Feedback on MINSC oral presentations during mid-term review in Fuerteventura

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Recommendations for future presentations:

1) Address your audience, not the slides. Do not turn your body consistently away from the audience and towards the slides.

2) Speak with conviction. Use body language to enforce this: stand up straight, appear confident.

3) If you are nervous standing in front of a group, find a "friendly" face in the audience and address that person.

4) Speak slowly with pauses.

5) Use only the time allowed. Do not go over your allocated time as this takes time away from other speakers. You have to practice ahead of time and use a stopwatch to time yourself. It is better to come in under time than over time. Leave time for valuable discussion.

6) Try to avoid verbal tics such as "I mean, I mean, I mean" or "like, like, like…"

7) Try to estimate how much time you need per slide. A general rule is one slide per minute but sometimes you may just need a few seconds for a slide and other times, you may want to spend more time describing your slide.

8) Remember YOU are the expert and the audience is there to listen to your expertise so be confident

9) Tell the audience from the beginning what the question/ problem is, then explain how you have addressed the problem and at the end, circle back to the original question/problem to remind the audience why did what you did. Why should the audience care about what you're doing? What are the implications?

10) Be prepared for potential questions. What might the audience ask you? Generally, people are not testing you. They are interested in what you have to say. If you don't know, simply say that. It is not a test.

11) Convey enthusiasm. If you are enthusiastic, your audience will reflect that and if you are dull, they will reflect your apparent boredom.

12) Think about where you should position yourself relative to the slides so that you can be comfortable switching slides or indicating information on the slides.

13) Use large fonts (font size 32 minimum) on your slides and use colors which stand out.   Red or green on black can be very hard to read. Practice in a large room and stand at the back to see if you can read the slides

14) Do not leave a lot of empty space on your slides. Better to have more slides than one slide filled with too many pictures or too much information. You can fill the whole space with one picture.

15) Remember to put scales and titles on your graphs and all images. You cannot assume that the audience will automatically know this information. Not everyone listening to you is an expert in your field.

16) Any non-scientific information should be interesting too.   For example, for these presentations, some people just listed networking opportunities, but they could have been presented in a more interesting way.

17) Watch out for spelling errors on your slides. Ask someone else to check through your presentation as you can often be blind to your own mistakes. They can make you look sloppy. Use the appropriate scientific language to describe your slides. Never use bad language or swear during a presentation.

18) As a general rule, do not have more than 7 lines of text or bullet points and use at least double line spacing. Often it is not necessary to have whole sentences, just key words. Very often "less is more" as the audience is more interested in hearing you explain your slides than in reading the information themselves. You do not want your audience to think they are going either blind or deaf.

19) To avoid problems with transferring slides between computers, send only pdf versions of your presentations.

20) Keep a "personal touch" to your presentations. You do not have to do the same thing as everyone else.