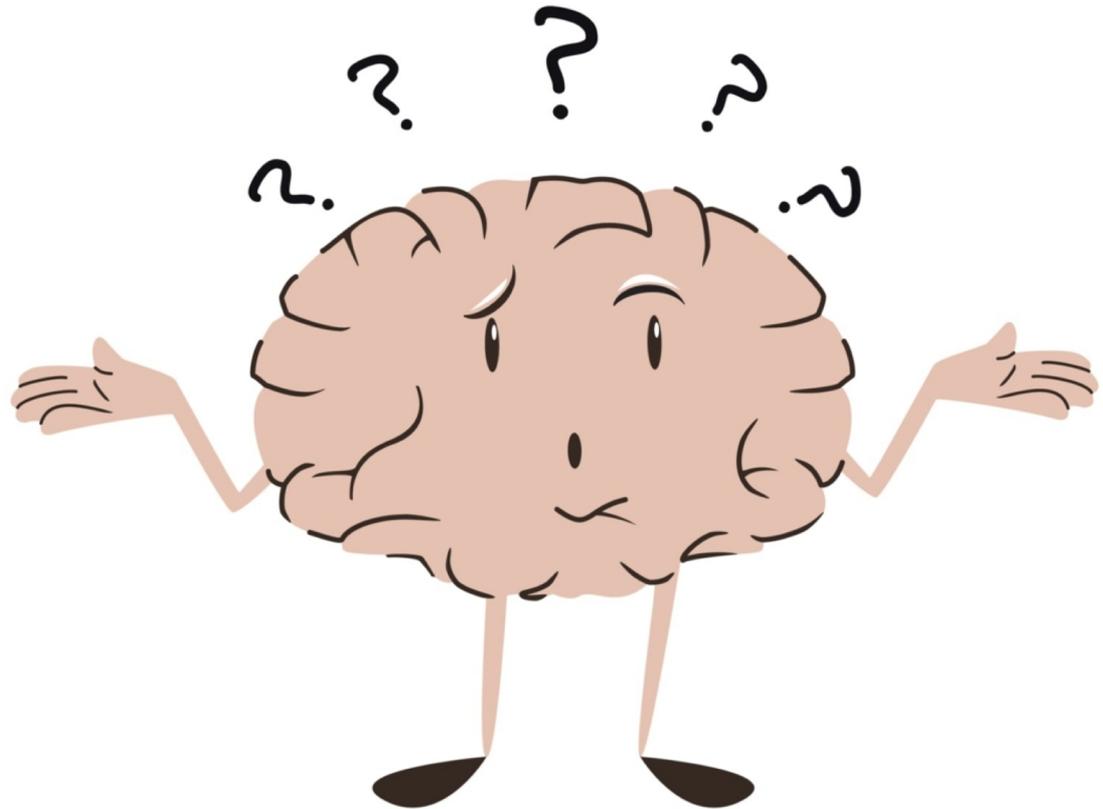
Choose BOLD and READABLE fonts.

Step 3: Practice

Do. Not. Wing It.

Practice at least once! Maybe more if you're presenting with a group.

*The audience **will** notice.*

Step 4: Delivery

Face the audience – keep your hips pointed in their direction.

Look at *specific people* in the audience (but don't stare at individual people for too long)

Use *calm* gestures (but not too many)

Don't pace around too much (especially in a short presentation)

If you have notes, try not to fumble with them or play with them while you're talking

Tone of Voice

Are you speaking loudly enough?

Are you speaking slowly enough?

Are you speaking clearly enough?

Vary both the volume and the pitch (but not too much!)

Pause occasionally

Actual Words

Use the right vocabulary for your audience

Be conscious of filler words (like "um" and "uh")

Be precise (avoid "kind of" and "like")

Don't be redundant by repeating yourself
- Say it once and move on, unless your repetition serves a purpose (i.e., for special emphasis of important points)

Let your slides seamlessly support you
- Things you don't need to say:
  - *"The title of my presentation is…"*
  - *"On this slide, I'm going to talk about…"*
  - *"I'm now going to transition to the next section"*
  - *"And that is the end of my presentation."*

"It has to feel like you're having **a live conversation with the audience**, not just regurgitating something you already thought about before. Doing that really well, especially with the backdrop of all that prep*—that's the art."

-**Sally Kohn**
Author & CNN Commentator

*and practice!!

Questions?

The End.

More Resources: