

Advice and Checklists for Oral Group Presentations

My aim is to have the best possible group presentations. Based on vast experience with group assignments, keys to success include all the advice included below and following the checklists.

ATTITUDES THAT LEAD TO COHESIVE AND PRODUCTIVE GROUPS:

- **Treat each group member with respect.** You will likely be in groups with individuals from different countries and cultures. View the diversity as an opportunity to learn about how to work with people from different cultures. Appreciate that individuals have worthwhile and unique viewpoints and talents that will enrich the group's performance.
- **Please do not complain to the professor about group members behind their backs.** The professor is not present during group meetings and cannot intervene without damaging group morale and group cohesion. (In the workplace, complaints often reflect more on the individual complaining than on the individual complain about.) If a problem arises, find a way to discuss the problem directly with the individual. If a serious problem arises that you have not been able to successfully address with the individual, then make an appointment with the professor and the entire group with the sole purpose of finding a successful route forward.
- **If you are not fully participating** for a legitimate reason (ill health, taking care of family, too much work travel), please be accountable by lowering your group contribution percentage. This will compensate your group members by awarding them a higher grade and you a lower grade. (I consider people who take personal responsibility as a sign of great integrity and I have written letters of recommendation in the past for individuals who insisted they get a lower grade because they earned a lower grade). This is explained in more detail on the syllabus.

CHECKLIST FOR FIRST TWO WEEKS OF SEMESTER:

- Start your group project as soon as groups are assigned.
- As soon as groups are assigned, sit next to each other in class to foster communication and relationship building
- Exchange contact information and develop a plan for when and how you will first meet.
- As a group, read together the document "Information about required Primary Sources for Group Project"
- As a group, read together the document "Information about required Secondary Sources for Group Project"
- Read entire syllabus and all associated documents regarding the group project
- Look at prior semester group presentations to generate ideas (BUT DO NOT PLAGERIZE FROM PRIOR GROUPS)
- Start investigating secondary sources by exploring your topic by gathering general statistics about your topic and start answering the questions: Why is your topic important to general managers? How much money do companies spend on your topic? What are the promised benefits of this topic if properly managed? What are the potential pitfalls if mis-managed?
- Save interesting documents in a group folder (you may use Mygateway Group site or create DropBox or Sharepoint Site)
- Identify early the original primary sources of data you want to collect (interviews, original surveys)

CHECKLIST FOR WEEKS THREE UNTIL TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR SCHEDULED GROUP PRESENTATION:

- Frequently meet with each other in person or online
- Keep your group site updated

CONDUCT INTERVIEWS:

- Develop a list of 5 to 8 potential people to interview
- Develop an interview guide with 10 good questions (see interview tips webinar)
- Draft an introduction to explain the research & confidentiality policy to potential interviewees
- Send proposed names, titles, and organizations of potential interviewees and a copy of your proposed interview guide to professor for approval. (email is fine)**
- Approach interviewees
- Schedule the interviews for confirmed participants
- Conduct and RECORD the interviews, hopefully two group members are present at each interview
- Transcribe the interviews
- Integrate the interviews into the group presentation

CONDUCT SURVEY (OPTIONAL):

- Develop one or two demographic questions related to age, gender, education level, indicate whether or not respondent is an UMSL student, add any other demographics relative to your topic.
- Develop 8 to 10 simple multiple choice questions or Likert scale questions related to your topic. (see sample questions from primary sources document).
- Try to keep the scales the same across survey questions so the cognitive burden on respondents is low.
- Develop instructions for survey respondents that includes a brief explanation of the purpose of the survey, the confidentiality of responses, and how data will be used (i.e., for class purposes only.) Something like, "We are graduate students at the University of Missouri- Saint Louis conducting an ANONYMOUS survey on people's use of social media to connect with organizations. Individual responses will be aggregated and overall results will be presented to our classmates. Data will not be used for any other purpose."
- Develop a plan to distribute the survey; Will the survey be online? By paper? You can use SurveyMonkey for free if you only ask 10 questions. You may ask Professor Lacity to distribute to her current students across her courses; You might also solicit respondents from your social media sites.
- Send a copy of your proposed instructions, proposed questions, and proposed distribution/solicitation plans to Professor Lacity for approval.**
- Administer the survey
- Analyze the survey responses
- Integrate the interviews into the group presentation

CHECKLIST FOR TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR SCHEDULED GROUP PRESENTATION

- The group will likely have too much data and will have to delete some content; The audience gets tired and cannot absorb too much information at one time. Groups are more effective when they deliver less information in a relaxed, effective manner rather than trying to rush through too much information. The group should keep the best content. No individual should feel bad if the information they collected is not all used. Again, each member needs to abandon the idea that they "own" content. The content is *group* owned by this time.
- Design slide show presentation using a cohesive, engaging design
- DO NOT HAVE MORE THAN 60 POWER POINT SLIDES (excluding references)
- Finalize your audience participation activity

CHECKLIST FOR ONE WEEK PRIOR TO YOUR SCHEDULED GROUP PRESENTATION:

- ☐ Finalize slides, including references
- ☐ For each slide or activity, decide who will speak
- ☐ **Meet with the professor one week prior to review power point slides.**
- ☐ Meet with group to practice oral presentation (this is the only way to get the timing correct!)
- ☐ When speaking in the front of the class, **do not use notes**. Your power point slides serve as your notes.
- ☐ When speaking in front of the class, speak LOUDLY enough for the back row to hear you clearly.
- ☐ When speaking in the front of the class, do not stand behind the instructor's computer station. Stand in front of the class.
- ☐ When speaking in front of the class, all group members should be standing in the speaking space, with one person advancing the slides.
- ☐ The best presentations pass control many times among group members. You should not organize the speaking as five 10-minute, independent speeches. The presentation should be *integrated* so that every person speaks several times.
- ☐ During practice sessions, help group mates with their oral communication skills. It does not matter if English is not your native language! Hundreds of international students have performed well on their oral presentations. What matters is that students can be heard (good volume), that students do not read from notes, that students connect with the audience by asking good questions, that students stand in front of the audience (not behind the instructor station), that students are enthusiastic, that students have prepared excellent content, and that students have practiced out loud with their groups.
- ☐ Remember to have about 5 to 10 minutes of audience interaction **during** the presentation. Do not rely on "Does anyone have any questions?" to fill up your ten minutes of class participation. In the past, students have done very creative things for audience participation including "Name that Entrepreneur", a short Jeopardy game, a short survey, etc.
- ☐ **BE SURE TO REVIEW HOW ORAL PRESENTATIONS ARE GRADED TO EARN MAXIMUM POINTS:** [oral group grade form](#)

CHECKLIST FOR DAY OF GROUP PRESENTATION:

- ☐ On the day of your presentation, please **provide a STAPLED, hardcopy set of slides for your instructor. Please print only 2 slides per page.**
- ☐ Please load your final power point slides in GROUP X Group Pages under FILE EXCHANGE.
- ☐ Please name the final version of your power point slides exactly as indicated on the syllabus
- ☐ Load your slides at the instructor station at the start of class; test any audio or videos you might need
- ☐ Please ENJOY your presentation...smile, energy, personality!

I want you all to succeed! Please follow my advice!