5 Tips for Delivering an Engaging Virtual Presentation

Due to COVID-19, many conferences and learning opportunities have shifted to virtual events, which requires new ways of delivering research. Below are practical tips on how to effectively deliver research science to a virtual audience, the best way to use stories and images for maximum impact, and how to create buzz for your session using social media.

1. **Focus on Content Delivery**
   - Your content is the meal and your delivery is the plate.
   - Tell a story in your presentation—balance scriptedness and genuine delivery.
   - Create an agenda and stick to it.
   - Sprinkle in anecdotes and real-life examples.
   - Use verbal (e.g., “As you can see on this slide…”) and non-verbal (e.g., looking at the camera) cues to grab attention.

2. **Do the Prep Work in Advance**
   - Every audience is different so every presentation should be too.
   - Tailor different slides to different presentations.
   - Set up your camera and test how your background and lighting look, as well as how the audio sounds.
   - Practice, practice, practice.
   - Silence any distractions or notifications before you start presenting.

3. **Use Visuals to Reinforce Your Message**
   - Use plenty of images and limited text to highlight the main points you want to make.
   - Use simple & consistent design.
   - Include only one concept per slide, with a limited amount of text.
   - Limit use of clip art & ensure that any charts, graphs, or visuals are readable.
   - Use consistent fonts and text placement.

4. **Plan Opportunities for Interaction**
   - We are all dealing with video fatigue these days—and sometimes people multitask during online presentations—keep people engaged by creating opportunities for active participation.
   - Ask precise questions that make it easy for attendees to respond.
   - Don’t fear silence as it takes longer than you think for people to respond.
   - Use what you get. When people offer a reaction or answer, respond thoughtfully to encourage more.
   - Various platforms offer different options for audience engagement so be thoughtful about what will work best for your audience.

5. **Use Social Media to Your Advantage**
   - Social media is a great way to promote your presentation.
   - Use the relevant hashtag for the conference or event.
   - Tag any related organizations or team members on Twitter.
   - Include any related conference or event links.
   - Use pictures to draw more attention to your post.

Learn More

Check out AcademyHealth’s blog for more tips on operating in a virtual environment:
- How to Create Meaningful Connections at the 2020 Virtual Annual Research Meeting
- Four Tips to Increase Audience Engagement When Presenting Virtually

About AcademyHealth

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