

ENGM 178 Presentation Guidelines

1. Introduction

This document provides general guidelines for presentations that are required for the ENGM 178 course. Developing and presenting professional-level presentations can be a significant challenge for students in 178 – this document is designed to make the process less mysterious. It provides basic advice on the three main aspects of writing:

- determining who your audience is
- developing a clear structure at both the macro-and micro-levels (i.e. deck and slide levels)
- ensuring that your language is precise and correct.

2. Audience

The audience for all of your written presentations in 178 includes your course instructor and faculty advisor and the Review Board members. Therefore you must present in a manner that is understandable to your instructors and the Review Board, avoiding jargon and explaining technical terms that are not in common use.

3. Structure

All effective presentations are structured in ways that help the audience understand your message. Structure applies at every level: from the development (storyboard) through preparation of an outline to the deck itself and to the individual slides.

3.1 Macro structure

Macro structure involves the structure of the deck *as a whole*. Your audience must be able to comprehend the overall structure at a glance, and must also know where he or she is within this overall structure at any point while you proceed.

Provide a detailed outline of your presentation and identify consecutive sections as you proceed.

3.2 Micro structure

Micro structure refers to the organization of individual slides, your points to make and the logic and verbiage supporting the points. Just as the entire deck must be structured, each slide within it must also be structured.

Each section and slide within it should follow smoothly from the previous section/slide and flow smoothly into the subsequent section. Use transitional phrasing to reinforce this structure.

4. Language

Avoid use of clichés, jargon (especially jargon from Six Sigma), or technical terms that are not in common use. Phrases such as this should be avoided: “Our product is the market-leader in the B2B space due to its world-class user-friendly interface.” After all, “user-friendly” is a cliché (and therefore meaningless) when describing interfaces: no one describes their product as “user-unfriendly.” “Market-leading” is another cliché; either provide concrete evidence of your market position or avoid making an empty claim. “B2B” may be acceptable jargon among some business people but it is not among some engineers; consider your audience.

Technical terms should either be defined in your phrasing or in the text or in footnotes or avoided in favor of descriptive terms in common use.

5. Requirements

Who Presents

Each team member is to take part in the presentation and in the question period.

Length

Presentation length is for 15 minutes and limited to 15 minutes. This is followed by 10 – 15 minutes of questions and response. Total cycle time is 30 minutes. Wordy responses to questions and repetitious response to those already given by teammates are to be avoided.

Appendices

Place back-up material in an appendix after your presentation deck so as to refer to key elements if asked. This appendix material is what you believe is relevant to your audience and should be clearly understandable without reference to the main deck.

Figures and Tables

All figures, pictures, and tables that appear in the text must be properly cited on the slide where they are presented. Further references may also be provided at the end of your slide deck.

Font Size and Spacing

The font size and graphics used in your slides should be legible on a room projection screen to the audience.

Citations

Proper citation of information sources is required and this applies to all paraphrases, quotations, pictures, graphs, charts, etc. This is a good ethical practice to follow in all writing.