HOW TO ANIMATE IDEAS :: HOW TO COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY

Prepared by Jennifer Edwards, JenEd Productions
For the Georgia Tech Capstone Design Course
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Focus: Human-centered design; talking about ideas before you file a patent; engaging non-engineers and engineers in the same presentation; how to illustrate your creativity

1) Identify potential 'audiences'
NOTE: by 'audience' we mean anyone you are speaking to
Potential audiences may include:
• Corporate sponsors
• Potential users
• Customers
• Fellow engineers
• Capstone (scorers)
• Professors
• Peers
• Parents
• Funders

2) Know who you are talking to [Never be afraid to ask.]
- 1-to-1, or in small groups: ALWAYS ask the listener first – a question like:
   • What drew you to our booth?
   • What are you interested in?
   • What interested you to the Expo today?

- Before you present at an event: Ask the organizers who will be attending (both corporations / institutions and role or position)

- When giving a public presentation: Ask the audience (by a show of hands, who is an engineer, who is a designer, who is a _____ (parent, medical doctor…etc.)

3) Craft a pitch for each of the following approaches for talking about your project:
a) Describe your Process (the important steps (start to finish) of your project, chronologically laid out)

b) Describe the Utility (What is the utility / function / uses of your product)

c) Describe the Problem – and your Solution (what 'problem' is your creation solving)

d) Pose a question (How do we…? (When, Where, Who…) and then answer this question with your process / product

- this could also be positioned as: I / we had this theory – this was our journey from that theoretical point of departure)

e) Personal narrative (I was always fascinated by… because… this led to my / our exploration of…)

Also craft:
• Why are you the perfect team to do this work?

• The technical explanation – in tech-speak AND in lay-people's-speak

4) Make decisions about the following:
• How do you hope to leave your 'audience' after their interaction with you?

• What are the action steps in your pitch?

• How can they follow up with you?

• How will you follow up with them?

5) Creating a strong HOOK or LEAD:
- A hook or lead is the first sentence / question / image / statement that is meant to draw people to your work.

- Choose an aspect of your project that is in some way surprising, intriguing or sparks the imagination. Refer to the work done in part 3 of this worksheet. Choose one approach that you feel draws all audiences into your product / idea / project.

PREPARATION FOR SPOKEN PRESENTATION (prepared by Jennifer Edwards)
• Attend, watch / listen to many presentations – take notes
        (what worked, what didn't, what do you want to 'steal')
• Write down every word of your presentation – not just talking points
• Rehearse: plan for at least 3 rehearsal sessions, practice multiple run-throughs per session.
- Read it allowed – multiple times.
- Record it – multiple times
- Time it
- Listen to your recording – multiple times
- Practice in front of a friend / friends

**NOTE: for multi-person teams, follow all of these pointers above, together – practice the entire presentation together, record the whole thing, critique it and practice again. Schedule at least three trail-runs as a team.

Dress the part – discuss what your team will wear together. Just like you put attention into your designs and your visual presentation, you appearance matters. Practice your presentation at least once in the outfit (particularly the shoes, ties, and anything else that is less comfortable to you) you will wear. When planning your team clothing theme, avoid patterns or lines that are distracting – remember the focus needs to be on the content of your presentation.

GUIDE FOR CREATING VISUAL SLIDE PRESENTATIONS (prepared by Carolyn Woolard, professor of design at the School for Visual Art (SVA), NYC)

Make sure your visual slide presentation:
- **has your First Name and Last Name on the first slide**. We need to remember you.

- **has a white background**. This is personal preference, but I choose a white background because black text for captions on a white background is easier to read if you use a black background you will have to use white type and make your type even bigger for legibility. I also think of the white background as an additional light in the presentation hall it allows me to see the audience and makes for a less sleepy environment. Those dark presentation spaces can feel completely dead. Add light

- **has more imagery than text**. Your slides serve as a backdrop to your story they add to what you are saying they do not repeat it. Your presentation should have as little text as possible. The slides exist to emphasize the important parts of your story¨ and the things that are difficult to remember. Slides are not for you to read off. You can hold note cards in your hand to remind yourself what to say. If you do use text use one color black.

- **uses the same font for the entire presentation** and only at two or three type sizes. For example you might use 24 pt size for captions, a 48 pt size for quotations, and a 96 pt size for your name, and other simple headers. If you want to use more than one font, please learn what a style guide is, and use it. Note that people read text best if there are 7- 9 words per line. See the NY Times website to check out this 7 – 9 word per line practice of legibility.

- **has high resolution documentation**. Make sure your image is at least the aspect ratio of the projection often 1920 pixels in width by 1080 pixels in height for widescreen or 1280 horizontal pixels results in 960 pixels on a for standard right now. Photographs that are placed in Google slides are compressed and displayed at a low resolution, so if you have to use Google slides, practice projecting the slideshow to see if you can alter the quality of your image.

- **has high quality documentation**. Your work is as good as the photograph that documents it and as good as the space it is photographed in. Hire a photographer if you aren't good at taking pictures, and consider staging an installation in order to document your work in a beautiful space or PhotoShop it in a nice space. If you make 2D work, do not crop it. Show me the shadow, the edges, and the installation on a wall. If you make 3D work, show me it installed in a space, perhaps with a person or other demarcation of scale outlet, light, etc.

- **has captions for all images**, in the correct format. You cannot show reference images that inspire or influence your work without captions. Your work needs captions.
- - For an idea about how to do this, see
http://bombmagazine.org/article/748097/audra_wolowiec
- - read quotations text if you have them in your slides. You certainly do not need to use text or a quotation in your slides but if you do please read it out loud. When you show text on the slide and say something else you have lost your audience because they are trying to read the text and listen to you at the same time.

- **does not have full bleed images or text over images**. As artists we care about how we frame our work so every corner of our documentary imagery and our 2D work matters. This means that you cannot create full bleed images of your work. Allowing the image to go off the edges of the slide. Even a detail shot should not be full bleed. Our work is not a backdrop for additional messaging unless it is an ad. Do not crop your image or place text over it unless you are consciously making a statement about your work in relationship to advertising.

- **ends with your contact information**. People will sit with this slide it should thank them and give them a way to contact you