

# Engineering and Scientific Presentations

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*A two-day workshop presented by Dr. Gavan Lintern*

## Introduction

In this workshop, you will practice practical strategies and techniques to improve your presentations. Following this workshop, you can anticipate that you will feel more confident and accomplished in your next technical presentation and that you will continue to build confidence and to improve every time you present.

If you now approach presentations feeling anxious or nervous, this workshop will help you improve to a level at which you can approach presentations with confidence and can also enjoy the experience. In this workshop, **Engineering and Scientific Presentations**, you will learn three essential steps for developing effective technical presentations:

- Content development: how to generate and select the right amount of content at the right level of detail,
- Content organisation: how to organise your presentation content so that your ideas flow in a way that helps members of your audience understand and remember them, and
- Presentation style: how to present so that members of your audience will listen to you and think about your issues as you present them.

## Who should attend this workshop?

Anyone who wants to be better at presenting and who wants to feel better about it will benefit. The workshop is tuned specifically for engineers and scientists in that it focuses more on the presentation of technical ideas than on marketing.

A special module is included for classes composed largely of non-native speakers of English who struggle with technical presentations in English. This module introduces simple language patterns that can be effective in engineering and scientific presentations.

## Training methods and materials

You will spend most of your workshop time developing and practicing presentations under instructor guidance. Your instructor will give you simple structures and guidelines that you can then use to practice development and delivery of presentations. These presentations will be short and simple on the first day but will expand into lengthier and more complex presentations on the second day.

On the afternoon of the second day, you will be given the opportunity to present a brief example of your own work. This will give you practice with the structures and guidelines introduced in the workshop. You will be able to use these structures and guidelines as building blocks for future presentations.

A commercially available paperback book on presentation development and delivery, which expands on the major issues covered in workshop, will be included in the courseware provided to delegates.

## Post-workshop consultation

As an optional fee-based supplement to the workshop, you will have the opportunity to consult with Dr. Lintern on paper and presentation development in the days after the workshop.

## Learning Objective

At the conclusion of this workshop, you will be able to develop and deliver a technical presentation with considerably more ease and confidence. You will also become more effective in engaging the interest of your audience and helping them understand your ideas.

## Frequently Asked Questions

I attend conferences. Why can't I copy what others do?

They will always be a few excellent presenters at any conference but in the main, presentations will range from ordinary to abysmal. Be careful who you copy. More problematically, it is not obvious why excellent presenters are as good as they are. Much of their excellence lies in their preparation and the better they are, the more that preparation effort remains hidden. Additionally, you will be struck by the fact that the very best presenters have markedly different styles. What contributes to their excellence is not immediately apparent. Finally, and most significantly, you must find your own style when you present. No matter how much you admire someone, you cannot develop as a strong presenter by copying them.

I want to do a better job but I cannot motivate myself to start developing my presentation until the last minute and then it is too late to use anything I might learn in this workshop.

This is possibly the most pervasive problem that afflicts presenters but it is also the simplest to fix. You will experience this problem most often because you do not know how to start or where to start. As a result, you procrastinate until the situation is in crisis. If you attend this workshop, you will confront this problem and you will learn how to resolve it.

Some people are natural presenters but I am not. In fact, in terms of presenting, I'm a disaster. How could a two-day workshop possibly help someone like me?

You would be amazed at the effort *natural presenters* put into their presentations. More significantly, they have somehow arrived at a level of awareness that allows them to see what works and what does not. That means that their next presentation will be better. They have become excellent by progressing along the path of steady and consistent improvement. This workshop is designed to get you to a point that you can do a creditable job your next time out but more significantly, that you can evaluate your own performance and thereby set yourself on that path of gradual and consistent improvement.

Gavan Lintern is an experienced presenter with over 100 conference presentations and over 20 multi-day workshops to his credit. As Head of Human Factors, Defense Science and Technology Organization, Melbourne Australia, as Senior Scientist at Aptima, Inc in Boston, Massachusetts USA and as Chief Scientist at General Dynamics-Advanced Information Systems, Dayton Ohio, USA, Gavan has been responsible for helping staff members develop and deliver quality scientific and engineering presentations for over 10 years. Although an accomplished speaker himself, he has found it necessary, in his role as staff facilitator, to create and refine strategies for helping those who are inexperienced and lacking in confidence. He will bring that wealth of experience to the development and delivery of this workshop.

In 2008, Gavan provided the behavioural science technical lead in a US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency initiative to develop a software application that would help inexperienced presenters develop and refine their presentation style.

Gavan is a fellow of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society and has served on the editorial boards of the Human Factors Journal, the International Journal of Aviation Psychology, and the Journal of Cognitive Engineering and Decision Making. In 1978, he received the George E. Briggs Dissertation Award, presented by Division 21 of the American Psychology Association for original research exhibiting creative application of scientific inquiry in the area of Engineering Psychology. In 1991, he received the Jerome H. Ely Award, presented by the Human Factors Society, for best paper in Volume 32 of the Human Factors journal.