



# Syl's Guidelines

## for a Great Presentation

## and a Happy Audience

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1. **BIGGER IS BETTER:** It's vital to make sure you can read the images from 30 ft. , think of your audience, how far away are they? Get away from the computer and test it. **Ask yourself, if I'm a senior citizen, will I be able to see this?**
2. **LESS IS MORE:** Keep the words on a PowerPoint slide to a minimum. Since we know your information is interesting, elaborate verbally. **Have you prepared your talking points?**
3. **IDENTIFY GRAPHICS:** Review the graphical images. Use circles/arrows to highlight what's important such as x/y axis, lines, points, key areas, streets, water bodies, etc. **Have you identified what's important?**
4. **KNOW YOUR MAP:** **Is there a map in your presentation, and have you labeled it?** Consider your audience: if they don't know the area, get them to know it via common points of interest identifying. **ADD PHOTOS** to make the maps real.
5. **NO ACRONYMS:** Review all the materials for acronyms and spell them out. Omit acronyms from your dialog as well. Acronyms make your audience feel like outsiders at best and stupid at worst. Acronyms are "NG", oops, I mean "no good". **Have you omitted all acronyms?**
6. **LOGICAL FORMAT:** Consider the order of the slides, ask someone who doesn't know the subject to review your slides and point out elements that might raise questions. **Are they in a logical order for the audience?**
7. **ADD PHOTOS:** Add meaningful photos that include the people, places of interest, and infrastructure. Photos make this real and provide a connection to the topic. Audiences will see themselves or a familiar place, perhaps during a flood that will make image real and memorable. **Are there high quality and meaningful photos?**
8. **PRACTICE:** Practice beforehand to work out the rough parts – I know, we are all experts, but this is vital for too many reasons to list. Since the audience may be new to the subject, practice in front of someone who doesn't know the topic, and then get their feedback. **Have you practiced and gotten feedback?**
9. **MAKE IT MEMORABLE:** Forget about black and white slides with 12 font, follow all the steps above and put life into your presentation. **Is your presentation memorable for good reasons?**
10. Finally, **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND KEEP THEM ENGAGED:** During your talk make sure you:
  - a. Stand, introduce yourself, feel the love, and have fun.
  - b. Learn who your audience is, poll them or if the group is small enough, have them introduce them. Share with your audience what you will be talking about (preview), present it, and then recap. Community members are not university students! (this is for our university professors)
  - c. Stand to the side of the screen; do not stand in the light of the projector.
  - d. Sometimes we get nervous and rush through a presentation. Breathe, and take your time, add humor, be energetic, and keep your audience engaged. One successful method is to ask the audience questions during the presentation. Engaging questions such as, "can I see a show of hands...." Will get the audience to feel a part of the presentation and get you connected to them.
  - e. Repeat and summarize any questions before responding. Assume there are audience members who cannot hear well, help them out and repeat the question.
  - f. If you have slides with words read them, this way when you elaborate, the audience won't be trying to decide if they should read or listen, they'll listen.