

Research Project Presentation Suggestions

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It is not possible to present in 15 minutes everything one has done and learned on a major research project. The goal of a brief presentation, therefore, is not to cover everything, but rather to convince your audience to read your work.

The following table of suggestions for a 15 minute presentation has been adapted from suggestions made in a professional development workshop run at the 1999 Academy of Management meetings (August 8, 1999, Chicago, IL), convened to try to address growing concerns of quality in its research presentation sessions

	DON'T	DO
Purpose	Present summaries of all sections of the paper	Present enough to tell the audience that the paper is worth a read – tell a good story Focus on the contribution. Minimize discussion of sections that don't stress what is new & different.
Format	Save the punchline as a <i>surprise</i> ending Use small fonts or too many overheads	Consider starting with the conclusion and then explain why you reached it (e.g. methods/results). Provide a 1 page handout describing your contribution & key points. Use fonts larger than 28 pt & no more than 6 overheads.
Audience Interaction	Give a monologue describing your research Read or look at either power point slides or written documents	Create expectations that you expect active audience participation. Survey/work the audience before the session starts. Look people in the eye and talk to them (another reason to limit the use of power point slides) Identify places for audience input and ask questions. Consider using brief exercises or scenarios that draw on the audience's personal experiences/knowledge. Offer an interactive data analysis ("mess with the data") by inviting the audience to make assumptions & suggest relationships to test.
Introduction	Focus on why you decided to do the study. Be too conceptual	Tell us what's interesting and new about what you have learned Try to start off with a real-world analogy/story
Theory	Present a broad literature review (cites, etc.) Explain every arrow in a complex figure	State the problem, why it is interesting, and what you will add. Explain what is new in this model over past contributions.

	DON'T	DO
Methods	Describe the sample measures, and validation of instruments	Provide an overview of why the measures are linked to the theoretical construct. Establish face validity and assure that more rigorous methods were applied.
Results	Present more than one or tables with numbers	Present what was significant (+ and – signs). Explain what the data tell you – not tests. People can read the paper to get details.
timing	Plan for 20 minutes in case there is extra time.	Plan for 10 minutes – it is easier to elaborate than to cut things out.
Conclusion	Review each result and summarize what was significant.	Answer broadly what we have learned and what needs to be done next. Urge the audience to read the paper for details.

These suggestions are, of course, only that. Some papers contribute through literature reviews or methods, etc. The main point is to sell rather than summarize. The objective is to get the audience to read the paper – not to present so much detail that one has no reason to read it.