

# **Giving Effective Presentations**

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November 2023

# MOTIVATION

Presenting is an essential professional skill

- ▶ During grad school it's a key opportunity to get feedback from faculty and fellow students
- ▶ Once you have a research job, still one of main ways to promote and get feedback on your research
- ▶ Useful in academia, policy, and industry jobs

Can always get better

# MAKING EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

1. Focus on presentation goals
2. Structuring presentation
3. Convey information clearly to audience
4. General presentation skills
5. Practice / get feedback
6. Additional resources

# 1. KNOW YOUR GOALS

- ▶ What are you trying to get out of the presentation?
- ▶ Who is your audience?

## Potential presentation goals

- ▶ Propose question
- ▶ Feedback on empirical or modeling strategy
- ▶ Convey key result
- ▶ Polished paper (job market talk)

## Tell your audience your goals and punchline at start of talk

- ▶ A presentation (or paper) is not a mystery story!
- ▶ There shouldn't be a surprise endings
- ▶ Audience should know your goal and where the talk is going
- ▶ Particularly important for student lunches where faculty can tailor feedback to presentation goals

## 2. STRUCTURING PRESENTATION

Standard applied micro structure

1. Motivation and question
2. Preview findings / contribution
3. Empirical Strategy and data
4. Results
5. Interpretation/implications

Can vary this depending on content, goals, and how much time you have

Even if you change things up, still need a logical structure

Intellectual history of your project is NOT a good structure

### 3. CONVEY INFO CLEARLY TO AUDIENCE

- ▶ Human mind = weak
- ▶ The audience isn't in the weeds like you
- ▶ Need to reduce the cognitive burden on your audience

Focus on most difficult to explain parts of presentation

- ▶ Spend lots of time prepping the most difficult part of your presentation to explain
- ▶ Will spend 50% of presentation prep on 10% of presentation

# TYPES OF SLIDES I

## Text slides

- ▶ Not everything you say needs to be a bullet point
- ▶ Slide deck  $\neq$  your notes
- ▶ Instead, highlight key numbers/ideas and help guide

## Literature slides

- ▶ Not list of all papers on topic
- ▶ Focused discussion that makes a point
- ▶ Many (most) audience members will not know the papers
- ▶ Especially important to be concise in short presentations

## TYPES OF SLIDES II

### Table slides

- ▶ Do not just copy table from your paper
  - ▶ Too small
  - ▶ Insufficiently focused
- ▶ Focus on just key parameters and specifications
- ▶ Often useful simplification methods
  - ▶ Convert to graph
  - ▶ Incrementally roll out columns

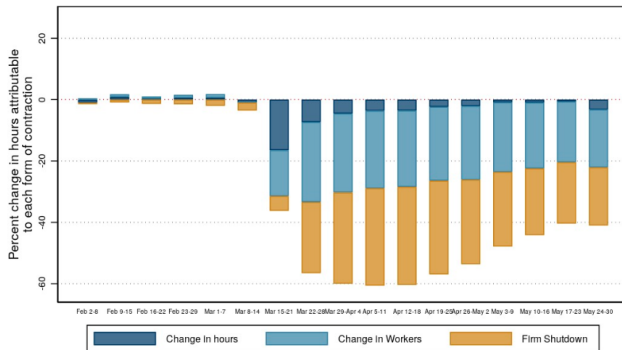
### Figures

- ▶ Clearly labeled x-axis
- ▶ Clearly labeled y-axis
- ▶ Take advantage of pre-attentive attributes
- ▶ Horizontal lettering if at all possible



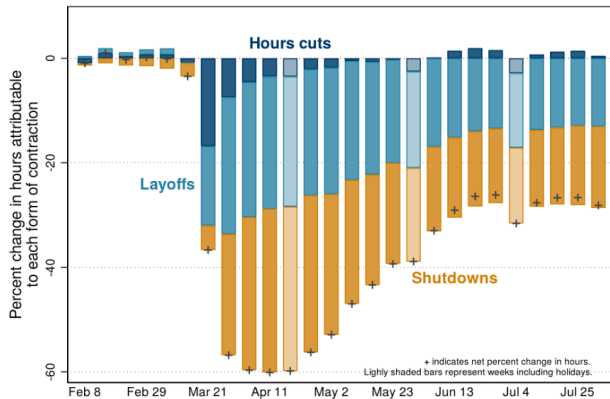
## FIGURES: ORIGINAL VERSION

Figure 2: Hours changes at Homebase firms each week relative to Jan 19-Feb 1 decomposed into firm shutdowns, layoffs, and hours reductions



Source: Bartik, Bertrand, Lin, Rothstein and Unrath (2020)

## FIGURES: BETTER VERSION



Source: Bartik, Bertrand, Lin, Rothstein and Unrath (2020)

## 4. HANDLING QUESTIONS

- ▶ Keep logic of presentation going
  - ▶ Finish your thought/section
  - ▶ Defer to later if you're definitely answering the question in next 5 minutes
  - ▶ Provide concise answer if you're not going to answer in next 5 minutes
- ▶ Don't get defensive
  - ▶ (Most) questions come from a good place
  - ▶ Admit if you're not sure/don't know/haven't done it yet
- ▶ Don't be afraid to:
  - ▶ Ask for clarification
  - ▶ Pause to think

## 5. PRACTICE

- ▶ Practice by yourself
- ▶ Practice with peers
- ▶ Follow faculty feedback

## 6. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ Think about effective and ineffective approaches of
  - ▶ Other students
  - ▶ Seminar Speakers
- ▶ Jesse Shapiro presenting guide
- ▶ Jonathan Schwabish effective presentation book
- ▶ Visualization book by Kieran Healey