

Handbook for Speakers

Preparation of a lecture presentation at the EPE Conference

So you are going to present a paper at the EPE Conference ...

... congratulations, in the European professional power electronics world it is considered an honour to have a paper accepted by the international selection committee for presentation at the 9th European Conference on Power Electronics and Applications.

... and good luck, since you are of course eager to get your ideas across to your colleagues who will come from many countries and who are prepared to learn from your experience.

A good presentation requires some preparation. Much of the preparatory work consists of trifles. But do not underestimate the troubles ... and the results.

These notes have been written for your help. Do not discard these unless you are definitely sure that you have already used all the ideas in the author's checklist.

A "slide" in the following text is either an overhead projection transparency or a Power Point presentation with a multimedia projector.

Author's Checklist

At home

- write paper according to the rules given with the authors kit
- prepare slides according to the suggestions given in the paragraph "Preparation of slides"
- do not use too many formulas, and keep them simple
- try out the presentation before an audience or with a camcorder:
 - use the slides;
 - ask for feedback as to the level of presentation;
 - have the language checked if you are not using your mother-tongue;
 - be aware of the time limit.

Before the session

- meet the session chairman
- inspect the lecture hall and its facilities:
 - projection equipment;
 - pointer;
 - lights;
 - microphone.

At the session

- speak slowly and as simply as possible
- stick to the time limit

Preparation at home

You certainly want slides to be made.

Remember that the preparation of slides takes (a lot of) time.

Follow the guidelines given in the paragraph “Preparation of slides”. It may mean the difference between a successful presentation on one hand and a rather incomprehensible presentation on the other hand.

Keep slides simple, both diagrams and formulae. Make sure that the slides really fit the text as orally delivered. Don't use the illustrations from the written paper as slides. Generally they require significant time to understand.

A poor slide is not better than no slide at all, it is far worse than no slide at all. A poor slide will embarrass the audience and later embarrass you! Someone will have the courage to tell you!

Avoid the use of too many slides: 10 are already a lot, 20 may be killing for your 15 minutes presentation.

There is a great difference between “writing” and “reading” a paper as far as the contents is concerned. The reading of a “written paper”, or of parts of it, hardly ever gives satisfactory results. A written paper is usually compact, providing a relatively high density of detailed information, exact formulation and derivation or formulae. Little redundancy is allowed, but literature references and cross-references are permitted. If, however, for some reason “reading” a text is unavoidable, e.g. because of language difficulties, then this text should be specially prepared with a view to oral presentation.

In an oral presentation the speaker has the opportunity to present his information in a conversational style. By far the best way is to discuss the topics using only a set of notes containing the essential points, instead of reading a text.

It is a good idea to make these notes on a set of cards as used in card files. In order to have a smooth start of the lecture, and a clear conclusion at the end, write out completely the opening and the closing sentences. But otherwise try to suffice with short notes.

Remember: you are the expert in the room on the topic that you are going to discuss.

A lecture ought to contain three parts:

- the introduction stating explicitly the topic of the lecture (perhaps 3 minutes);
- the main body;
- the conclusions, summarising the lecture (perhaps 3 minutes).

The total amount of time allocated per lecture will be 15 minutes, plus 5 minutes time for discussions.

Because of time limits only main topics can be treated; they should be in an easily understandable - not very mathematical - form.

For derivations of formulae and less important details one should refer to the proceedings, as in an oral presentation the introduction of the terms, definitions and symbols may be relatively lengthy to allow the audience to become familiar with them (the listener cannot look back as it is the case when reading a written contribution).

It is far better to treat a few subjects in a clear and comprehensible way than many subjects in a hurry. As the proceedings have been distributed among the participants, authors should certainly not try to present the full text of their papers.

They should concentrate rather on a short formulation and motivation of the problem being discussed and on the obtained results.

After these preparations you ought to feel quite confident. The only thing that remains to be done is to try out the presentation (including the use of slides) with some co-workers and on a camcorder. If you will speak in a language that is not native to you then try to get some feedback on that aspect too.

Mispronunciations (e.g. “angel” instead of “angle”) may spoil the whole performance.

Be aware of the time limit. It requires much skill (or training and self-discipline) to stick to the allocated time.

Preparations just before the session

The speaker is invited to meet the session chairman.

Familiarise yourself with the environment and the technical equipment:

- 1- slides projection;
- 2- microphone;
- 3- pointer;
- 4- lights.

At the session

An author should be present in person at the conference, otherwise his paper is liable to be not presented and not discussed.

See to it that your time-table is strictly adhered to.

It is impolite to force other lecturers at the end of the meeting into the bad position of having insufficient time, or of lecturing to a tired audience. Allow sufficient time for the slides. Please move over to the conclusions if ever your chairman warns you that your time is up.

One has to appreciate the fact that at an international congress most listeners use another language than the speaker. Therefore one should speak slowly and as simply as possible, with much more redundancy than in written papers.

Do not have things circulated during the lecture; this diverts the attention. Experience has taught that circulating objects lose their correct sequence on their way.

While you are projecting a picture, explain it (e.g. the co-ordinates and parameters) before you continue your lecture. Do not expect the audience to try to understand the picture while you are already talking about conclusions or even other topics.

Preparation of slides

Effect of slides

Good slides are an effective tool in holding audience attention, in clarifying and amplifying the verbal message.

Bad slides have the opposite effect: They distract and irritate the audience. It is discourteous to project slides that cannot be read or understood by viewers in the rear seats. It is, however, easy to make better slides by keeping to a few simple rules that are presented and explained on the following pages.

Dimension of slides

For the EPE 2001 Conference we are concerned only with Power Point presentations or A4 transparencies. The lay out must be of the landscape type.

Delivering your presentation

Your Power Point presentation is expected by the local team around August 1st. The file is to be sent by e-mail to epe2001@unileoben.ac.at. The name of the file should include the number of the session and the paper number: LSxy-PP0XXXX.ppt. Your file will be tested by the local team and copied on the local PC in the conference room to ensure that the presentation will run smoothly without set up waiting time. *Just in case, you should also bring transparencies with you as a back up.*

You are asked to send your presentation also to your session chair for a check.

Principles of good slides

Idea concentration

A good slide conveys a single, significant message to support the oral presentation. Several simple slides are more effective than one complicated slide.

Simplification

It is usually advantageous to simplify all tables, graphs, diagrams and drawings. Reduce lines and wording to a bare minimum. Supplementary information may be presented orally.

Graphs better than tables

Tables require interpretation and are recommended only if the presentation cannot be portrayed graphically.

Size references

A photograph should generally include some object of known size to show dimensions if the size is of any interest and if the main object does not give any clue; a few examples: a person, a head, a hand, a fingertip, a matchbox, a pencil, or a millimetre-gird graph paper as a background.

Lay-out

The artwork should be planned, if possible, with such proportions that the net picture area is efficiently utilised. There is no necessity of placing a company's or university's logo on every slide as this will consume precious space.

Critical use of illustrations

When reproducing material from printed publications, check their suitability according to our principles, and use only unfolded and unwrinkled originals for the best results. In most cases even good illustrations cannot be used because they contain too many details.

Text legibility

Legend should be concise with sufficiently large letters (height about 2.5 - 3.0 % of picture width). Limit each table (or tabulation) to about 25 words or data. Spacing between words and lines should be more ample than in ordinary printed text.

Formulae and equations

When formulae and mathematical equations are used they should be limited to a few lines. Not more than one hundred letters, symbols and figures should be used on one slide.

Colour

Colour slides are highly effective. Colour can be used in graphs, diagrams, etc ..., to clarify and direct attention to areas that might be lost in black and white.

Duplicate

Plan to duplicate slides if one particular slide is to be shown more than once. This will reduce the confusion in hunting the slide when it reappears on the slide listing.

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