Technical Communications in the Real World

As previously mentioned, communication, both written and verbal, is extremely important in the business world. The best communicators are often the most successful people. Steve Jobs was an excellent communicator.
Activity

By yourself, think about someone who communicated well verbally. Questions to consider are:

• What characteristics made the person a good presenter?
• What visuals did he/she employ?

With your group, discuss these questions and identify the common traits/characteristics/skills that can aid in a good presentation.
Today's Learning Objectives

After today’s class, students will be able to:

• Describe expectations for producing high-quality (i.e., clear, professional) presentations.
• Identify the value of using visuals along with verbal communication.
• Discuss good and bad oral communication techniques.
• Recognize appropriate attire for presentations.
Technical Verbal Communication

- Verbal communication is a large part of the engineering field, as well as other professions.
  - What to present and how to present it?

- Effectively communicate information in a presentation.

- Use visuals to supplement the speaking points.

- Discuss what makes a good versus bad presentation.
Why Verbal Communication?

The purpose is to get practice communicating ideas concisely and effectively.

There are two opportunities in ENGR 1181/1182 to present using different media:

• Ethics case

• Advanced Energy Vehicle (AEV) project
Using the Technical Communication Guide

The *Technical Communication Guide* aids students and contains:

- An introduction to technical communication
- An explanation of the different types of written and verbal presentation assignments in the class
- A description of helpful software tools and grammatical rules
Planning Presentations

- Audience
- Message and Supporting Detail
- Purpose
- Organization Strategy
- Figures/Graphics/Illustrations
- Other Media?
Presentation Organization

- Cover/Title slide
- Introduction to the speaker or team
- Purpose statement/overview slide
- The main “body” of the presentation
- Conclusion/Recommendations
- References
Quality Content Found in Communications

- Clear message presented
- Content focused on message
- Information is obvious while the presenter gives details
- Titles indicate sequence of topics
- Title/text font is consistent
- Research is cited
- Content free of typos, spelling errors, etc.
Activity

As a class, we will watch the following presentation:
  • Example (4:50)

Individually, grade the presentation using the Oral Presentation Evaluation Form.

As a class, let’s discuss what the presenter did well and what needs to be improved. How did you grade the presentation?
How to Effectively Deliver Your Presentation

- Have poise and stay relaxed when in front of audience
- Have a strong voice and speak loudly
- Keep a consistent pace throughout
- Maintain eye contact; scan the room slowly
- Find a good balance using hand gestures
- Use suitable body language to help convey your message and keep attention
Verbal Communication Delivery

DO:
• Tell stories
• Show passion
• Show personality
• Use themes and metaphors
• Polish your performance
• Use humor
• Involve your audience

DO NOT:
• Neglect visuals
• Assume the audience understands
• Show your nerves/fidget
• Read directly from the screen or notes
• Use fillers or overly casual words
Team Presentation Tips

- Establish a speaking order
- When waiting to speak
  - Stand quietly to the side
  - Don’t fidget/draw attention
- Use a verbal transition or segue between speakers
- Practice together
Appearance

- Business Casual Attire for 1181
  - Men: neatly pressed khakis and a polo shirt
  - Women: khakis or dress slacks and a polo shirt or blouse

- Resources: Engineering Career Services
Verbal Communication Material

A presenter can have PowerPoint slides (or other media) to supplement their delivery of content.

The focus should be on the speaker and not the material.

- Concise points in large font
- Good contrast between text and background
- Limited information per slide
- Only use photos (not Clipart) as necessary

**Life After Death by PowerPoint** (4:25)
- Dan McMillan
Visual Communication Material

Visuals convey information quickly and efficiently when used appropriately.

How to Select Visuals:

• What is my purpose?
• Who is my audience?
• What form of information will achieve my purpose for this audience?
Functions of Graphics

- They can catch a readers’ attention and interest.
- They can help writers communicate information that is difficult to communicate with words.
- They can help writers clarify and emphasize information.
- They can help nonnative speakers understand information.
- They can help writers communicate information to multiple audiences with different interests, aptitudes, and reading habits.
Functions of Graphics
Creating Honest Graphics

- Cite your source and obtain permission if needed.
- Include all relevant data.
- Follow good graphing practices when displaying graphs.
- Do not use a table to hide a data point that would be obvious in a graph.
- Show items as they really are.
- Do not use color or shading to misrepresent an item’s importance.
Important Takeaways

- PowerPoint slides (or any media) are to assist a presentation, not be the focal point.

- Presentation material should be concise, factual, and easy to read.

- Successful verbal delivery takes practice. Focus on:
  - Eye contact & body language
  - Consistent speech
  - Knowing the material fosters confidence!

- Use the Technical Communications Guide
Preview of Next Class

Team Building

• Students will explore similarities and differences in experiences within and across social identity groups.

• Students will develop skills to work constructively as a team and identify actions which can contribute to a more inclusive environment.

• Complete the pre-class reading before coming to class.