

Successful Presentations

Getting Your Message Across With Great Content

- **Know Your Target Audience**

- Ask your conference program manager who will be in audience before you build your presentation. You should know at what level participants are in their organization, what types of problems keep them up at night and how the information, technologies, tools or approach you are sharing will help solve them.
- Remember that, while our organization is called “The Food Marketing Institute,” we represent all food retail functions, not just marketing!

- **Establish Learning Objectives**

- Establishing the learning objectives of your session will help you structure the rest of your presentation. Recognize what participants should know or be able to do at the end of the session. The learning objectives should be measurable and achievable.

- **Craft a Compelling Session Description**

- A well-crafted session description can be the deciding factor in whether conference participants attend your session. A dull session description can lead potential participants to believe that the session itself will be equally as dull.
 - Think of a relevant, intriguing session title that will grab the attention of the target audience and get them to read further.
 - Outline realistic and measurable learning objectives that will show that they’ll take home knowledge and skills that they can take action on.
 - Describe a problem or challenge that the attendee may be facing and how this session will help solve it.
 - Focus on the needs of the attendees and address the “what’s in it for me” benefits.
 - Explain who the intended audience is.
 - Make the session description short – no more than 3-4 sentences.

- **Start Strong**

- Make a good first impression and set the tone by grabbing the audience’s attention. Ask a question, make a bold statement, state a shocking statistic or play an interesting and relevant video.



- Explain who you are to establish your credibility and illustrate why participants should listen to you. That doesn't mean listing your credentials, rather explaining why they need to know what you're going to tell them and why your content is relevant to them. Remember, the session is about them and not you!
- **Connect With The Audience**
 - Always remember to be attendee-centric and focus on what the participant will get out of your session, rather than what you want them to know.
 - Don't get caught up in the back-story, research methods, etc. Most attendees just want to know what something means to them and how they can use it.
 - Address a problem or challenge that the attendee may be facing, provide a solution to that problem or challenge and explain your reasoning behind it. Make sure that attendees understand how they can apply your solution to practical situations.
 - Case studies and storytelling are powerful ways to explain an idea, a concept or a practical application of your theory. It's much easier for attendees to understand your concepts if you relate them to their own experiences.
 - Think of yourself as a facilitator, a flexible resource for the group, rather than as a purveyor of knowledge.
- **Reiterate the Key Takeaways**
 - At the end of the presentation, summarize the key points you're trying to get across, reiterate the takeaways and provide a call to action. Help the attendee walk away with a realistic plan to apply what they've learned to their own situation.
- **Don't Make it a Sales Pitch**
 - Avoid any commercialization in your presentation. Attendees will look poorly upon any presentation that comes across as a thinly disguised sales pitch.
- **Match Content to Session Description**
 - Make sure that what's promised in the session description is delivered in your presentation. There's nothing more annoying for an attendee than to sit through an hour-long presentation that doesn't deliver on the advertised learning outcomes.
- **Have Your Content Peer-Reviewed**
 - Your program manager will arrange a conference call for you to review your content with members of the conference planning committee. This is an opportunity for them to give feedback and for you to make sure that that your session will meet its intended goals.

