Professional Presentations
In a Nutshell:

• Plan your presentation
• Organize the parts of your presentation
• Practice your presentation
• Practice with technology
• Be presentable
• Speak in a normal voice
What we say to dogs

Okay, Ginger! I've had it!
You stay out of the garbage!
Understand, Ginger? Stay out of the garbage, or else!

What they hear

blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah GINGER blah
blah blah GINGER blah...
Planning The Presentation

• Plan For Your Audience
  – Determine how to be relevant
  – Listeners hear selectively
  – Ask yourself standard profile questions
    – What is the nature of the gathering?
    – How many will be present?
    – What is their knowledge level and expectations?
    – How much time do I have?
    – What happens before and after I speak?
    – How will I know whether or not the talk was a success?
Planning The Presentation

• Plan For The Situation
  – Investigate site or room
    – What is the seating capacity of the room?
      » If you have a choice, a smaller seating capacity is preferable to a larger seating capacity
    – Where you will stand?
    – Where are the electrical outlets? Is there wireless access?
    – What are the acoustics like?
  – Investigate technology needs/systems
    – How will you hook up your laptop to the projector?
Planning The Presentation

• Choose Your Organizational Pattern
  – Introduction - Body - Conclusion
  – Problem - Solution
  – Goal - Methods - Results - Discussion
  – Narrative
    • Set the stage
    • Introduce the dramatic conflict
    • Resolve the conflict
Planning The Presentation

• Determine your relationship to your slides
  – A presentation consists of two things:
    • your voice and personal presence
    • the information on the slides

• You are the main source of information during the presentation

• Determine which combination of information from you and information from the slide will best convey the ideas to the audience
Planning The Presentation

• Choose foreground or background strategy
  – With foreground slides, you explain in detail the implications shown on the slide
    • Tables, graphs, complex visualizations
  – With background slides, you summarize key points
    • Help the audience stay on track and follow and remember points that have been made
    • Project the main points on a slide and discuss each point in turn
    • Help the audience to stay aware of their place in the presentation
Planning The Presentation

• Create an outline
  – A good outline shows both the sequence of the topics and the content of the slide or slides devoted to that topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Visual Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Outline of main topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Examples of similar technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td>List of features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages/disadvantages</td>
<td>Discussion points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Table of costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demo of main features</td>
<td>Live demo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Summarize findings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning The Presentation

• Create appropriate slides
  – Use easy-to-read fonts
  – Use subtle transitions and animations
  – “If your words or images are not on point, making them dance in color won’t make them relevant.”
    – Edward Tufte
  – Do not distract your audience from the main point of the slide!
Planning The Presentation

• Understand the parts of the slide
  – Title
    • Largest font size - 44 pt. or larger
  – Text or graphic
    • Use phrases that convey specific content rather than generic topics
    • Graphic refers to a table, chart, drawing, or image
  – Border
    • A line that provides a frame around the visual
  – Background
    • The color or design that appears behind the text or graphic
    • Light text on a dark background for a dark room
    • Dark text on a light background for a light room
Planning The Presentation

• Help the Reader
  – Use landscape (horizontal layout)
  – Give a title to each slide
  – Use a template master to establish a visual logic
  – For tables, graphs, images, etc:
    – Each visual should make only a single point
    – Interpret the visuals for your audience
      » Use a table for presenting numbers - be prepared to point out the numbers you want your audience to notice
Planning The Presentation

• Fonts
  – Use a single, simple font for all slides
  – Use different sizes, boldfacing, and italics sparingly
  – Use larger font sizes for titles
Planning The Presentation

• Colors
  – Use color to establish a visual logic
  – Use red and green sparingly (color blindness)
  – Avoid low contrast colors such as yellow on white or violet
  – Check your color scheme on a screen
    • Don’t assume that just because it looks good on your laptop screen that it will project well
Planning The Presentation

• Animation
  – Use sparingly! (If at all.)
  – If you use transitions between slides, use the same transition for all slides
  – Consider fading the previous bullets when new information appears
  – Be consistent when using animation to convey a complex point
Planning The Presentation

• Sound Effects
  – As with animation, use sparingly or not at all
  – Use the same sound transition for each slide
Planning The Presentation

• Slide Transitions
  – The goal of transitions is to let your audience know that another type of data is about to appear
  – If your audience concentrates on the transition rather than the message, you’ve lost the audience
  – Select transitions that will help the viewer
Planning The Presentation

• Visual Aids and Slides
  – Hardcopy handouts - outlines, slides, drawings
  – Consider using PowerPoint’s Notes function and handing out copies of the slides with your commentary in the note window
  – “If what you say when you expand the bullet points is useful for the audience to take away, put it in the handout.”
    – Stratten
Rehearsing The Presentation

• Practice Developing a Conversational Quality
  – You should sound like you are speaking to people
  – Do not memorize words
    • If you memorize, you will tend to grope for memorized words rather than concentrating on the listeners and letting the words flow
  – Do not use “up-talk”

• When you practice, wear the same clothes you will wear in the actual presentation
Rehearsing The Presentation

• Practice Handling Your Technology and Visual Aids
  – Understand how to open and navigate your presentation
  – Consider having the presentation on several different media
  – Have a backup plan in case the technology does not work
    • Overhead transparencies are a good backup
    • If you use transparencies, arrange them in the order they will be needed, and decide where you will place them when you are finished with them
  – If you have handouts, decide whether to distribute them before, during, or after the presentation
Rehearsing The Presentation

• Rehearse!
  – Practice your presentation at least once under conditions similar to those in which you will make the presentation
  – This is particularly important for group presentations!

• Consider memorizing the following statement:
  – “This is not about me. As a person who has something significant to share, I commit to getting out of my own way.”
Delivering The Presentation

• Develop the Introduction
  – Perhaps begin with a story, a provocative question, a startling statistic, or a quote
  – Be serious, but not dull
    • If you are not naturally optimistic, work on lightening up
  – Be explicit about your purpose and the sections of the presentation
    • Tell them what you’re going to tell them
    • Tell them
    • Tell them what you told them
Delivering The Presentation

• Develop the Introduction (continued)
  – A well-chosen light story helps relax both you and your audience
  – Explain why this presentation is important to your audience
  – Indicate your special knowledge of the subject
  – Present your conclusions right away
  – Explain how the presentation will progress
Delivering The Presentation

• Navigate the Body
  – Use verbal transitions liberally
    • Indicate how the next main idea fits into the overall presentation and why it is important
  – Emphasize important details
  – Be aware of time limitations
    • It is better to present one or two main ideas carefully than to attempt to communicate more information than your audience can comfortably grasp
Delivering The Presentation

• Develop a Conclusion
  – Say, “In conclusion ...”
  – For a proposal, stress the main advantages, and urge your listeners to take specific action
  – For a recommendation, emphasize the most important data presented, and clearly present your recommendation
  – End by asking for questions from the audience
Delivering The Presentation

• Tips for Effective Presentations
  – Use a note page if you feel it is necessary
    • The note page should contain clear main headings and subheading, with plenty of white space so you can easily find your place
    • Do not read from the note page; use it only to jog your memory if necessary
    • Watch the “uhms” – silence is much more professional
Delivering The Presentation

• Tips for Effective Presentations (continued)
  – Adopt a comfortable style
    • Smile
    • Look directly at each listener at least once
    • Do not speak too rapidly, project your voice, and modulate your vocal pitch (no monotone!)
      – Imagine you are reading a book to a 5-year old
    • Eliminate distracting mannerisms
    • Stand firmly on both feet without swaying or slumping
Use “Verbal Punctuation”

• Emphasize certain words
  • It SIGNALS to your audience to what you assign greatest importance
  • It signals to YOUR AUDIENCE to what you assign greatest importance
  • It signals to your audience to WHAT you assign greatest importance
  • It signals to your audience to what YOU assign greatest importance
  • It signals to your audience to what you assign GREATEST importance
  • It signals to your audience to what you assign greatest IMPORTANCE

  – Especially important for statistics, sometimes with re-statement:
    • “Eighty-two percent of software project managers are looking for other jobs. That’s four out of five top staff members.”
Use “Verbal Punctuation”

- Use verbal commas and exclamation marks to accurately communicate your meaning:
  - “Woman, without her man, is nothing.”
  - “Woman! Without her, man is nothing.”
Use “Verbal Punctuation”

• Speak in a voice that matches the “face” you want to put forth in your content
  – If you share a story, it is important that you be in it rather than talk about it
Checklist

√ Identify your audience
   – What is your listeners’ level of knowledge about the topic?
   – What is their level of interest in the entire speech?

Create an outline showing the main point and sub-points
Assign a time limit to each point
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√ Create a list of visual aids
  – What visual aid will illustrate each sub-point most effectively?

Decide whether you will include handouts

Review the speaking location

Select a method for pointing to the screen
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√ Prepare a clearly written note page — with lots of white space between topics

Rehearse the speech

Check the compatibility of hardware and software at the site
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Evaluating an Oral Presentation

✓ Did the speaker tell you the point early in the speech?
✓ Could you tell when the speaker moved to a new sub-point?
✓ Did the speaker sound conversational (or speak in a monotone)? Did the pace allow you to follow easily?
✓ Were the visuals clear enough to understand? Did the speaker use visuals effectively?
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Evaluating an Oral Presentation

✓ Did the presentation have any annoying transitions?
✓ Was the design of the slides effective?
✓ Did the speaker focus on the audience (not the slides)?
✓ Do you remember the main point and the main support?
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