Southern Arizona Volunteer Management Association

Presenters Guide

Purpose: To provide Presenters to SAVMA guidance to apply the Volunteer Engagement Principles to the learning needs of audiences, and by incorporating common practices for increasing inclusivity, accessibility, and belonging. The guide also includes common practices to streamline and simplify presentations, reduce technical issues, and increase audience engagement.

Audiences may have sight, hearing, speaking, or physical impairments that make participation difficult. This guide is a place to start and not a standalone resource.

Fundamental Principles of Engaging Volunteers

- **Volunteer Engagement Professionals (VEPs)**: individuals in the volunteer program management profession are best at their jobs when they are trained, strategically integrated, part of a peer network, and financially supported.
- **Volunteers are people**: VEPs engage volunteers, but do not "use" them like tools. For that reason, as individuals, we refer to them by name and never as "my" volunteer or "our" when the organization's name can be referenced.
- **Volunteer Resources/ Services Program**: these terms (used interchangeably) classify a centrally coordinated volunteer program. It is preferred to assign costs of volunteer resources appropriately by program. Calculation options are square footage or time allocation.
- **Volunteers belong everywhere, so we prepare**: that training, insurance, and supervision are requirements for all staff, paid and unpaid. Inclusion requires that all supervisors require basic volunteer engagement training.

Inclusivity, Accessibility, and Belonging

Audiences are diverse in needs and learning requirements. When everyone can fully participate, a presentation is **accessible**. When all participants have the resources and opportunities needed to participate without barriers, that is an **inclusive** design**.** Presentations promote a sense of **belonging** when everyone feels accepted and supported.

Inclusivity in Language

- **Gender-neutral terms**: include more people in the language used to describe them or talk about them. Address audiences by segment titles such as "honored guests" or "valued employees" rather than "guys" or "ladies and gentlemen."
- **Use plain language:** clear, concise, and easy to read (avoid jargon, acronyms, and idioms)**.**
- **Respectful Writing**: When communicating with, for, and about people with disabilities, diseases, and health conditions, it's important to learn the history of their experiences with social stigma

and prejudice, because some audiences prefer a person's first language and others prefer an identity-first language.

- **Speaker Voice:** plan to moderate the five aspects of voice – volume, pitch, rate, and pauses or vocal fillers.
- **Non-verbal communication:** requires unique approaches for each of the nine types of nonverbal communication including facial expressions, gestures, paralinguistics (such as volume or tone of voice), body language, personal space, eye gaze, and haptics (touch), appearance, and artifacts (objects and images).

Streamline and Simplify

Streamline formats for Accessibility

These general formatting strategies ensure presentations are accessible, clear, and engaging. Use the Slide Master to consistently apply the same fonts and images (such as logos), across all slides.

- **Automation:** use a consistent slide transition and avoid sound effects.
- **Font type:** select a sans-serif font such as Arial or Calibri.
- **Varied learning styles considerations**: the four learning styles (**V**isual, **A**uditory, **R**eading/writing, and **K**inesthetic) require varied levels of audience engagement during participatory, visualization, and explanatory activities.
- **Visuals:** require in-person description to audiences; accessibility readers require completion of alternative text fields (Alt-text).
- **Spatial Layout: l**eave space around the text and graphical images.
- **Font Size:** online presentations 18+. Standard classrooms 24+. The Presenters Guild calculates sizes using "8H formula."
- **Color and Contrast:** Strong contrast between text and background makes it easier for people with low vision or colorblindness to see and use the content. This includes contrast between text and background colors and between colors in graphs.

Simplify Your Message and Foster a Sense of Belonging

Learners more readily digest simple messages. Instructors who foster a sense of belonging improve learning and satisfaction.

- **Use sentence titles on slides**: "The single most important thing you can do to improve your presentations is to use sentence titles that give the main point of each slide." (Polk, 2018)
- **Sharing:** Presentations will be shared and forwarded. Attribute photos, use the notes sections, and link to research and resources.

- **Avoid the 10 most common pitfalls:** too many words, formatting issues, jargon, complicated stories, alignment issues, gratuitous pictures or charts, animations, many fonts, typos, and color issues.

Engage the Audience

Engaged audiences increase memory retention, sense of belonging, and satisfaction with the presenter.

- **Be Familiar with Industry Trends**: presenters are industry experts and may not have experience engaging volunteers. Relating industry expertise to audience experience can be linked to trends and outlooks.
- **Relate and respond**: connect theory to practice with relatable, real-life examples.
- **Interactive participation activities:** think-pair-share, breakouts, brainstorms, games, and Q&A sessions should happen at least twice an hour.
- Always At Your Best, hosted by AZ Impact for Good, presented by Ashley Bright, Founder of The Message Fixer

SAVMA Prepares

- Moderators are available upon request.
- Timekeeping flashcards are available upon request for 5 and 10 minutes.
- In-person attendees complete and return evaluations before leaving. Presenters receive summarized feedback.

References

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