

2017 Guidelines for Platform TED Talks
(adapted from TEDx Speaker Guidelines; <http://www.ted.com/talks>)

All will present using a TEDx talk format. **In our PD workshop, you have:**

- **Maximum 10 minutes to speak;**
(we will strictly enforce 10 minutes to stay on time; slides will turn off at 10 minutes)
- **Maximum 3 minutes for audience questions (additional ones can happen at breaks);**
- **We will use 2 minutes to transition to the next speaker.**

If you haven't seen a TEDx Talk, you may want to go to TED.com and watch one. Like this one:
[Phil Plait: How to defend Earth from asteroids](#)

This is a higher level talk:

- In addition to speaking about your active NIFA project, you have the option to also include information from other projects you may have now, or have had in the past.
- You can include cutting edge findings from others in your area of science if it helps you discuss the key messages you want to convey about your "Vision" and the research area(s) you are involved in.
- **The goal is not to overwhelm with data or intricacies of complex methodology; instead, to educate a diverse science audience about your "work to make a difference".**
- Many listening will know very little or nothing about your area.
- Your success is whether the audience is interested in your "project/ideas" even when it is completely out of their area of expertise.

1) As you think about your talk:

Think about how your idea might apply to a room full of varied kinds of people. How can you make sure everyone is interested from your opening slide?

2) Make an outline and script

There are many ways to structure a great presentation. ([Nancy Duarte presents one here.](#))

Here is one structure that works particularly well:

1. **Start by making your audience care, using a relatable example or an intriguing idea.**
2. Explain your project/ideas clearly & with conviction.
3. Describe your evidence for progress/success (but not in complex detail & without jargon).
4. **End by addressing how your project/ideas could affect your audience.**
Explain how your work, even if it is extremely basic in nature, will eventually help make a difference for animal health, animal well-being, consumers, &/or producers.

Whatever structure you decide on:

1. The goal is to communicate an idea effectively. You will tell a story & evoke audience emotions as a tool, not an end in themselves.
2. Your structure should flow.

Introduction: A strong introduction is crucial.

Draw in your audience members with something they care about.

- If it's a topic the general PD awardee audience thinks about a lot, start with a clear statement of what the idea is.
- If it's a field they never or rarely think about, start off by invoking something they do think about a lot and relate that concept to your idea. **This will apply to most, if not all of our platform talks since we have a diverse group of scientists listening to your talk.**
- If the idea is something fun, but not something the audience would ever think about, open with a surprising and cool fact or declaration of relevance.
- If it's a heavy topic (perhaps extremely basic science), find a down to earth way to get off the ground; don't force people to feel emotional or connected.
- Get your idea out as quickly as possible.
- Don't focus too much on yourself.
- Don't open with a string of statistics.

Body

In presenting your topic and evidence:

- Make a list of evidence you want to use:
 - Why this is a critical area- why should people care?
 - Before your project, what was known about this area & what knowledge gaps are significant deterrents to improving health or well-being?
 - What have you done to advance this area?
 - Where is this science area headed?
 - Think about what your audience already knows & the things you'll need to convince them of.
- **Order items in your list based on what a person needs to know before they can understand the next point**, and from least to most exciting. Now cut out everything you possibly can without losing the integrity of your argument. *You will most likely need to cut things that you think are important.* Consider running this by a friend; someone who isn't an expert in your field.
- Spend more time on new information; if your audience needs to be reminded of old or common information, be brief.
- Use empirical evidence, and limit anecdotal evidence.
- Don't use much jargon, do not use acronyms, or quickly explain new terminology.

- (Respectfully) address any controversies in your claims, including legitimate counterarguments, reasons you might be wrong, or doubts your audience might have about your idea.
- Don't let citations interrupt the flow of your explanation: Save them for after you've made your point, or place them in the fine print of your slides.

Conclusion

- Find a landing point in your conclusion that will leave your audience:
 - Feeling positive toward you, your "project/ideas", & your project's chances for being a good investment of dollars;
 - Knowing exactly where you want to take the work next.
- Don't use your conclusion to simply summarize what you've already said; tell your audience how your idea might affect animal health and/or animal well-being if it's implemented.

Script

Once have an outline, start writing a script. Be concise, but write in a way that feels natural to you. Use present tense and strong, interesting verbs.

3) Create slides

Ask yourself: What slides help & clarify information for the audience, and which should not be created as they will distract and confuse them? Some great examples of slides can be found in the talks by [Dan Phillips](#), [Jarrett Krosoczka](#) and [Rick Guidotti](#) on TED.com.

Most important rule for slides: Keep it simple.

It is a VERY bad practice to show a slide and say, "This slide is busy & has too much information for you to see data clearly, but I will tell you what it means". That loses everyone's interest & the boredom factor rises.

- Skip putting up data that is too small to read or too congested. Make a slide that puts in words what the data told you.

General rules of thumb for effective slides

- No slide should support more than one point.
- Use as little text as possible -- if your audience is reading, they are not listening.
- Avoid small font size. If it can't be easily seen you wasted a slide.
- **Choose a common sans serif font (like Helvetica or Verdana) over a serif font (like Times).**

5) Rehearse & time yourself: After 10 minutes are up, whether all slides are done, you are done. A reminder chime will occur at 8 minutes; a gong at 10 minutes turns off your slides.