PREPARING and DELIVERING TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

Kenneth G. Budinski

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ASTM International
100 Barr Harbor Drive
PO Box C700
West Conshohocken, PA 19428-2959

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Foreword

THIS PUBLICATION, *Preparing and Delivering Technical Presentations*, was sponsored by the ASTM International Committee on Publications. The author is Kenneth G. Budinski, Technical Director of Bud Labs in Rochester, NY. This is the first edition of Manual 54 in ASTM's manual series.

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Preface

This manual guides students, technologists, engineers, and scientists through the process of making an oral presentation. It can be used as a personal reference or as a text to teach students or employees how to make oral technical presentations. It is a companion to a previous book dealing with technical writing. That book devotes one chapter to oral presentations. This book is completely about oral presentations.

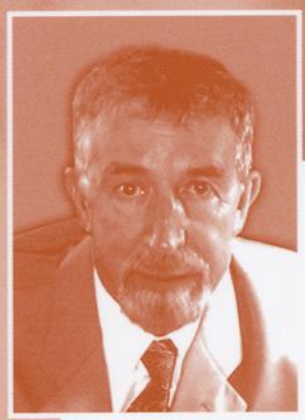
It is almost certain, if you work in a technical field, that making oral presentations will be a job requirement. You may only do this once a year, month, or week, but whatever the frequency, your job success will be tied in some way to how well you make oral presentations. An oral technical presentation "sells" your technical work, as well as yourself.

The problem addressed by this book is poor technical presentations. I have worked in U.S. industry as an engineer for more than forty years, and I cannot begin to estimate the number of "poor" technical presentations that I have squirmed through, the number of unreadable slides I have attempted to decipher, and the number of talks that have wasted my time. Most of the time, the speakers had useable knowledge and information to communicate; they just "botched" the communication step. The audience received little return for their time investment, and the organization received little return from the speaker's preparation time.

This book is written by a still-practicing engineer, and the suggestions (called rules in the text) come from personal experiences (italicized anecdotes) in giving technical presentations. I have presented more than 100 papers at conferences and countless presentations in the workplace. Just about all of the problems that can occur have happened to me. My speaking situations range from the hallowed halls of Cambridge University to alongside an incredibly noisy factory floor tubing mill. The audiences that I have encountered range from one to one thousand. All of these experiences are distilled into a step-by-step procedure on how to make successful oral presentations—presentations that get your message across and achieve your objective successfully.

There are seven chapters in this manual, which begins with commitment and ends with the evaluation of your presentation. The book addresses formal and informal presentations, including common meeting situations. It starts with how to develop a presentation strategy that accommodates your message and offers something of value to the audience. It tells you how to research a subject, how to prepare a presentation, how to protect intellectual property, and then how to prepare and use visual aids. It ends with a chapter on delivering your message and speaking successfully in front of any size group. I fervently believe this book will help anyone who reads it to become a better communicator.

Kenneth G. Budinski
Technical Director, Bud Labs
Rochester, New York



Ken Budinski is a Materials Engineer who has made countless technical presentations during his professional career, as well as in his personal life. His work has required presentations on his research and development, on project proposals, on environmental issues, on teaching engineering materials to others, and even on promoting ASTM standards. In his personal life, he had to make presentations at public hearings, in courts of law, at retirement gatherings, and at numerous other occasions.

Mr. Budinski has a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering (Kettering University) and an M.S. in Metallurgical Engineering (Michigan Tech), and he is currently Technical Director at his son's company, Bud Labs, in Rochester, NY. Bud Labs manufactures friction and wear testers and performs contract testing to solve friction and wear problems. Mr. Budinski has spent most of his career in large manufacturing facilities: six years at a General Motors division and 38 years at Eastman Kodak's largest manufacturing facility. This book is an outgrowth of communication tutorials that he presented for years to co-workers at Eastman Kodak.

Mr. Budinski is the author of other technical books: eight editions of Engineering Materials: Properties and Selection, Prentice Hall; Surface Engineering for Wear Resistance, Prentice Hall; and Engineer's Guide to Technical Writing, ASM International. He has presented over 100 papers on his research work at conferences in the United States and around the world. He has authored more than 50 papers in refereed journals, and he is a Fellow of ASTM International, ASM International, and The Rochester Engineering Society. He has been a member of ASTM International since 1972 and is a past Chair of the G02 Committee on Wear and Erosion. He is currently Chair of the G02.50 Friction Subcommittee.

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