PRIMER:
Initial Design reviews (IDR's)

EE Senior Design

Overview

- The Initial Design Review (IDR) is a forum in which the results of the preliminary design process are presented to your instructor and/or company sponsor **for their approval**.

- **Often, your Functional Specification must be revised as a result of the IDR – this is a good thing.**

- Your Sponsor is invited but so are other members of our Industrial Advisory Board

IDR Objectives

- Receive an in-depth review of the Functional Specification from your Sponsor and other attendees

- **This is the Stage-Gate to start your design**

- Practice your presentation skills

Logistics

- **IDR's will be set up based upon Sponsor availability**
  - If your Sponsor (or Technical Mentor) can't attend then you will not receive in-depth feedback regarding your Functional Specification

- **IDR's may be conducted concurrently, i.e., in multiple rooms.**

- **IDR's consist of:**
  - A formal oral presentation using the Template
  - A formal review of the Functional Specification and project
  - Recording of Action Items
  - Thanking the attendees at the end

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Behaviors

- **You are expected to dress professionally**, e.g., business casual although more is better

- **Each person on the team MUST orally present** during the standing oral presentation
  - The entire team will be penalized if this does not occur

- **The first time a person speaks during the oral presentation, he or she MUST introduce by name**: *"I'm Sally Supreme."*

- **You must provide a means for the spec to be reviewed**, e.g., hardcopies available at the IDR. Remember – more than just your Sponsor may attend!

Sequencing

- Your Sponsor must receive a softcopy of your powerpoint **at least 3 business days in advance of the IDR**

- The PM starts the presentation

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Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Talking to a slide when the content appears later
   1. It's human nature to want to talk to a slide.
   2. Don't.
   3. Practice talking only to the slide so you can move on.
2. Reading the slide instead of paraphrasing it
   1. Everyone can read the slide.
   2. They can read it faster than you can say it.
   3. Paraphrase the content
3. Speaking too softly and/or too quickly
   1. You must be clearly understood
   2. Recall how a good lecturer speaks – clarity, intensity – strive for this
4. Lack of rehearsal and organization
   1. It's painfully obvious when a presentation hasn't been rehearsed
   2. Rehearse at least 3 times
   3. Make sure everyone knows the sequence & plan

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Presentation Skills

- Presentation skills are extremely important
  - You're promoting your ideas
  - You're promoting yourself and/or others

- Good presentation skills can make the difference between a mediocre and a superior performing employee

- The best way to improve your presentation skills is to
  - Practice in front of a live audience and seek feedback
  - Video record yourself and critique
  - Actively work towards better skills

1. Show Passion & Connect with your Audience

- **It's hard to be relaxed and be yourself when you're nervous.**

- But time and again, the great presenters say that the most important thing is to connect with your audience, and the best way to do that is to let your passion for the subject shine through.

- Be honest with the audience about what is important to you and why it matters.

- Be enthusiastic and honest, and the audience will respond.

2. Focus on your Audience's Needs

- **Your presentation needs to be built around what your audience is going to get out of the presentation.**

- As you prepare the presentation, you always need to bear in mind what the audience needs and wants to know, not what you can tell them.

- While you're giving the presentation, you also need to remain focused on your audience's response, and react to that.

- You need to make it easy for your audience to understand and respond.

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3. Stay Simple: Concentrate on Core Message

- **When planning your presentation, you should always keep in mind the question:**
  - What is the key message (or three key points) for my audience to take away?

- You should be able to communicate that key message very briefly.

- Some experts recommend a 30-second 'elevator summary', others that you can write it on the back of a business card, or say it in no more than 15 words.

- Whichever rule you choose, the important thing is to keep your core message focused and brief.

- And if what you are planning to say doesn't contribute to that core message, don't say it.

4. Smile & Make Eye Contact with Audience

- **This sounds very easy, but a surprisingly large number of presenters fail to do it.**

- If you smile and make eye contact, you are **building rapport**, which helps the audience to connect with you and your subject. It also helps you to feel less nervous, because you are talking to individuals, not to a great mass of unknown people.

- To help you with this, make sure that you don't turn down all the lights so that only the slide screen is visible. **Your audience needs to see you as well as your slides.**

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5. Start Strongly!

- **The beginning of your presentation is crucial. You need to grab your audience's attention and hold it.**

- They will give you a few minutes' grace in which to entertain them, before they start to switch off if you're dull. So don't waste that on explaining who you are. Start by entertaining them.

- Try a story, or an attention-grabbing (but useful) image on a slide.

6. Use your Voice Effectively

- The spoken word is actually a pretty inefficient means of communication, because it uses only one of your audience's five senses.
  - That's why presenters tend to use visual aids, too.
  - But you can help to make the spoken word better by using your voice effectively.

- Varying the speed at which you talk, and emphasizing changes in pitch and tone all help to make your voice more interesting and hold your audience's attention.

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7. Use your Body, Too

- **It has been estimated that more than three quarters of communication is non-verbal.**

- That means that as well as your tone of voice, your body language is crucial to getting your message across. Make sure that you are giving the right messages: body language to avoid includes crossed arms, hands held behind your back or in your pockets, and pacing the stage.

- Make your gestures open and confident, and move naturally around the stage, and among the audience too, if possible.

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