

## DECISION SCIENCES INSTITUTE ANNUAL MEETING GUIDELINES FOR PRESENTERS

Thank you for your participation in the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute in Boston. This year's conference offers an excellent selection of papers and presentations. But there is more to a successful meeting than good papers – your performance is critical. To help you prepare a presentation that matches the high quality of your paper, we offer this set of guidelines.

### 1. YOU OWE YOUR AUDIENCE A GOOD PRESENTATION

Inclusion in the Institute's program is a recognition of the value of your research activity. But the work you have done – in conducting your research and preparing your paper – isn't truly finished until you've presented your ideas. You should take at least as much care in preparing your presentation as you did in preparing your paper.

### 2. PREPARE EARLY

Putting together a good presentation takes time. Don't wait until the last few days before the conference to prepare. Instead, start your presentation a few weeks ahead of time, then set it aside and come back to it. What seemed like a clear, logical presentation the first time around may look quite different after you give it a rest.

### 3. YOUR PRESENTATION MUST SUMMARIZE

You will have only about 20 minutes to make your presentation. That is not nearly enough time to go into all of the details of your work. You must summarize in order to have time to get across to your audience the most important points from your paper.

### 4. PRIORITIZE TOPICS AND ALLOCATE TIME ACCORDINGLY

Figure out which topics in your presentation are most important. This will help you determine how to allocate the limited time you have available. Keep your audience in mind as you prioritize topics. Ask yourself what they are most likely to be interested in and what they already know. In most cases, you can assume some degree of audience familiarity with your problem and/or the relevant literature. Don't waste time telling your audience what it already knows. It is suggested that you provide a copy of your paper to the session attendees.

### 5. YOUR INSIGHTS AND YOUR CONCLUSIONS ARE CRITICAL

You have spent more time working with your data or problem – analyzing, interpreting, and understanding it – than your audience. Share your insight and conclusions with your audience. Suggest some implications of your findings. Don't simply present data or summarize results, thereby forcing your audience to draw its own conclusions.

### 6. SUPPORT YOUR PRESENTATION WITH APPROPRIATE VISUAL AIDS

Most speakers at the Institute's annual meetings use PowerPoint projections or overhead transparencies in their presentations. These can help reinforce and clarify your verbal presentation, but if they are to work well, they must be designed and used properly. Here are a few tips:

⇒ Use high quality lettering of at least 18 point font. Avoid handwritten slides.

⇒ Limit the number of slides used. A good rule of thumb is to allow at least 1-2 minutes per slide. If you go beyond about 15 slides, you'll likely lose your audience or be unable to finish your presentation.

⇒ Don't put too much information on a slide. Limit each slide to 3-5 bullets.

⇒ A picture (that is, a good one) is often worth a thousand words. A well-designed diagram or chart can make your point more quickly and more clearly than words.

⇒ Avoid visual clutter – don't over-use fancy graphics that distract your audience and diminish the impact of the slide.

⇒ Have a good reason for showing every slide.

Also, if your slides are prepared properly, they should give you the cues you need to keep your presentation on track and eliminate the need for memorizing or reading it.

### 7. PRACTICE YOUR PRESENTATION

The time you have for your presentation is limited; and if you don't practice, you'll have difficulty fitting everything you want to say into the allotted time. Practice also gives you a chance to try out your slides to see that you don't have too many and to ensure that the ones you have fit logically into your presentation.

### 8. FINAL THOUGHTS

At least one month prior to the annual meeting, please provide your session facilitator with an updated copy of your paper or relevant information.

Please be at your assigned meeting room several minutes before the session begins to introduce yourself to the other participants and the session facilitator.

If an emergency prevents your attendance at the conference, please make arrangements for a colleague to fulfill your responsibilities; and if this is not possible, then notify your Track Chair and session facilitator as soon as possible.

We hope you will find these guidelines helpful in putting together a high quality, professional presentation for the 2004 Annual Meeting. Good luck and enjoy the conference.