

Tips for a Good Conference Talk

- Plan very carefully what you can cover in the allotted time. You have 25 minutes, and a conscientious session chair will ruthlessly cut you off if you attempt to exceed that limit.
- Design your slides with a large room and audience in mind. Use large fonts so your slides are visible from far away. As a general principle, don't put too much on each slide.
- Given the time limit there's simply no way you can present all the results in your paper, so don't even try. Think of your talk as an advertisement – your goal is to entice the audience into wanting to read your paper.
- Motivate the problem; describe your overall approach and your major results. If your work includes experiments, pick a representative graph or two.
- Don't put everything you want to say on your slides and then read them during your talk.
- You will captivate your audience by forcing them to listen to you, looking at the slides only for cues and diagrams.
- Keep your examples simple, emphasizing the main points, and give the audience enough time to digest each example.
- It is strongly recommended that you practice your talk several times, especially if you haven't given many conference talks in the past. Time your runs; get your friends to listen and criticize.
- If you are not a native English speaker, make an effort to speak slowly and clearly enough for a large audience to understand you. Even if you are a native speaker, you will need to speak loudly and clearly.
- Position yourself carefully with respect to the screen – be sure not to block the audience's view.
- During the question & answer session at the end of your talk, be sure that your audience knows what question you are answering – repeat a question if not everyone was able to hear it. It's often a good idea to repeat questions regardless, to make sure you have them right and to give yourself a moment to think.
- Most of all, have fun, and remember - your talk serves as an advertisement for your work and your paper.