

Strategy and Tactics for Technical Talks

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**You must chose a strategy
for your technical talk**

because:

**an explicit strategy actively
engages your audience**

and

**determines effective solutions
to technical questions**

And avoids



Why is a strategy needed?

What strategies can be used?

Which strategy will be effective?

Why is a strategy needed?

For the audience:

The objective of speaking technically is to change people's thought/behavior

Helps you think what the audience should know, not what you want to say

For yourself:



Reduce the fear of losing the audience's attention

Feel authoritative by knowing what you are trying to do

Sound authoritative by thinking through the process of communication



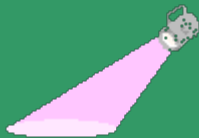
What strategies can be used?

Strategies are based on:

The type of outcome you intend in the listeners



The dramatic structure that will make the presentation vivid



Recall: The objective of speaking technically is to change people's thought/behavior.

Research:

persuasion that *this information* meets *that purpose*.

Buy/Do:

the focus is on someone doing or getting something new

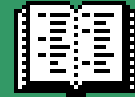
Modify:

promoting change in the use of a procedure or device.

Dramatic Structures

Thesis

State the thesis - so inviting the audience to evaluate and appraise your information



Disaster

Begin with evocation of the disaster and examine how it could have been prevented



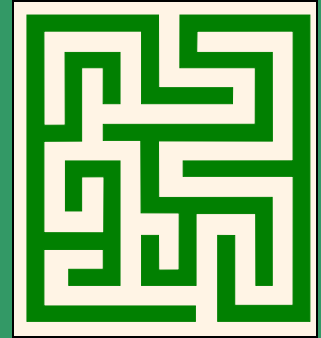
Problem

Present an interesting and important problem for the listeners and solve it



Puzzle

An unresolved anomaly or difficulty within a theory or procedure



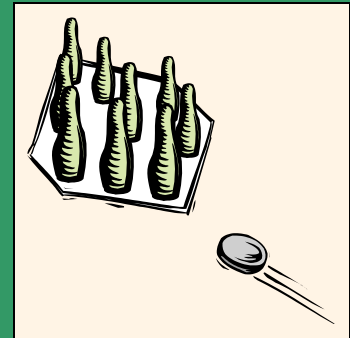
*Comparison
or Contrast*

Highlight specific advantages of one system, idea or procedure over another



Ninepins

Eliminate one after another of a set of competing items until only one is left standing



	Research	Buy/Do	Modify
<i>Thesis</i>			
<i>Disaster</i>			
<i>Problem</i>			
<i>Puzzle</i>			
<i>Comparison</i>			
<i>Ninepins</i>			

	Research	Buy/Do	Modify
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<i>Ninepins</i>			

I will argue that ...
Pull information together systematically to argue a valuable case

	Research	Buy/Do	Modify
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<i>Problem</i>			
<i>Puzzle</i>			
<i>Comparison</i>			
<i>Ninepins</i>			

You should use this method
Present information for
using the method over
others. Useful framework
for complex arguments

	Research	Buy/Do	Modify
<i>Thesis</i>			
<i>Disaster</i>			
<i>Problem</i>			
<i>Puzzle</i>			
<i>Comparison</i>			
<i>Ninepins</i>			

You should change procedure X because ...

Appropriate for “in house” presentations. Identify where the change is needed.

Research

Disaster

Describe a disaster - “We do not yet know what caused it.” Analyze possible reasons, and indicate the research needed.

Problem

Don’t let this happen to you! The classic sales technique. Evoke images of doom, and destruction until your listeners cry aloud “What shall we do to be saved!” Then tell them to use your brand X.

Research

Puzzle

“Can you help us solve this?” Bring the listeners as near as possible to the cutting edge of a discipline by concentrating on a central puzzle.

Comparison

**Why theory x is better than theory y
The classic “conflict of views” approach.**

Ninepins

“These explanations won’t do because ...” Demolish all but the favored theory.



Which strategy will be effective?

The type of your research and the stage it has reached will influence your choice

Essential tactical requirements in delivery that any talk must meet – these can influence your choice

The type and stage of your research

**Ecological analysis or synthesis,
or a new quantitative method?**

Analysis of the problem

Preliminary results

Essential tactical requirements

The problems that many people identify:

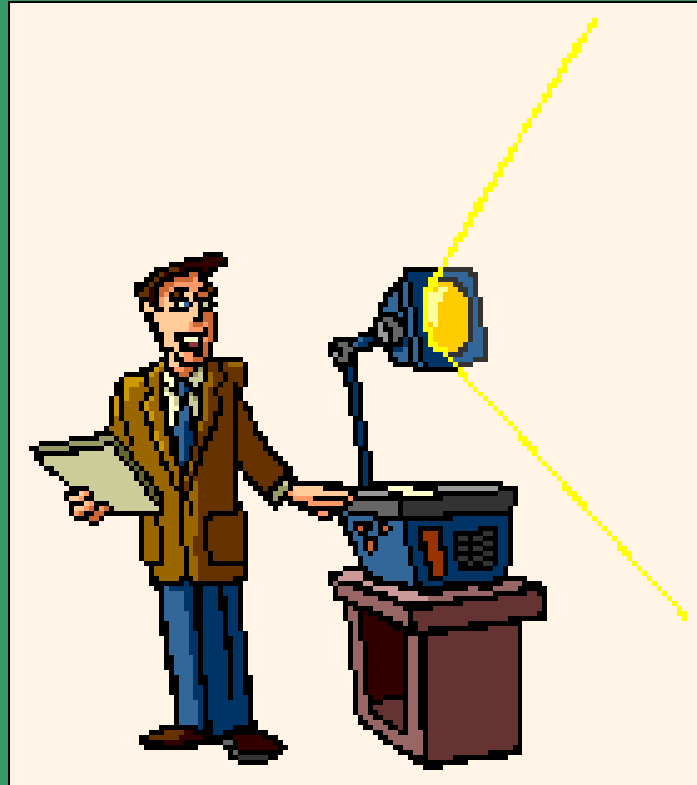
<http://faculty.washington.edu/edford/Courses/QERM597/suggestions.html>

Signposting the organization

Defining adequate introductory material

Planning the visual aids

Communicate with your listeners ...



... not with your machine!

