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## Suggestions for Speakers

Dear Colleague

In what follows, some specific suggestions are given with the objective to help you in preparing your presentation:

- Use the microphone effectively. Speak to the mike. Be careful to keep your volume up by pacing your breathing.
- Avoid reading your speech. This has been the single most common complaint. Use an outline with key points to keep you on track. Each point should allow you to speak from memory for one or two minutes without referring to notes. Keep to the outline to avoid running on.
- Less is more. Centre your speech on the unique developments that you or your group have discovered. Provide enough context to allow the audience to follow your presentation. This leaves more time for inter-active questions and answers. Previous audiences have complained that speakers consume the whole time slot, and there has been insufficient time for audience questions on interesting topics. Your chair will provide guidance on when to end the questions.
- One of the effects of "stage fright" is to cause people to speak faster and to breathe shallower; both interfere with clarity. Generally, speak a little slower, pause between thoughts, and breathe deeper. Use inflections to vary the delivery.
- If English is not your first language, you are to be commended for taking the time and effort to make a presentation under extra pressure. Practice your presentation with a native English speaker and seek advice on pronunciation and timing. Avoid reading your material, with your face down in your notes. Speak slower than in conversation. If a group effort was involved in the paper, select the best English speaker in the group to make the presentation.
- Have a clear introduction, body and conclusion. Summarise the key points in the conclusion. Speak to "why" your work was done.
- If time allows, solicit questions. When answering, repeat the question, and then speak to the key point of the question. Don't make an elaborate "second speech".
- Visuals are very valuable to your speech, if prepared and presented well. If you want the audience to read your material, the letters have to be quite large. On an overhead your characters should be at least 1 cm high. Use not more than 8 to 10 lines of copy on any overhead or page. Overheads should be in landscape format. Graph lines should be broad and dark. Use a pointer to draw the audience to the key elements of your slides, and when you do this be careful you are still speaking to the mike. Notice that it is NOT possible to keep your nose in your notes, reading

your speech, while pointing out interesting visuals. If you use a lapel mike and are working from an outline, you CAN turn to the visuals and involve them effectively.

- It is quite practical to use your visuals as your outline and to speak around each one. Be careful not to bring up ideas from the NEXT slide as this can get you confused, and you will start duplicating material. Watch your timing and sequence of speaking. Practice this several times with your presentation. Have a contingency plan in case the display equipment fails.
- It is natural to feel nervous about speaking. You should know that the audience wants you to do well and they will support you. Before your speech, you may find it helpful to circulate in the room and find out what people are interested in. This will help dispel nervousness and may give you an opportunity to comment on how your work connects with the interests of others there.
- You are an engineer and you have passion for this work. **SHOW SOME OF IT.** Your efforts weren't some cold, isolated event. You worked hard, you stayed up all night sometimes. You made mistakes, and you had a brilliant insight. Share some of those moments; tell about the silly idea that blossomed into the discovery, and what took you there. These are things that aren't reflected in your paper, so share it now with your companions.

Good luck in your presentation.

Sincerely,

The Organising Committee.