AIPLA

American Intellectual Property Law Association

SPEAKER'S GUIDE

To: AIPLA Speakers

This guide is created to assist you in preparing your presentation to an AIPLA program. We have tried to incorporate in this simple guide some of the wisdom learned by experience from the many years of conferences and meetings.

Your participation in our programs is most appreciated. We hope that you find our Speaker's Guide of some benefit.

AIPLA Professional Programs Committee

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SPEAKING IS AN ACQUIRED ART. Few people are born speakers. Public speaking is a learned skill.

Many books and pamphlets have been written about giving a good speech and each has valuable lessons on preparing and presenting a talk. This Speaker's Guide is the AIPLA's effort to give its speakers some useful points specific to AIPLA programs learned from the experience of presenting those programs.

WHAT TO SAY—Organizing Your Talk

What to say is not a conundrum. Generally, you have already volunteered to talk on a specific topic about which you have knowledge or expertise. Your goal is to educate your audience about your topic.
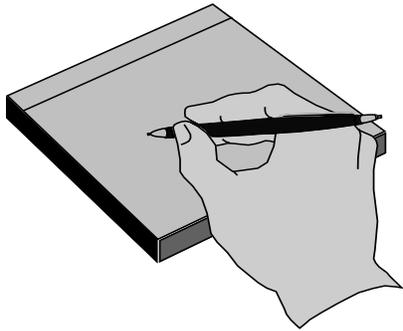
Most talks at AIPLA programs are fairly short, generally 20-30 minutes in length. Time flies when you are at the podium, but running over your allotted time is unconscionable. You should have already prepared a paper conveying detailed information about the subject matter of your talk. Your speech should augment and illuminate your topic. Do not read your paper.

AIPLA programs are generally presented in three different formats:

- Plenary Sessions;
- Breakout Sessions; and
- How-To Sessions.

Any of the formats may include panel discussions as well as stand-alone presentations.

Conventional practice for organizing a speech is to:

1. Introduce your topic to your audience. Present a brief "roadmap" of what you are going to tell them.
2. Communicate the substance of your subject matter by fleshing out the details of the roadmap you have already given your audience.
3. Summarize what you want your audience to know or remember after your talk.

OPENING YOUR TALK

In your speech's opening, you want to establish contact with your audience, gain their attention, arouse interest, and lead into your subject quickly and easily. To do that, you can use any of the following techniques. No matter which method you use to open your speech, you should always emphasize a benefit immediately. Why should the audience care about—or even listen to—what you have to say?

- Use a vivid anecdote, story, illustration, or example.
- Ask a compelling question.
- Use a startling statement, an unusual fact or statistic that ties in with your subject.
- Present the seminal point of your talk.
- Refer to some previous information.
- Quote an authority.
- Display some appropriate visual aid.

THE BODY OF YOUR TALK

The amount of information you can include in the body of your talk will be limited by the amount of time available, but you will generally want to include:

1. A statement of facts, the background for the rest of your talk;
2. Proof of your premise, supported by both law and facts; and
   - Visual aids help the audience with case citations and statutory authority.
   - Use examples or hypothetical situations.
   - Break down complex issues into manageable subparts.
3. Refutation of contrary views.

K.I.S.S. (Keep It Simple)

- Keep your sentences short.
- Link short points as building blocks to develop your premise or argument.
- Do not confuse your audience with undue complexity. The most effective speeches have at their core a single concept that can be written concisely.

CLOSING YOUR TALK

Close your talk with something that makes your point memorable. Finish forcefully and confidently. A weak, inconclusive, or apologetic closing can spoil any positive impression made during the body of the talk. Examples of a good closing are:

- A summary of the points you have made.
- A story, quotation, or illustration that emphasizes the point you are making.
- A specific appeal for action.

## HOW TO SAY IT—Tips For Delivering Your Talk

Depending on the topic and the format of the session, you may be speaking to an audience of 50, 500, or 1,500 attendees. No general guide will satisfy all of these conditions, but a few suggestions are useful:

- Know your material. You don't necessarily have to spend weeks in preparation, but you do have to think through what you want to say.
- Speak from an outline or note cards to remind you of key points and to keep you on track.
- Practice delivering your presentation aloud a couple of times, even if you are an experienced speaker. Consider recording yourself on audio or videotape.
- Don't memorize your speech or read it word for word. Canned presentations only make you appear stilted, and reading a speech means you won't have any eye contact with individual audience members. That means you won't connect with them, which makes it easy for them to start daydreaming.
- Engage your audience. You want your listeners to have rapport with you.
- Make direct eye contact with individual members of the audience; don't just look out over the sea of heads. Let your eyes rove into all four corners of your audience as well as the heart of it. Looking at different individuals throughout your talk will give everyone a greater sense of your connection with the audience as a whole.
- Be enthusiastic about your topic; don't keep your interest or passion buttoned inside your jacket. An audience's biggest turn-on is the speaker's obvious enthusiasm. If you're lukewarm about your subject, you should find a different presenter.
- Use vocal variety and pauses for emphasis. Varying your voice inflection, pitch, volume, and speaking rate can be much more effective for adding emphasis or dramatic impact than pounding the lectern.
- **Do not pound on the podium or table.** The microphones are very sensitive and the amplified boom not only drowns out what you are saying but also awakens audience members who are asleep!

- Don't be wooden; be animated. Look up. Look out. Speakers who don't move lose audience attention. On the other hand, if you expect to move around or gesture a great deal, ask for a lavaliere microphone that will move with you.
- Use PowerPoint® or other visual aids as a prompt, as well as a graphic presentation aid. But keep in mind that you, the presenter, should be the primary source of information in your talk, not the visual aids.

AUDIOVISUAL AIDS
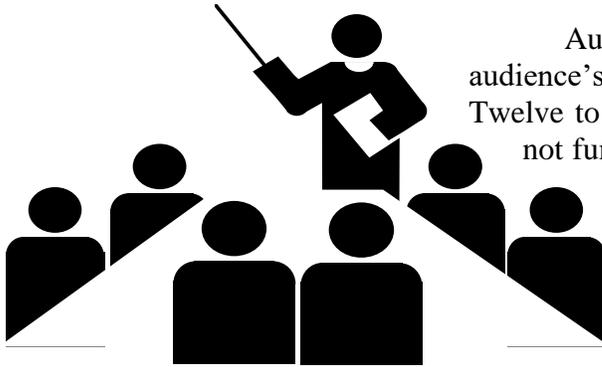
Audiovisual aids add immensely to the audience's enjoyment and comprehension of any talk. Twelve to 15 hours of CLE that is all talking heads is not fun. Not too long ago, visual aids were limited to overhead projected transparencies or slide projections. No longer. Use of the new generation of computer graphical presentation programs such as Microsoft PowerPoint® can make all the difference. To assist speakers in presenting the best talk possible, the AIPLA is committed to providing a broad base of audiovisual equipment. Though overhead projectors and slide projectors are not totally passe, the advent of computer-generated presentation programs gives speakers a much broader range of presentation graphics and the means to create a visually interesting presentation. As easy as these new programs are to use, however, there are guidelines:

- When creating your visual presentation, be careful not too overdo it. The graphics you create can get so busy that the visual aid overpowers the substance of what you are trying to say.
- Keep the graphics simple.
- Limit use of action elements.
- Do not put too much detail into any one slide.
- Check out your color scheme. What looks good two feet from your portable computer's screen may not project well. If your audience has to strain to read your slide presentation, your speech will be adversely affected.
- Practice your presentation and timing so you know when to change images and can do so easily.
- Make sure your equipment works and know how your application program works. Nothing ruins a good presentation faster than a bad joke or a speaker that spends too much of the allotted time fussing with the computer.
- Check with the audiovisual coordinator and the moderator well before your program starts:
  - Do a test-run if necessary.

- Combine your slide presentation with the other presentations onto one computer to avoid having to interrupt the program moving computers around.

- If you must use your own computer, try speaking from your seat on the dais rather than trying to move your computer up to the podium or lectern.

- Make sure you are able to see your portable computer's screen while you are projecting your program onto the screen for the audience because you may not be able to see the audience screen from the dais.

REMEMBER THAT THE USE OF VISUAL GRAPHICS IS TO AUGMENT AND ENHANCE YOUR SPEECH, NOT TO OVERPOWER IT.

AUDIENCE Q&A

Whether to take questions is generally dictated by the size of the audience, the nature of the program (such as a how-to), and the subject matter of the talk. How and when to take questions is best left up to the speaker.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Repeat the question being asked because many people in the audience may not have heard it. But don't feel you have to repeat the question verbatim; you can restate it as the opening of your answer.

- Answer the question succinctly. You don't have to answer every question fully; just make your best point and relate it to your overall objective. Then break eye contact with the questioner and move on.

- Cover the entire room. Try not to develop any blind spots as you look for questions.

- If the question is very fact-specific, which often happens, and not of general interest to the audience, ask the questioner to speak to you individually at the end of the program.

- If you don't know the answer to a question, say so. If you're on a panel, one of your panelists may know the answer—so it may be useful to toss the question to other panelists.

- Do not let the question period push you over your time limit. Though questions and answers are a part of your talk, they are not license to expand the time limit given for your speech

- Avoid getting into an argument with someone in the audience who disagrees with your points. Ask the individual to speak with you at the end of the program.

- If there are no questions, you can break the ice by posing your own question, starting with "A question I'm often asked is…" Or ask a question that was posed earlier, like this: "Before I started my talk/during the break, someone asked…"

These ploys buy you time for listeners to think up their own questions and make it easier for someone to start the audience Q&A.

TIME
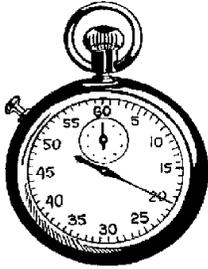
A specific amount of time has been allotted for your presentation and for the entire program. If you go over your time, you either cut short another speaker's time or you push the program over its time limit. AIPLA programs are often run concurrently and on a schedule that permits attendees to move from one program to another. Keeping to your schedule is very important to everyone. Use these strategies to keep track of your time:

- On your speaker notes, mark the amount of time each point should take to cover.
- Place a watch next to your notes on the lectern so you can keep an eye on the time unobtrusively.
- Heed the moderator's warnings about coming to a timely conclusion.

GOOD HUMOR

Humor is always good in any talk. It captures people's attention, releases tension, and increases retention of your material. But you must be able to use it effectively because a poorly told joke isn't funny. Humor must relate to your topic and be appropriate for your audience. Be careful about any joke or example that could be offensive. A great talk can be wholly undermined by an off-color or distasteful joke that bombs.

GENERAL INFORMATION SPEAKERS NEED TO KNOW

Costs and Expenses

Ordinarily, participants in AIPLA programs, whether a member of the AIPLA or not, are expected to give of their time to share information and expertise with others at stated meetings (Annual, Mid-Winter, and Spring). All speakers and moderators must register for the meeting. Under the AIPLA Speaker Expense Policy, speakers and moderators are expected to pay their own travel, lodging, and meeting registration and function fees, unless specifically exempted by the Policy or in writing by the AIPLA Officer-in-Charge of the given meeting. AIPLA will waive the meeting registration fee for corporate speakers and moderators for CLE sessions only. Also, certain exceptions may be made for costs incurred by law faculty not also associated with a law firm, government employees, private sector participants such as scientists or other non-lawyer professionals, and judges, but must be approved by the Officer-in-Charge in advance. No honorarium will be paid.

However, if a member or non-member speaker attends a meeting solely to speak at a Plenary Session, Concurrent Track, or Committee Educational Session and then leaves, AIPLA will offer that speaker the one-day registration rate at a 50% discount. This speak-and-leave option is limited to extraordinary circumstances, particularly in the context of private law firm speakers.

Please consult with your session coordinators for additional information.

Papers

Your participation is an important part of the success of AIPLA meetings and its educational offerings and so are your written materials. For many states, CLE credit is awarded only if papers supplement the presentation (i.e., PowerPoint® slides are not sufficient). Your written materials preferably should follow the AIPLA Style Sheet. If you need other information, please contact your session coordinators, moderator, or the Chair of Professional Programs. And *please* remember, papers must be at least 12-15 pages, single spaced. The deadline for submission of materials is set forth in the Speaker Letter (and the applicable meeting's draft program).

Last updated: November 1, 2019.