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Scott Morgan and Barrett Whitener
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SPEAKING ABOUT SCIENCE

Presenting in public is an important career skill for anyone in the sciences, and this practical manual is essential reading for researchers and clinicians who are preparing talks for meetings and academic conferences. The book features step-by-step instruction for creating clear and compelling presentations – from structuring a talk and developing effective PowerPoint slides through delivery before an audience. Color examples of slides and posters from actual presentations are included. The authors also provide tips on answering questions and strategies for handling media inquiries and job interviews.

Scott Morgan and **Barrett Whitener** are professional public speakers and write from their extensive experience designing courses and teaching presentation skills to scientists and medical researchers at the National Institutes of Health and in the private sector. The seven-step process they have developed will help readers become better speakers and ensure success behind the podium.

For more information, visit www.premierepublicspeaking.com.

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A MANUAL FOR CREATING CLEAR PRESENTATIONS

Scott Morgan
Premiere Public Speaking, Washington, D.C.

Barrett Whitener
Premiere Public Speaking, Washington, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

Thus, it is the communications process which is at the core of the vitality and integrity of science.

– Philip Hauge Abelson

In an age when so much communication is tethered to technology, delivering messages face-to-face has paradoxically become even more vital to professional success. We all have ready access to more information than any of our ancestors did. At the click of a few keys, we can locate reams of facts on any topic under the sun. But although the amount of data available to us has grown, the number of hours in a day has not. Amidst this flood of information, technology can make getting to the *pertinent* bits of data much more challenging. And that is where a good public speaker becomes a priceless commodity. Listening to a clear and concise speaker is still the most time-efficient way to comprehend new information.

Yet even with its known benefits, most of us view addressing a group of people as a dreaded burden. That may be even more the case for scientists. In addition to the concerns that all speakers have, they must present specialized and complex data.

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Some of the dread is also due to the fact that the craft of public speaking is not taught properly. For most of us, it was never taught at all. We all have had to learn by painful trial and error. The purpose of this book is to offer a methodical and efficient procedure that can be used to prepare and deliver any talk, to any audience.

Our method builds cumulatively, so we suggest reading the book in sequence the first time, without jumping between topics. We have tried to enhance readability, yet avoid gender bias, by using masculine pronouns for the odd-numbered chapters and feminine pronouns for the even-numbered chapters. Because our primary focus is on scientific talks, most of our examples come from basic research. But the concepts are easily adapted for clinicians, administrators or review talks.

Lastly, these ideas have hardly developed in isolation. We would like to thank the hundreds of clients who have helped us discover the techniques that make a presentation successful. In fact, we think of them as our teachers, and it is an ongoing honor to learn from them.

Scott Morgan
Barrett Whitener

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