Presentation Tips

from the Business Communication Center

Eye Contact
- ❑ Look at the audience as you talk, not the computer nor the projection screen.
- ❑ Avoid note cards. They indicate a lack of preparation.
- ❑ Make eye contact with all parts of the room.

Hands
- ❑ Use your hands *descriptively*, not just generically.
- ❑ When not using your hands, rest them loosely in front of you or lightly on the lectern. Don't let them fidget.
- ❑ Keep hands out of pockets.
- ❑ Gesture to the screen when you say "*As you can see…*"
- ❑ Let PowerPoint highlight or point to details for you.

Voice
- ❑ Replace "uh" and "um" with silence.
- ❑ Keep good inflection to avoid speaking in a monotone.
- ❑ Speak loudly enough to easily be heard in the back.
- ❑ Stay conversational. Explain things simply and clearly.
- ❑ Be concise when discussing each point.
- ❑ Keep a good pace, but don't rush.
- ❑ Keep your presentation fact-based. Avoid saying *"I feel"* or *"I hope"* or *"I believe"* or *"I think."*

Stance
- ❑ Keep your weight evenly on both feet to avoid weaving and swaying.
- ❑ Don't cross your legs.
- ❑ Don't block the screen.

Miscellaneous
- ❑ Know what you're talking about.
- ❑ Prepare well in advance. Don't wait until the last minute.
- ❑ Practice several times individually and as a group.
- ❑ Dress appropriately.
- ❑ Prepare for glitches (bring backups, handouts, etc.)
- ❑ Smile. Be pleasant and friendly.
- ❑ **Mute your phone!**

Slide Design
- ❑ Display a photo or chart on all (or most) of your slides to make PowerPoint *show* what you are talking about.
- ❑ Show numerical data visually via graphs & charts.
- ❑ Keep good contrast between text and background.
- ❑ Display bulleted text as *keywords*, not full sentences.
- ❑ Use *title case* for titles, *sentence case* for keywords.
- ❑ Design your *Summary* slide first, then work backwards. Make sure it briefly and succinctly reminds your audience of your presentation's main *takeaway points*.

Introduction
- ❑ Greet your audience, then establish their buy-in. (What's in it for *them*?)
- ❑ Introduce yourself, your teammates, and your topic.
- ❑ Establish your credibility. (Why should they listen to *you*?)
- ❑ Specify the Q&A ground rules.

Transitions
- ❑ Thank the previous speaker.
- ❑ When you change to a new slide, state your *point*, then prove it with that slide's bulleted text or charts.
- ❑ When you change to a new slide, avoid saying *Next is [slide title]* and *Now I'm going to talk about [slide title]*.
- ❑ Stay in sync with your slides and bullets.
- ❑ Ask rhetorical questions.
- ❑ At the end of your section of a team presentation, briefly recap the key *takeaway points* of your section, but don't repeat a lot of details.
- ❑ Introduce the next speaker.

Summary & Conclusion
- ❑ The closing speaker should *briefly* summarize the *major takeaway points*, but not the small *details*.
- ❑ Stop on a **Summary** slide, not on a **Questions** slide.
- ❑ End on time.
- ❑ Be prepared for Q&A.