

How to...

organise and effective and entertaining academic meeting

Dr Nick Brown
Federation of Infection Societies conference
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Adapted from Brian Lucey, Trinity College Dublin



The British Society for
Antimicrobial Chemotherapy



1) Be organised.

This is going to take time, and probably some resources beyond yourself.

Federation of Infection Societies (FIS)

FIS was established in 1993, with the sole purpose of organising a national conference contributed to by the infection specialty societies in the UK. The first conference was held in 1994.

VENUES AND DELEGATE NUMBERS

1994-2002	UMIST, Manchester	circa 150-200
2003-2008	City Hall, Cardiff	180-360
2009-2016	Venues across the UK	500-1000

2) Get professional help.

Stick to the academic side of things. For the practical side of things, get help.

3) Take a delegate's perspective.

Be honest, people don't just go for the papers. High quality papers are the skeleton around which you must build a lot of breakout and coffee sessions.



VIEWS AND REVIEWS

NO HOLDS BARRED

Fear of missing out on conferences

Margaret McCartney *general practitioner*

Glasgow

‘Fear of missing out (FOMO) is the experience, when on social media, of noting that other people are at a party, concert, or film when you aren’t. They are having a better time than you; either you made the wrong choice or you weren’t offered it. You missed out.’

‘That may not be important in the grand scheme of things, but what about fear of missing out on conferences—maybe we should call it FOMOOC? I am lonely and not there. We onlookers—we easily outnumber the attendees—are all missing out.’

‘Conferences are where people meet each other and where private conversations happen; and where power, in invisible networks, is laid and strengthened.’

4) Budget budget budget.

Good things cost money. Budget does not mean do it cheap. Cheap is usually nasty. Be nice. Set a rate that covers professional help.

5) Keep it tight.

A conference's success is not necessarily dependent on the number of people running it.

6) Hold it somewhere nice, but not too nice.

You want to attract people to come. But not so much that they slope off and not attend any sessions.

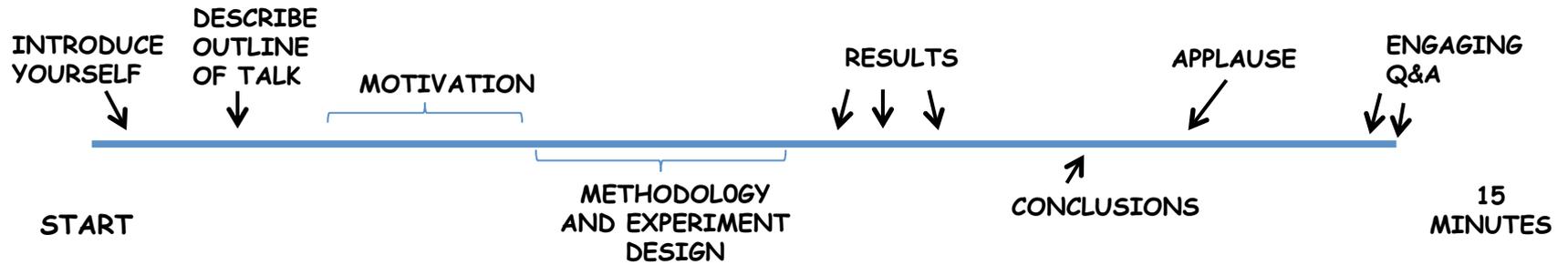
7) Embrace technology.

As well as the AV technology in every room, use a conference organising software or conference maker site to receive, manage and organise papers, distribute to reviewers, arrange sessions and so forth.

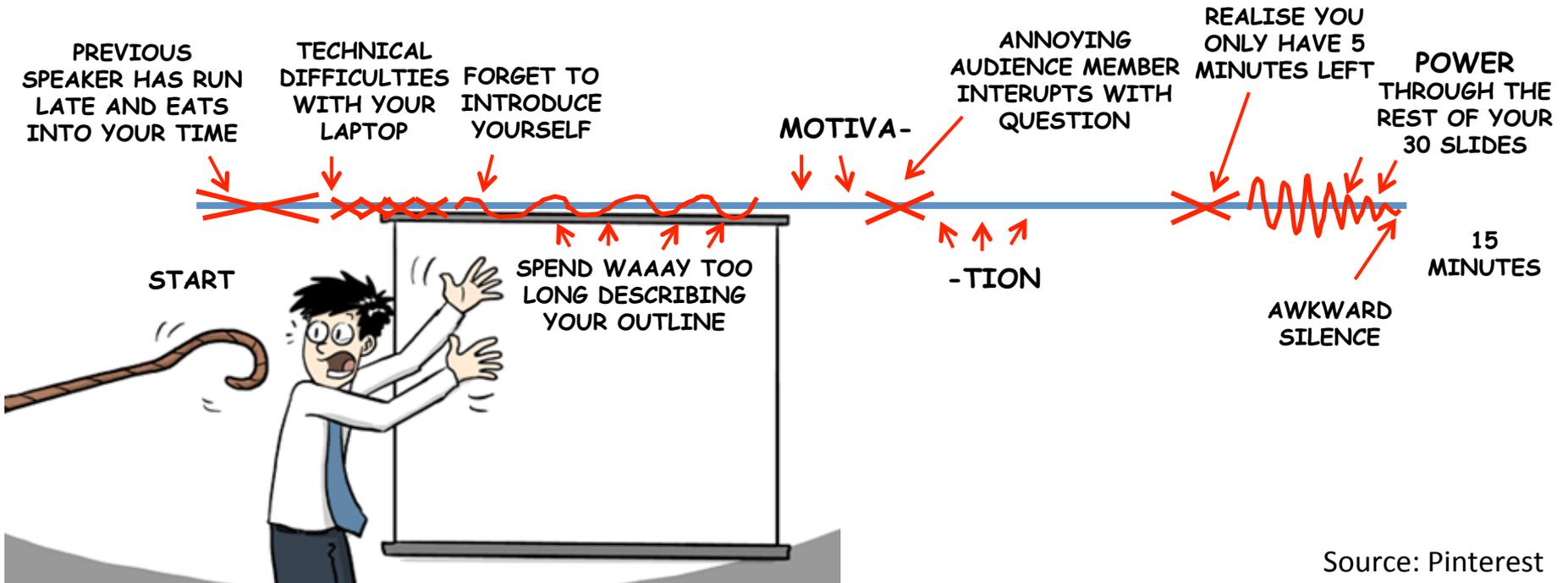
8) Keep track of time.

Make sure that you keep on time. Make the sessions so that they run on time.

HOW YOU PLANNED IT:



HOW IT GOES:



The anatomy of free paper sessions

- A protocol was used to score presentations during a conference at which 356 free papers were given in 48 sessions to a total audience of 2,483
- 85 (24%) of speakers were not present when the session was due to begin.
- 60 (18%) began without an introduction.
- 94 (28%) speakers did not face the audience
- 120 speakers (34%) exceeded the allocated time
- The number of slides varied from 0 to 94
- All but one of the 21 speakers who used more than 24 slides exceeded the allotted time.

Dreaming during scientific papers: effects of added extrinsic material

RICHARD F HARVEY, MELVIN B SCHULLINGER, ALEXIS STASSINOPOULOS, ERICA WINKLE



FIG 1—Typical audience sample (infrared picture) to show eye signs. Of 14 members of the audience in view, eyes are "normal" in three, "moving inappropriately" in one, "fixed and glassy" in two, "ptosis" in two, and "closed" in six.

Scoring system for stupor index

Head posture

Appropriately alert, forward looking	0
Moving inappropriately (for example, watching the girl with the wandering microphone)	1
Still and immobile	2
"Vertical nystagmus"	3
Complete loss of neck tone	4

Eyes:

Moving appropriately between lecturer & screen	0
Wandering (as defined for head posture)	1
Fixed and glassy	2
Ptosis or positive Bell's sign	3
Closed	4

Respiration:

Normal	0
Kussmaul (slow and deep) (< 20 dB)	1
As above, with noise audible at up to 2 metres (20-40 dB)	2
As above, noise audible 2-5 metres away (40-60 dB)	3
Noise audible at 5 metres away (60 dB)	4

Other:

Mumbling with eyes closed	2
Laughing with eyes closed	3
Myoclonic jerks	4

Interpretation of scores: 0= Unusually attentive (mainly rivals or coauthors); 1-4 =Normal; 5-6 =Drifting; 7-9 -Stuporose; 10-12 =Asleep; 13-16 =Asleep and socially unacceptable.

Factors found to have general effect on stupor index

Stimulus	Observed reaction
Wandering photographer in the auditorium	Wary, watchful. Look alert, keenly interested, as camera pointed in general direction
Important message on monitor	No reaction
Trivial message on monitor	Nervous conversation, mass exodus
Use of laser pointer	Wary, watchful. Duck for cover if laser pointed at audience
Speakers with ability below 5th percentile - e.g. unable to find way on to rostrum	Very attentive (a) Laughter (b) Leave for early coffee
Certain female speakers	Very attentive or extremely attentive (exceptionally) clapping during presentation (very exceptionally) cries of "encore," "bravo," etc.
Some words and phrases - e.g. "in conclusion," "finally"	"Arousal response"- that is, open eyes, sit up, replace pen, check watch, read summary to see what speaker has been talking about

'Humour is a fantastic way to make a good presentation great. It is also the best way to make a good presentation terrible'.

Anon

‘Be picky about your speakers and location, and make sure you run to budget, time and free, working WiFi’

Brian Lucey, Trinity College Dublin