

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEAKERS

### Suggestions for Speakers

The purpose of this Conference is to share ideas and stimulate new developments in communications. As a speaker, you have the honor of presenting your material to the IEEE communications community in support of those goals. With that honor come the responsibilities of creating clarity and maintaining the interest of the attendees. The quality of your presentation directly affects the interest your audience will have in your material and the overall satisfaction the community will have in the Conference. During previous conference events, the audience has been surveyed to discover what they liked and didn't like about the presentations. This note summarizes some of those findings. If you are not an experienced presenter, we suggest you practice your material with a small group that will provide candid feedback to assist you. The following are specific suggestions. If you have questions or want help, please contact the person who sent you your acceptance letter for assistance.

1. Use the microphone effectively. Speak to the mike. Be careful to keep your volume up by pacing your breathing.
2. 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.
3. Less is more. Center 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 interactive 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 moderator will provide guidance on when to terminate the questions.
4. 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, breathe deeper. Use inflections to vary the delivery.
5. 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.
6. Have a clear introduction, body and conclusion. Summarize the key points in the conclusion. Explain "why" your work was done.
7. If time permits, solicit questions. When answering, repeat the question, then address the key point of the question; don't make an elaborate "second speech."
8. 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 a viewgraph, your characters should be at least 1 cm high. On 35 mm slides, which are preferred to viewgraphs, you should have characters sized so that they are about 8 to 10% of the slide height. Use no more than 8 to 10 lines of copy on any viewgraph or slide. Slides should be in landscape format. Graph lines should be broad and dark. If you need to re-work your materials on site, contact the Executive Committee. Use a pointer to draw the audience to the key elements of your slides. 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 roving or lapel mike and are working from an outline, you CAN turn to the visuals and involve them effectively.
9. 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 slides. Have a contingency in case the visuals are not available.
10. 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.
11. 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, sometimes you stayed up all night, sometimes you made mistakes, and you had brilliant insight. Share some of those moments; tell about the silly idea that blossomed into the discovery and what took you there. That isn't in your paper, so share it now with your IEEE companions and interests of others there.
12. Fortune favors the brave.