



Institute for Healthcare Quality,
Safety and Efficiency

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Presenting to Influence Tip Sheet

Strong start (hook)

- Make your message memorable
- The “hook” - patient story, statistics, or humor are effective ways to engage people.
- Be authentic

Empathize with your audience

- What makes them tick?
- What do they need?
- What is value from their perspective?
- What is THEIR burning platform?
- Craft a story that gets your audience on your team

Visuals

- Follow cognitive and design principles
- Use >24 font
- Do not use animations, unless very well considered and minimally placed.
- A single word, phrase or photo on your slide that cues your point is much more effective than having 50 words that you read. Yes, you lose the crutch of being able to read it but if you practice (5 times!) this is a good thing. You are not there to read a story!
- Avoid too much data or low-definition photos.
- Attempt to have 6 or fewer lines with 6 or fewer words each.
 - Avoid sentences, rather use key points.
 - Keep things on one line. E.g., try to avoid sentences that wrap to the next line.

Strong closing (dismount)

- A gymnast’s dismount is the last, most memorable part of the routine. Yours too!
- Anticipate and answer key questions.
- Synthesize your point and consider revisiting your hook.

People will forget nearly everything you say

- Your audience will remember less than 10% of what you say.
- Make what’s important stick by displaying it prominently on your slide (e.g., one number), repeating it often, and baking it into your hook and dismount.



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Presentation style

- You are the star!
 - Your slides are there to emphasize key points not to be the feature event. You want eyes on you. Don't look at your screen, look at the audience. Don't be afraid to touch the screen or use a laser pointer to make a key point. But, remember, you are why they are there.
- Ditch the podium
 - Try to get out from behind the podium. "We are having a conversation, let me come talk to you."
 - But, walk with purpose. Mindlessly pacing gets distracting.
- Eye contact
 - Avoid aimlessly looking about the room, staring at the ceiling or the ground.
 - Look an individual in the eyes for a half or full sentence. This creates the impression that you are having a conversation with that one person. Then move to the next person, preferable in a different part of the room. Moving from one person at a table to the next in sequence is creepy.
- Room control
 - You are the star, own the stage!
 - Movement engages people as they must shift around to see you.
 - Beware of the box out (someone stuck behind you).
 - Someone not paying attention, talking to others? Walk over and stand next to them!
- Slow down
 - Frenetic pacing is perceived as anxiety (You are nervous, but don't show it!).
 - Actively force yourself to go so slow it feels awkward...that's usually the right pace!
 - Nearly all 'ums' and 'ahs' are filler. Slowing down allows you to pace these out of the presentation as it gives you time to think of what you want to say next.
- Vary your pace
 - Monotone = boredom.
 - Cue your message...something is exciting, speed up! Making a key point that you want to resonate, slow down! This is what you do in a conversation with a friend.
- Power of the pause
 - Pausing causes people to 'wake up' and pay attention—"why are they not talking?"
 - Use pauses to re-energize the audience and to give you a second or two to catch your breath.
- Show up early
 - Slow your pulse. Nothing cues panic like showing up 2 minutes before the talk and rushing in to breathlessly begin. Come early, get situated, get a cup of water, sit and rest while you visualize presenting the opening slide.



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- Test the mic. Lavalier mic? Make sure you have a place for it to fit on your shirt. Handheld? Practice where you need to place it for people to hear.
- Test the advancer. Some are super sensitive; some have lasers that are too dim. Pro tip: travel with your own.
- Test your slides. Be sure it's the correct slides! Sometimes fonts change, pictures don't appear. Be sure you've reviewed before the presentation.
- Test the room. Speaking to people at tables is different than to people seated classroom style. Come early and walk the room a bit.
- Consider chatting with the people in the front and back of the room (especially if they are new to the crowd). This creates a set of 'allies' you can look to throughout the talk.
- Practice (at least) 5 times!
 - People whom you think are great speakers are actually great preparers. They are not doing that spontaneously; they've practiced it a ton.
 - Practicing allows you to know what you are saying next and significantly cuts down on the filler 'ums' and 'ahs.' Unless you practice putting 'ums' and 'ahs' in. Don't do that!
 - Memorize your first and last slides, word for word. Include your pacing, your room placement, your movement, and your eye contact. Typically, people will remember your first slide (the hook) and your last slide (the dismount). All the stuff in between is mostly forgotten. Make sure you have these parts down cold.
- Relax!
 - People came to hear your talk about something you are expert on. They don't want you to fail, they want you to succeed. They are on your side. Be the expert and tell your story with confidence.
 - You've prepared, you've practiced. You are ready to go!

Resources

- <https://beautiful.ai/> - Nice for ideas for slide designs
- <https://venngage.com> - Great for infographics
- <https://unsplash.com/> - Free photos that you do not need permission
- <https://thenounproject.com/> - Decent place for finding icons
- AI generated images