

Presentation Ideas and Best Practices

Presentations highlight the most relevant and interesting parts of a project. The hard part, especially if it is a large or complicated project, is determining what to include and what to edit out. Your final design project will have all of the information in it, so you should refer to it during your presentation, but rarely show it in full. Rather, keep your presentation short and sweet so the audience does not get bored and comes away with an understanding of your project. Additionally, don't forget to be creative and try interesting things – your audience just may thank you for it.

When preparing for a presentation, there are many different decisions that need to be made. They include determining your audience, purpose and goal of the presentation, as well as, what type of and media to use during your presentation. A basic workflow for preparing and delivering a presentation may include:

1. Planning the presentation

- Determine your audience, purpose and goals.
- Determine the type of presentation: oral, video, a combination of media types, and so on.
- Create an outline identifying the main ideas, points, and media.
- If necessary, do additional research on the topic.
- Determine how you will showcase your design project in the presentation. Determine what media you will use in your presentation. Media should support the spoken message, not be the message. Make sure all visuals illustrate and help explain major points.
- Be creative and consider using: a whiteboard or smart board, a computer, props, stories, breaking the audience into small groups to discuss a particular topic, and so on.
- Take the outline and begin to write out the specifics of the presentation. Once you feel the presentation is nearly final, begin to practice, practice, practice. Ask friends and family to watch your presentation and offer feedback.
- Identify ways of improving the presentation, for instance making sure you have a strong opening and closing.

2. Delivering the presentation

- Introduce yourself and the goals of the presentation.
- Smile while you present.
- Make eye contact.
- Use confident body language and inflection in your voice.
- Use stories to help you make your points.
- Make sure all technology has been checked and is working. Prepare a backup if the technology doesn't work.

3. Concluding the presentation

- Ask the audience if they have questions.
- Lead the audience in a discussion on the presentation topics.
- Thank the audience.

Best practices for presenting to different audiences

Client presentations

- Determine your message – what kind of presentation are you making to the client? Is this a presentation to show work done so far or is this a final presentation. If it is an assessment on work done thus far, perhaps present only what the client needs to make a decision.
- Be flexible as you present - if the client seems to become distracted, move on to the next topic. If the customer is ready to end the meeting, do so. Being able to read the customer and make adjustments shows them you are responsive as well as confident.
- Look at and listen to the client - Body language, facial expressions and tone of voice may reveal far more than the client's actual words. If you sense the client being hesitant, ask questions until you understand what is on the client's mind. Then respond to their concerns.
- Plan ahead - Think about what kinds of things you will show your client during the presentation. Some things to include may be:

- How your wireframes, design comps, storyboards, rough cuts, and/or prototypes address the client's goals, audience, and content requirements.
- Samples of the color, font, and content, accompanied by the reasons for the design, layout, and navigation choices.
- Question-and-answer session in which the client gives feedback.
- Final versions of a project, with the understanding that small changes can be made.

Team presentations

- Be time sensitive.
- Make sure the presentation is on topic.
- Solicit feedback and remember to listen to your teammates.

Types of presentations

Verbal/Oral presentations

Spoken presentations often have some sort of media to illustrate their points, including slideshows, videos, and so on.

- Some things to remember include:
- Introduce the goals of the presentation.
- Decide what the important topics are and highlight them.
- Do not read your presentation – this will bore your audience. Rather bring along notes to consult when need be, but if you've practiced your presentation you will be confident when speaking publicly to your audience.

PDF presentations and slideshows

Acrobat PDF presentations can be used as an interesting way to showcase how progressive design was used in a project. Your PDF slideshow or presentations can highlight versions of a project, design principles used, and/or design decisions made at various points along the project's development.

Video presentations

Video presentations can be done in person or pre-recorded. Video presentations are usually used like a movie trailer, to highlight the main parts of the project. Remember to do and consider the following:

- Introduce the video before you show it. If the video is long, select a few clips that will illustrate the main points of the video project and show them.
- Determine if you will use a video-sharing site, like You Tube or Vimeo, to view your video. You can also embed a video from a video-sharing site into a personal or class website.
- Film festivals – a fun way to showcase and present films is having a film festival. In order to do so, define the awards categories and create an awards list with criteria for each category.

Some awards to include might be:

- Writing
- Film editing
- Sound editing
- Visual effects
- Music direction
- Direction
- Cinematography

Jigsaw presentations or debriefs

The Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy that encourages people to develop their own understanding and then share knowledge with the group. You will be responsible for learning about and sharing information on a specific component of a larger topic and presenting, or debriefing with teammates, on your topic. This method can also be used to teach teammates technology skills where certain team members are responsible for learning specific skills and teaching the rest of the team those skills.