

MAGI's Clinical Research Conference

Session Chair Guidelines

Thank you for serving as a Session Chair. We run a tight ship at MAGI meetings, so your role is very important.

Guidelines

- Print this page and bring it to the conference.
- Read the speaker guidelines at http://magiworld.org/Guidelines_Speakers.pdf.
- Arrive at the session room at least 10 minutes early.
- Make sure you have a watch and it is correct.
- Introduce yourself to the audiovisual technician.
- If necessary, help clear out speakers from the previous session.
- Verify that the speakers are present and introduce yourself to them. If they are late, contact the front desk or Norman Goldfarb at 1.650.465.0119. We have cell phone numbers for most of the speakers.
- Verify that their slides are ready to go.
- Introduce yourself to the audience in a non-promotional manner in about 30 seconds. Establish your credibility so you can lend it to the speakers. (See below.)
- Ask attendees to complete and return the feedback forms. We need those forms!
- Make other announcements, as appropriate.
- Introduce the speaker(s) and topic in about 90 seconds. Your objectives are to (a) establish their credibility and (b) explain why attendees should care about the topic. Do not recite the speaker(s)' biographies. Speaker bios are available from the session page on the conference website. (The conference website may not yet be open to speakers when you read this document.)
- It is not necessary to contact the speakers before the conference, but, if you want to, there is a link to speaker contact information on the session page on the conference website. To visit the session page, click on the session button on your main conference page. You can also use the online networking module.
- Sit in the front row directly in front of the podium.
- Monitor the room for problems, e.g., with the sound system or a shortage of chairs. If you can fix the problem, do so. Otherwise, let us know ASAP so we can try. Be assertive.
- The audience should hold their questions and comments until the end of 45-minute sessions. For longer sessions, help the speakers manage multi-part and rambling questions.
- Give the speakers a sign if, based on their progress through the slides, they appear to be falling behind schedule. If you do not make other arrangements, give them a 10-minute warning before their time is up. Discuss these communications with them in advance. There should be time signs (e.g. "10 MINUTES LEFT") on the podium or at the front row.

- If a speaker is talking too fast, ask him or her to speak more slowly. There should be a sign on the table that you can use to signal him or her.
- Help the speakers stop talking. If there are multiple speakers, it is very important to not allow the first speaker(s) to run over their time. Allow about 10-15 minutes for Q&A. One approach is to stand up and gradually approach the lectern. Tell the speaker(s) in advance that you will be strict about time.
- Assist the speakers with Q&A, e.g., carrying the microphone around. In general, do not let the audience ask questions without using a microphone. Prepare a question or two yourself, in case the audience doesn't have any. If one of the speakers is getting all the questions, ask the other speaker a question. If a question is not clear, you can try to paraphrase it. When appropriate, announce, "We have time for one more question."
- VERY IMPORTANT: Finish the session on schedule, even if it seems awkward. The only excuse for finishing late is if the speaker(s) started late for reasons out of his or her control. Even then, try to recover some of the time.
- If another session is starting in 15 minutes, help move the speaker(s) off the podium and out of the room.
- If you want to put something on your resume/CV, you can list your role as "Session Chair."

Example Introductory Remarks

Good morning, ladies and gentleman. Welcome to the session "Budget Negotiations: Have It Your Way." My name is Pat Smith. I am your session chair. Please remember to complete your feedback forms. Your life may depend on it. As a Partner at Dewey, Cheetham and Howe, I often find myself giving clients advice about study budgets in the larger context of clinical trial agreements. Gene Walker, Director of Budgets at Acme Pharmaceuticals, has personally negotiated over 18,000 budgets in the past 10 years. He will be telling us how budgeting really works. Gene?

Example Closing Remarks

Thank you, Gene. That was terrific. Gene will be available for questions outside the room and at the reception this evening in the bacchanalia room. I am also available for the rest of the conference if you have any questions for me about the legal aspects of this topic.