

Slide Preparation

(Guidelines to use for slides or a PowerPoint® presentation)

Poor slides are the most common cause of a speaker's failure to hold the attention of an audience. Your slides should enhance your message. Just a little bit of extra care in preparing visual aids can add immeasurably to the overall quality of your presentation and the effectiveness of the information you have to convey. Here are a few simple guidelines:

1. Prepare rough sketches of your slides immediately after you prepare the first draft of your paper, and refer to the sketches as you revise the draft in preparing the final copy. In this way, you can be sure that the slide support the points you are making in the paper.
2. Make sure the type on the slides is legible. Some guidelines are attached that will insure maximum visibility by the audience.
3. Never present a slide of a construction drawing or blueprint. They usually contain too much detail that only serves to confuse and frustrate the audience.
4. If a flow sheet is required to depict a system, do not photograph an engineering flow sheet. Redraw it and include only the basic elements needed.
5. If at all possible, do not present tables of data. Charts or graphs are a more effective way to show the effect of process parameters or experimental variables. If tabular data must be shown, make sure it can be read easily in the short time the slide will be projected. One rule of thumb is to limit tables to a maximum of four rows and four columns.
6. Slides do not have to be prepared by a professional artist to be effective. Clarity and simplicity are far more important.
7. Always use a large room to conduct a test run of your slides well in advance of your departure for the conference. If the details cannot be seen or read at 100 feet away when projected on a six-ft screen, you should redraw the slide. If a room this large is not available for your trial run, test for readability at 50 feet on a three-foot screen.
Remember, your audience will not appreciate it if you make such comments as:
"You probably can't read this, but . . ."
"The only important data are in column six, row 10 . . ."
8. On the day of your presentation at the conference, please plan to use the "Speaker Ready Room" to make your final trial run.
9. Do not use proprietary terms, company names or logos in your slides.

