Summary Notes from the Session:
What makes you better in communicating science?
CommOCEAN '24

Created by: Laura Secorun, from Meridian & Tiago Garcia, from +ATLANTIC CoLAB

ACCESSIBILITY

The first step is to make sure that the science you share can be easily understood by audiences of different backgrounds and expertise levels. This involves removing barriers to comprehension by using clear language, helpful visuals, and an easy-to-follow structure that avoids unnecessary jargon and complexity. Accessibility ensures that your key message can be grasped without requiring specialized knowledge or excessive cognitive effort.

- Incorporate clear visuals and aids like renderings, graphs or color coded visuals to help audience process complex information
- Break down technical information into digestible segments, moving from basic to more complex concepts
- Speak clearly, at a moderate pace (go slower if there are non-native speakers in the audience)
- Use straightforward language to explain technical terms and translation when needed (AI tools can help)
- Show real-world videos or images to demonstrate concepts rather than *just* describing them
- Use visual comparisons with everyday objects to explain complex technical concepts

RELEVANCE

This is the degree to which scientific insights connect meaningfully to an audience's existing knowledge, immediate concerns, and real-world context. Relevance bridges the gap between abstract concepts and practical significance by highlighting direct applications, addressing current issues, overcoming skepticism and demonstrating clear value to specific stakeholder groups. It answers the crucial question: "Why should I care about this?"

- Open by engaging the audience with a question to establish immediate connection
- Connect the research to multiple practical applications (these can be relevant to the audience's interests, professional background, personal pain points, geographic locations and cultural context)
- Highlight any environmental, social or financial implications to demonstrate actual or potential world impact
- Tie the research to current events and concerns (climate change, recent floods in Spain etc.)
- Use concrete examples of failure / negative to illustrate the problem of "not knowing enough"
- Emphasize cost-effectiveness or any "easy first steps" to make the solution seem more attainable
- Show social proof and examples similar audiences/organizations benefiting from this (or similar) research
- Use the terminology that is relevant to different audience segments (ESG for corporates, for example)
- Add geographically relevant data, whenever possible

MEMORABILITY

Last but not least, a great presentation should not need repeating. That's why we need to ensure the key aspects of the presentation cam be easily recalled after. Memorability is achieved through emotional engagement, simple mental models, vivid examples, and contrasting narratives that help anchor complex information in the audience's memory. It transforms scientific content from something that is merely
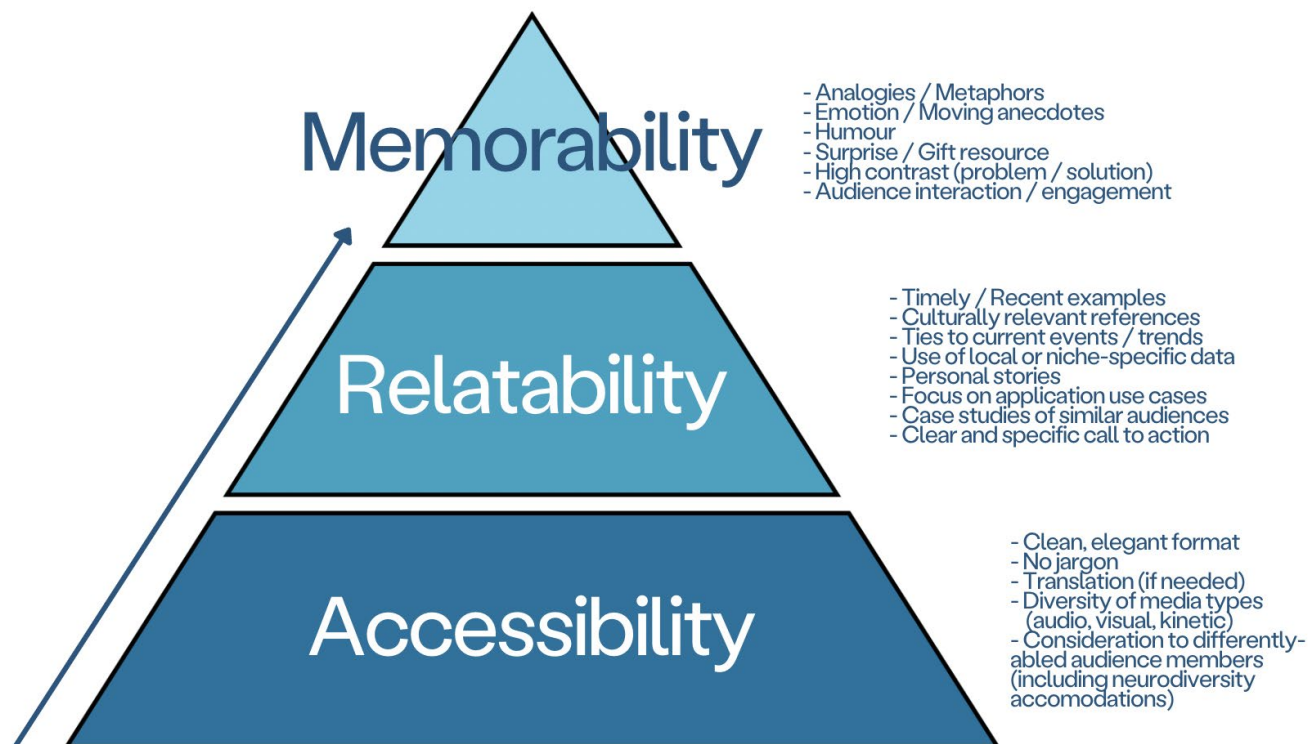
understood into something that resonates and stays with the audience over time. Ideally, something they will want to tell others about.

- Use a compelling narrative structure (presenting a problem, showing why it matters, revealing the solution)
- Incorporate emotional hooks through sports competition stories (like personal stories. They can be yours)
- Create suspense and audience participation (asking audience to think along with you, like a treasure hunt)
- Include personal touches (ie: "This is my favorite part!") to create genuine emotional connection
- Employ vivid or poetic metaphors ("giants of water" for big waves)
- Share a simple framework (ideally with no more than 3 main sections) that makes the information easier to follow and remember and categorize
- Leave audiences with a crystal clear idea of what action you'd like to them to take next and any resources they need to do so

And remember: Knowing your audience is the key. And think outside the box is the way!

Consider hypothetical scenarios - like what you would do with no financial constraints? Or iif you could work with artists? Then try to get more resources to match your vision or scale it down into version that you can actually deliver. (ie: "we should take them surfing" can turn into > we can make them stand up, close their eyes, and imagine a 10 meter wall of water rushing towards them)

Here's a graphic framework to help you remember and think through each section.

Memorability
- Analogies / Metaphors
- Emotion / Moving anecdotes
- Humour
- Surprise / Gift resource
- High contrast (problem / solution)
- Audience interaction / engagement

Relatability
- Timely / Recent examples
- Culturally relevant references
- Ties to current events / trends
- Use of local or niche-specific data
- Personal stories
- Focus on application use cases
- Case studies of similar audiences
- Clear and specific call to action

Accessibility
- Clean, elegant format
- No jargon
- Translation (if needed)
- Diversity of media types (audio, visual, kinetic)
- Consideration to differently-abled audience members (including neurodiversity accomodations)

Additional Resources: [Make your Powerpoint Accessible](#) / [Make your Talk Accessible](#) / [Universal Design](#)