

What makes a good talk good?

Here is a list of answers that I liked, collected from various sources :

- State your question at the beginning of your talk. What do you want to solve? (J. DiCarlo)
- Introduce what is needed, and don't introduce what's not. (P. Miller)
- Short talk rule: Stick to one message, so that we (the audience) can remember what your talk was about. **One question, one answer.** (P. Miller)
- Stick to your allotted time. (R. Froemke)
- **Practice!** Rule of thumb: (At least) once alone, twice with an audience. (Some people say practice makes them perform worse. They are wrong.) (L.F. Abbott)
- Speak to the audience, don't speak to the screen. (R. Naud)
- Keep your head up, your shoulders straight, your arms un-crossed. Embrace your audience. (E. Marder)
- Entertain us. Tell us why you find your result interesting / exciting / awesome. (A. Maffei)
- Control where the audience is looking. (L.F. Abbott)
- Avoid jargon. Introduce or define terminology you want to use. Be mindful of theorists / experimentalists (the respective "other"). (Y. De Koninck)
- Use keywords to summarize the content of your slides, as a headline or a summary, to get people back on track if they should lose you. (M. Woodin)
but also:
- Fill the slide with the important stuff, a data figure for example, not with words that you are saying anyway. (L.F. Abbott)
- Every time you use your hands to describe something, you are missing a figure. (W. Gerstner)
- Every time you show a figure, introduce what we see. Don't assume we can read the axes and labels. (Y. De Koninck)
- Axes should be at least 15 pt. font. Bigger is better. (P. Drew)
- Avoid 3D and contour plots. They are difficult to understand. If you must insist, take your time and show accompanying 2D plots. (R. Yuste)
- Try to keep your color scheme consistent throughout your talk. (C. Swinehart)
- Don't introduce more than two graphs [on a new slide] at the same time. Otherwise you will surely forget to introduce the details of what is plotted in one of them. (R. Yuste)
- Don't show a formula if a figure can do a better job. (L.F. Abbott)
- If you present a formula, please keep a variable name legend available on the same slide (underneath the formula, for example). You may know what x stands for, but we can easily forget. (Y. De Koninck)
- Don't be "cute". Cute is annoying too easily. You win nothing by being cute, but you can lose a lot. (L.F. Abbott)
- Never assume that your audience knows what your talking about. (N. Doyon)

Can you think of anything else? Let me know @ tim.vogels @ epfl.ch.