Creating Your Proposal Presentation

Atissa Banuazizi
atissa@mit.edu

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Overview

- Goals and components of the Module 3 Presentation
- Planning as a team
- Delivering the presentation as a team
- Revising as a team
A proposal presentation has a distinct audience and purpose

Persuading evaluators to support your research project

• Assume that your audience comprises
  • experts in your topic
  • intelligent generalists with exposure to your field

• How can you make your proposal compelling?
  • Convince audience that project is worth doing
  • Convince audience that you are capable of carrying it out
Help your audience understand the motivation for your idea

• Broadly: What is the problem? What is its (social, scientific) significance?

• Specifically: How have you zeroed in on a well-defined research question?
  • What about your project is novel, relative to prior work?
Help your audience appreciate the merits of your approach

• Provide a clear overview of the scope of your plan
  • be realistic, not overambitious
• Propose pertinent experiments with good controls
• Explain your methods succinctly
• Demonstrate the kind of data you might see
  • show how they will illuminate your central question
• Offer alternative solutions/backup plan
### 12 minutes to cover...

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<th>Brief project overview</th>
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<td>Statement of the research problem and goals</td>
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<td>Project details and methods</td>
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<td>Predicted outcomes if everything goes according to plan and if nothing does</td>
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<tr>
<td>Needed resources to complete the work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Societal impact if all goes well</td>
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Early decisions should be planned jointly

Discuss, pre-drafting:

• What to put in/leave out
  • What does audience need to know?
  • What do they not really need to hear?
• How to organize flow of information
• How much time should be allotted to each element of the talk
• Your assumptions
  • you know the project better than audience -- certain connections may make sense to you and not them
Be equitable in dividing the presentation, but don’t distract from content

- Each partner should speak roughly the same amount of time
- Respect audience expectations: change in speakers should correspond to a change in topic
- Keep shifts to a minimum
  - changing speakers can distract audience/slow the talk down
- Many options for dividing the talk!
  - depends on the shape of your presentation..
Dividing up the presentation:
Option 1 (Down the Middle)

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*division assumes that Part I is roughly as long as Part II*
Dividing up the presentation:
Option 2 (The Sandwich)

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context = bread

experiment nuts and bolts = filling
Dividing up the presentation:
Option 3 (Back and Forth)

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*each partner speaks long enough to establish flow*
More options (for specific kinds of projects)

- Two discrete research questions OR
- Two discrete methods
  - each partner follows one strand
  - introductory and concluding material each presented by a single partner
- Other possibilities, depending on the particulars of your material
Focus the audience’s attention on the right speaker

- During overview, identify who will speak on what topic
- Review/Preview as you proceed through the talk
  - Articulate transitions explicitly -- “hand off”
- Only one partner “onstage” at a time
  - If you’re not speaking, don’t hover nearby
- Do not interrupt each other
Rehearse as a team

• Familiarize yourself with partner’s material
• Note timing of each section and of talk as a whole
• Aim for similar speaking styles
  • don’t imitate each other, but match formality/engagement levels
• Practice moving into speaking position at transition points
• Will you advance each other’s slides?
• Practice Q&A
Revision is an essential part of the collaborative process

- Be prepared: collaborative presentations require more revision than individual ones
- Invest yourself in the success of the presentation as a whole
  - don’t get too emotionally attached to your own contributions
- Rehearse before AND after you revise
Critique your presentation’s organization

• Does our talk fit together as a coherent whole?

• Are all sections of the talk adequately developed?
  • Do we have a focused, well-defined hypothesis?
  • Is it clear **what** is going to be done and **how**?
  • Have we realistically articulated the scope of the work?

• Have we omitted extraneous material?

• Will our project fire up an audience’s interest?

• What might make this proposal more convincing to a funding body?
Critique your presentation’s slide design

• Is everything on the slide readable?
• Are our slides a good balance of text and figures?
• Have we chosen clear, specific titles that express the main point of each slide?
• Is the design/format of our slides consistent, or were they obviously designed by different people?
Critique your (joint) delivery

• Can we get through our entire presentation in 12 minutes?
• Do we know where to position ourselves, and how to coordinate our shifts smoothly?
• Do our speaking styles work well together?
• Are we making the transitions between topics and speakers clear to the audience?
• Is each individual speaker clear and understandable?
For more information

• Useful tips on creating funding proposals at http://nuweb.neu.edu/nhe/insideview%20NSF.pdf


• Andrew J. Friedland and Carol Folt, Writing Successful Science Proposals (Yale, 2000).