Meetings

The Importance of Being Concise

What a Five-Minute Talk at the Annual Meeting Can Do for You!

by Susan Fisk and the Annual Meeting Planning Committee

The world is moving to brevity. In standard writing and presentation recommendations, experts state the following length limits:

- Six words—recommended titles
- Three minutes—best readership of blog posts
- Three minutes—best viewership of YouTube videos
- 100 characters—best Twitter viewership/reach

But, as scientists, we struggle to get our message across concisely. I left the lab 30 years ago and have focused on communications and marketing ever since. And yet, when Twitter came along, I struggled with that 140-character count! And finding out that the best Tweets are 100 characters (remember, that includes spaces between words) almost gave me a heart attack.

That said, scientists need to strive for brevity in their communications. In 2016, ASA, CSSA, and SSSA are debuting a new style of presentation: the five-minute talks called Rapid Fire.

Rapid Fire Benefits

What will you get out of doing a Rapid Fire?

- Brevity creates excitement. Be prepared for robust discussion about your research after the session is over.
- If you also do a poster presentation, the 5-minute talk can be your “advertisement.”
- Experience with being concise gives you tools to communicate with the public, funders, and other audiences, too!

According to program planning officer Darin Lickfeldt, “the main benefit is learning how to tell our story in a clear, succinct manner. Our world is on information overload. To be truly successful, we need to help others see why our work is important in a short, impactful way.”

Three Slides per Talk

There will be three slides per talk (several Annual Meeting Planning Committee members have done this!)

1. Title slide (six words)—uses the question as the title and lists authors/co-authors and their respective institutions.

2. Results—one slide, including figure/table on separate slides. Use SI units in text, figures, and tables.


For more information, please contact your respective division/section chairs.

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