So you have to give a talk? Make sure it does not become bedtime for the audience

Fresh from a number of conference talks, I can say that we have a large number of our AusIMM members giving some very professional presentations. However, there is always room for us to improve and aspire to be Tony Blair, Bill Clinton or Edward De Bono.

There are plenty of guidelines on what to do and what not to do, but sometimes these need to be cut to the real basics.

- 15 words per slide
- Get the font right
- Know how you are going to start, i.e. a strong first 30 seconds
- Do not read out what is on the slide (the audience can do this themselves and much faster than you can read).

Preparation is everything: contrary to how it may appear, Barack Obama does not walk up to the microphone and decide then what he is going to talk about.

Corporate presentations: some of our exploration and mining do not give a good message for our industry. Some fail badly on the 'can the audience read the text' criterion. Some of the small assays along the drill core are even hard for the speaker to read. And I am not talking about the disclaimer which may be closer to 500 words in micro-font. With the present disclosure issues, this needs some industry thought, but there is inspiration in how some of the largest ASX corporates do this.

Mosaics: why cram four photos and four messages on a single slide. In my experience it is incredibly rare for genuine comparisons to be necessary with all the mosaic showing at once. Four times the information must equate to smaller font and excessive words. Three extra slides do not cost.

Forget the time of day: it seems nobody wants to speak when they are allocated. Of course the audience is sleepy during the morning after the dinner, rundown late each morning, drowsy after lunch, and exhausted towards the close of the day. Wouldn't it be nice to speak like Blair / Obama every time and without powerpoint.

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