

Lena Söderström 2019-04-10

Researchers' Grand Prix - why join?

As a researcher, you need to be able to communicate with the many different groups of people you meet during your career: financiers, entrepreneurs, school students, politicians, journalists and - not least - other researchers. Being able to explain your research in a simple and easy to understand way increases your chances of starting a dialogue with these different groups.

The goal is not to tell people everything about your research, but allow them to be curious enough about what you say to ask questions. Then a conversation will open up where you can build on your ideas with more complexity based on their interests. In this way you get more feedback on your research, you find new questions that you may not have thought of before. You are forced to think about what is at the core of your research which will lead to higher quality science in the future!

By signing up for Researchers' Grand Prix you get help and advice on how to produce a 4-minute presentation about your research and practice on stage.

How to make a presentation?

"It is good to showcase a variety of physical objects, such as different types of materials that I have been able to create with the help of my research. Then the audience sees how they really look and your research becomes more than just an idea."

Sunil Kumar Ramamoorthy - winner of the Researchers' Grand Prix 2015

You have to design the presentation on your own. You will get help and feedback from professional coaches - communicators, actors, rhetoric experts - but you are responsible for the material and must be able to stand behind it. Expect that it will take a long time to prepare the presentation. It often takes longer to prepare a brief talk than it does to produce an hour-long lecture.

The timing of the presentations in the competition will be strict and you need to practice to make sure that you can keep good time. Write a script (NB! write how you intend to speak!) and stick to it. This does not mean that you should read from it, but it will be much easier to change the presentation if you have full control of what you are saying. It is also good if you practice your presentation as much as possible in front of people who are not your research colleagues. Ask them to give feedback on your presentation. Then you get a good idea of how much they have understood.

There are many ways to design a good presentation. Some basic questions you can work from are:

- What is the most important thing that I want the audience to remember about my research?
- What problem does my research try to solve?
- Who is affected by my research?

Target group

As a member of the audience, you can imagine a high school student of approximately 17 years old. This usually means that you must come down to a level that most people in the audience will understand.

Content

When it comes to structuring the presentation, it is important to immediately capture the audience's attention. It is about finding something that everyone can relate to, a good question, a phrase that surprises the audience or a word that raises curiosity. Introductions such as "Have you thought of ...?", "Have you wondered why ...?" can cause people to take note. You should then start to talk about what your research is about *results, problems and questions*, and *methodology* (in roughly that order!)

Design

- Talk in the first person "I" perspective rather than "we" or "my group." The audience is interested in you and what YOU have done. Instead, you can say; "My colleagues and I".
- Drop the jargon! Often there are special terms that you use to describe what you are doing. These terms must be explained if they are necessary to understand your research.
- Feel free to use stories and anecdotes to put your research into context.

Performance

Dare to be personal! Do you have special talents, any special interest or a hobby that could be useful in the presentation? Can you use what you wear or a special attribute? The audience wants to see your personality shine through in the presentation.

Other things to think about

- Use images and text sparingly. Use high-quality photographs and illustrations to make associations rather than lots of pictures and text. Keep in mind that all images used must be copyright free.
- Feel free to test the presentation on colleagues from other research areas, friends and family to get feedback. In this way, it becomes clearer to you what works and not. The more you practice the presentation, the better it will be.
- Sometimes research can contain sensitive subjects and words. It is difficult to give general advice but avoid particularly charged terms.

For more information, films with tips and interviews with previous competitors:

<https://forskargrandprix.se/for-forskare/>

More links for inspiration

<http://urplay.se> , search for "forskar grand prix" to see last year's final presentations

<http://www.ted.com> , click on "most viewed".

<http://vimeo.com> ,

<http://youtube.com> , search for "forskar grand prix"

