

IBA Conference Quality Working Group

Alternative Presentation Formats

A. Ideas for Discussions with Presenters

- Be clear on the specific objectives for each program (i.e. what the audience should know or be able to do after the program).
- Be clear on the level of audience to whom the program is targeted. If you hold a session for lawyers at a more advanced level, consider scheduling a prior introductory session for beginners.
- Ensure speakers understand that their role is not to lecture, but to (i) engage their audience, and (ii) facilitate discussion and questions.
- Hold regular pre-conference meetings to keep your faculty focused more on program outcome and delivery, and less on content.
- Power Point: Discourage speakers from reading power point. Power point can be effective if it shows in pictures or words what the presenter is trying to say. It can also be useful to set out a very basic agenda or if it sets out a short statutory provision that one is analyzing. It is most commonly used to repeat the speakers presentation in written form which is not useful and disliked by audiences.
- Titles - give your program a title that not only reflects the objective, but also markets the program (e.g. "M & A Agreements: How to Avoid Top Ten Liability Traps " rather than "Drafting M & A Agreements").
- Encourage speakers to "rehearse" in advance by themselves and plan to end well before the amount of time they have allocated to them. It always takes longer to do it on your feet than you think.

B. Alternative Presentation Formats

The following are a variety of different approaches to the standard lecture or panel format. Some are suitable for use during the whole program, some for only part of a program. Some are more suitable for larger or smaller groups. The list is intended as a menu of options from which to pick and choose or to adapt as you see fit.

Poster Sessions

The idea here is to create "market place" of ideas in a larger room.

How it works

- The room is set up with a number (say 6) different stations. Each station deals with one aspect of a particular topic and is located under a poster that identifies the topic and might have some basic information about the narrow topic at issue.

Part 1 (30 minutes max)

- Presenters will give a brief explanation (5-10 minutes) about their poster/issue.
- Presenters speak from their station, not from the front of the room.

Part 2: 45-60 minutes

- After these introductions, participants circulate in the room to various stations to interact with the presenter at that station. This prompts discussion with a group of individuals at each station.
- The presenter at each station has hand-outs offering more detail and background on his/her issue.

Part 3: (30 Minutes .)

- Presenters wrap up by making a short presentation on issues and ideas that arose during discussions in Part 2.

Timing can obviously be tweaked but the most important portion of the session is Part 2. This is what generates energy in the room and promotes interaction between participants. The goal is to allow attendees to focus on poster presentations they are particularly interested in, and avoid topics that they are not interested in. The flow of individuals around a room encourages networking possibilities

Demonstration

- model a skill
- After the demo, conduct a debrief (i) asking the audience for their comments, questions and experiences, and (ii) highlighting points you want to get across

Role Play

- Create a hypothetical fact scenario and ask the audience to pair up to practice a skill (e.g. negotiate a clause)
- If there is enough time, ask participants to switch roles. If you have enough participants, ask one to observe each pair and give feedback on the skill practice
- After the role play, conduct a debrief
- Could be used with or without a prior demonstration

The 6 Minute _____ lawyer

- The title is completed by filling in the blank with whatever type of issue/lawyer is pertinent. e.g. The 6 Minute M & A lawyer.
- The session would then have a series of speakers, each dealing with a different but narrow issue.
- Presenters are **strictly** limited to 6 minutes.
- After 5 minutes a sound goes off letting them they have 1 minute to wrap up. At 6 minutes a loud bell rings at which point the presenter must stop (even in mid-sentence).
- Forces presenters to get to the point quickly and narrow their scope

- Forces presenters to ensure they are providing their best points and preparing an excellent 5 minute presentation on a narrow issue rather than a mediocre 20 minute session which usually tries to cram too much into one session in any event.
- If people are less effective and can't complete what they want to say in 6 minutes, the abruptness of the ending is part of the fun and creates energy in the room.
- The constant change of people also creates interest and energy

Debate

- Almost any legal issue can be presented as a debate. Even the issue of how to draft a particular clause can be structured as a debate with one presenter vigorously advocating one approach and another advocating a different approach.
- Debate allows information to be drawn out in a more engaging format, the one sided nature of a presentation engages the audience in that they are constantly agreeing or disagreeing with points as they are presented.

Problem Resolution

- State a narrow, specific problem (a longer session could deal with several problems in succession)
- Set out the range of resolutions to the problem, analyse the advantages and disadvantages of each.
- Encourages presenters to be practical and concrete as opposed to having longer more theoretical discussions of points.
- Should be done with the audience suggesting other solutions and pointing out advantages and disadvantages of each

Interview

- Using this method, one or more people respond to questions from an interviewer.
- The interviewer can take a more adversarial approach pointing out the weaknesses, risks, flaws in the approach advocated by the interviewee.

Breakout Groups

- Have groups of no more than 8 discuss a narrow issue or problem.
- If participants are sitting at tables, that can be a group. Otherwise, you can ask them to create their own groups of no more than 8.
- Ask each group to appoint a scribe who will also be the spokesperson. Set a time limit for the breakout group discussion. Chairs/co-chairs can circulate around the groups to pick up on points that are being raised.
- At the end of the time, run a debrief asking each group spokesperson to report back to the entire group. To avoid repetition ask each group to report back on only one issue/raise only new points. Alternatively, at the outset ask each group to address different issues.

Round Tables

- This is perhaps a more organized form of the poster session.
- Can include multiple topic tables in a conference room.
- Each table is dedicated to the discussion of a particular issue under the guidance of a facilitator.
- Participants change tables at regular intervals to discuss different issues.

Group Brainstorm (5-7 minutes)

- Ask the audience to respond to an issue/solve a problem.
- The facilitator (or someone else) writes down all audience responses on a flip chart without judging the responses. At the same time, the facilitator relates his or her expertise/experience to the responses and periodically stops to review or expand on important points.

Workshops

- Learning-by-doing occupies most of the session, and any presentations are brief.
- Usually consist of four to five presentations of approximately 15 minutes each followed by at least 20 minutes of discussion. Total time of a workshop is generally 90 minutes.
- The focus should be How to.....
- E.g. how to negotiate with a nasty adversary... .

Thumbs-up/Thumbs-down

- Hand out "thumbs up"/ "thumbs down" signs to each participant
- After each question in a series of questions (e.g. is this evidence admissible or not?), encourage the audience to hold up "thumbs up" "thumbs down" sign

Video Vignettes

Use a video vignette to:

- set up a fact situation (instead of a written case study)
- model a particular skill (instead of a live demo)
- set up a dilemma for discussion and debate by the audience