

Road Business is a quarterly publication of the

Technology Transfer Center  
University of New Hampshire  
33 College Road  
Durham NH 03824  
603-862-2826  
800-423-0060 (NH)  
Fax: 603-862-2364  
t2.center@unh.edu  
http://www.t2.unh.edu

### UNH T<sup>2</sup> Center Staff

David H. Fluharty  
LTAP Director  
Charles H. Goodspeed  
TRCG Director  
Kathy DesRoches  
Assistant Director and  
Road Business Editor  
Daryle Lamoureux  
Program Assistant  
Alyssa K. Rezendes  
Project Assistant



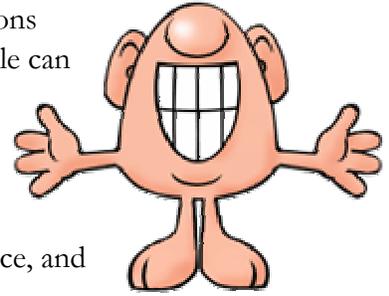
The Technology Transfer Center at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) is supported by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), and UNH. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations presented in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the FHWA, NHDOT, or UNH.

Any product mentioned in *Road Business* is for information only and should not be considered a product endorsement.



# Take the Fear Out of Giving Presentations

When surveyed, people fear giving presentations more than death. Speaking before a room of people can be intimidating. Then again, this fear pales to other disasters (such as death).



Speakers can ask themselves, “What’s the worse that can happen?” Presenters envision projection failure, laptop seizures, a crabby audience, and other embarrassing situations.

However, these seldom come true. To control fears, whether real or imagined, take stock and confront them head-on. Accept that there is no such thing as a perfect presentation.

Prepare by practicing and promising oneself to talk well. To begin, think about what the audience needs to understand.

## What If’s

To tackle the “what if’s,” imagine the greatest fear. For instance: the projector fails, the room is too hot or too cold, no one comes, speakers have too much or too little materials, or the audience decides they are boring.

While picturing these scenarios, consider how to handle each situation. List alternatives dealing with each situation to provide oneself peace of mind.

## Questions and Confidence

Do not fear the audience; plan to listen as well as talk. It is best when the speaker involves the audience from the start. Get them involved—they’ll enjoy the talk more. Find out what they know and don’t know. Learn why they are there. Discover their interests.

The way that presenters deal with questions indicates their confidence level. If the speaker begins by saying, “I’ll take questions at the end,” odds are that the presenter is scared and has no idea of what they are talking about. Or, have hours of material and they’ll never reach the end. Instead, begin by asking questions of the audience.

Finally, remember it’s nice when speakers project their voice to the back of the room, has exciting slides, and manages eye contact with the audience. After a few minutes, the audience takes this for granted and the message becomes important. Therefore, speakers must concentrate on their message, no matter what. Take a deep breathe and go for it. The audience will enjoy it more and so will you.

Source:  
*Presentations* February 2004, page 58