

How to Succeed in Science

Successful Grants and Interesting Presentations

Delivering a Reasonably Interesting Talk

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Learning Objectives:

- The key to any good talk: careful preparation
- Respect your audience
- Avoidance of data overload
- How a scientific talk can seldom be too brief or too basic

Although fear is the general emotion most people experience when contemplating giving a talk, whether at a wedding, at work or at nearly every venue in which more than a few people are assembled, the actual talk itself can be enjoyable for the speaker – particularly if well prepared. Perhaps the most intimidating of talks is that delivered before one's peers, as in our case at a scientific meeting, where each slide is carefully scrutinized allowing for judgment to be passed not only on our life's work but also on our understanding of the field and the impact that our labors have on it. Accordingly, we will focus on delivering scientific talks. However, far from careful scrutiny of each slide, even when presenting our best work most of the audience remains busy on their smart phones up to and sometimes including the summary, and occasionally acknowledgments, slide. Our goal is to prevent that from happening – by maintaining the interest of the audience by obeying several simple and obvious rules – enabling not only effective communication, but also providing a positive impression of oneself, mainly through not wasting the time of those in attendance.

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