

A Guide to Pechakucha Presentations

Adapted from: Pechkucha Nights and Beer: a Sober Guide to Better Presentations 3rd July 2007 Paul Baron (<http://www.sdarchitecture.org/pecha-kucha-night>)

From its home in Tokyo, Pecha Kucha Night has spread to more than 70 cities worldwide, where every month, people continue to present their creations and ideas in front of hundreds of peers, within the same minimal format with which Pecha Kucha started:

- 20 slides, 20 seconds each. That's 6 minutes and 40 seconds per presentation.
- Still images or video
- Any subject

Preparation:

Tell a story

- If you can tell it in a compelling way, you can tell it at PechaKucha.
- Don't just describe what's on the screen, reveal your thought process, your mistakes and your discoveries. The audience may just begin to care about you and your work.
- Make sure there is an over-arching narrative to pull the work together.

Take your time

Crafting a presentation takes time. Dumping 20 images into PowerPoint won't cut it. You must decide on your approach, gather material, work out your script, and adjust rhythm and pace, and all this takes time. Count on at least 6 hours of preparation spread over a few days.

Rehearsal

Completing the slides doesn't mean you are ready to present them. Even twenty seconds can feel endless for you and the audience if you don't know the material. Rehearse until you feel a rhythm taking over and the initial stiffness melt away.

- Recruit a test audience. A friend is good, a stranger is even better.
- Stand up.
- Pay attention to your body language and the tone of your voice. Do you look slouchy, stiff, bored?
- Try to imagine yourself in the audience. Would you enjoy the presentation? If not, trim, tweak, project, whatever it takes to get you excited about your own work.

Showtime:

The First Word

Without revealing too much, set a few expectations. Introduce yourself, where you come from, and what you will present. Quickly.

Talking

- Pechakucha means "chit-chat" in Japanese, so that means talk. Every presentation requires a different amount of narration, but don't stay silent: if people wanted to stare at a screen, they'd go to a movie. The audience are here for you.
- Speak up! If people were put to sleep by the previous presentation, it will wake them up. Besides, when was the last time you heard someone say "too loud! Speak softer" at a presentation?
- Speak into the microphone. If you move (which you should), hold the microphone and move it with your head. If you turn your head to show something on the screen and the microphone doesn't turn with you, people will not hear you anymore.

- Breathe. The audience needs pauses to digest your information, so snappy bursts are better than an endless stream. Use silence as your punctuation.
- Articulate, otherwise people won't understand what you're saying.
- Time your comments so you can follow the slides in a controlled manner. If you start feeling like you losing pace (i.e. the slides are switching before you've been able to say what you wanted to) stop yourself start with the next slide afresh.)

Body Language

- Talk to the audience, not your shoes, not the projector, not the wall, not your notes, not the front row.
- Smile
- Make eye contact
- Talk to everyone.

Endurance

20 seconds is short, but 6m 40s is a fairly long time. Aim to keep the same intensity for all 20 slides or people will be gazing out of the window half way through.

Finishing your Pechakucha (some ideas)

- Give thanks.
- Offer people a next step: Where can they see more? How can they find you?

When its over

- After it's finished don't hide.
- Scan the room to see how you've done.
- Someone may be trying to catch your attention.
- Someone may have an opportunity for you
- PechaKucha can start discussions and networking opportunities
- So don't be shy, show your work, make an impact, and let's keep the chit-chat alive.