

Roadmap for assembling a job talk and slides

General advice

- It will take you MANY MANY drafts before you have a talk ready to deliver
- Don't overload your slides with too much text. And no crazy PPT themes.

Flow of slides

1. Talk hook slide

- Something puzzling or interesting about what you study to grab the attention of the audience and hook them in.
- Graph of trend or illustrative photo work well
- Don't go overboard. Need to tell your audience what your research question will be so don't get bogged down in your opening teaser.

2. Research question slide

- Keep it simple but make sure your audience knows within the first 90 seconds what you are asking. (This is the Lee Sigelman rule of job talks.)

3. Brief overview of talk

- Road map for your talk is optional, but helpful, so that audience knows where you are headed.

4. Theory slides

- Start with conventional wisdom slide if appropriate
- Then show slide(s) with your alternative approach
- Scope conditions could go here

5. Data/methods

- Dependent variable -- makes sure audience knows what you are studying and roughly how it was measured

- Note any key independent variables. You can provide a little detail but then say you are happy to talk in detail in Q/A about measurement

- Rough sketch of your research design -- fine to note your estimator, don't go overboard on details

6. Caveats before showing results (optional)

--If there are big endogeneity concerns, you might flag them here. Or before data/methods. Point is that you want to anticipate objections from your audience BEFORE they discount your results because they think your key independent variable is endogenous

7. Results

--Some empirical results slides

--Graphs always better than tables; be sure to explain what's in the graph-- and don't assume everyone has quantitative skills to understand what you are showing

8. Conclusions

-- a couple of takeaways

9. Future research/questions (this would be optional)

--No "Thank you!" slide.

--Keep in mind that whatever your last slide is, your audience will be staring at it for a long time!

--Better for this to be a substantive slide (future questions or conclusions) than "thank you!"

10. Prepare back up slides with all the details that are NOT in your talk. If someone raises a question, you can pull up the slide.