



A C A D E M Y O F  
*Management*

# Orientation for Leaders of Paper Sessions (Session Chairs and Discussants)

The Academy of Management

# Agenda

- Introduction
- Hallmarks of a Successful Session
- Overview of Roles
- Prepare in Advance
- Manage the Mechanics of the Session
- Manage Constructive Conversations

Additional References:

<https://aom.org/annualmeeting/participation/>

<https://aom.org/annualmeeting/presenterguide/>

# Hallmarks of a Successful Session

- What our sessions CAN do well:
  - Articulate interesting ideas.
  - Bring new issues forward for discussion and debate.
  - Connect people with each other.
- What our sessions CANNOT do well:
  - Present full papers thoroughly.
  - Assess results rigorously.
  - Discuss deep issues in depth.
- Remember: the papers are available online.
  - Sessions are more valuable when there is more discussion and less presentation.
  - Presentations should focus on the main ideas and perhaps raise just one question the author would like to stimulate discussion on.

# Overview of Roles

- Your role as a “session leader” may be formally defined as one of the following:
  - **Session Chair** (traditional or discussion paper session)
  - o **Discussant** (traditional or discussion paper session)
- Most paper sessions have a single “session leader” so your responsibilities as session leader include all the roles regardless of your formal role.
- If your session does have more than one session leader then typically the **Session Chair** acts like an emcee (introductions and time keeping) and the **Discussant** guides the content of the session.

# Overview of Roles

## ➤ Traditional Paper Session

- [Chair] Prepare in advance.
- [Chair] Manage the session (mechanics, technology, time).
- [Chair] Complement the **Discussant** (if there is one) else perform that role.
- [Discussant] Complement the **Chair** (if there is one) else perform that role.
- [Discussant] Prepare constructive feedback.
- [Discussant] Be flexible, supportive, and responsive in your facilitation in order to stimulate valuable and creative interaction among the session participants.
- [Discussant] Time and moderate the discussions.

# Overview of Roles

## ➤ Discussion Paper Session

- [Chair] Prepare in advance.
- [Chair] Manage the session (mechanics, technology, time).
- [Chair] Complement the **Discussant** (if there is one) else perform that role.
- [Discussant ] Complement the **Chair** (if there is one) else perform that role.
- [Discussant ] Assign each paper in your session to another presenter in that session.
- [Discussant ] Read all of the papers and prepare some constructive feedback for each paper.
- [Discussant ] Be flexible, supportive, and responsive in your facilitation in order to stimulate valuable and creative interaction among the session participants.
- [Discussant ] Time and moderate the discussions.

# Prepare in Advance

- Before you travel to the meeting:
  - Consult the online program for most updated session details (<https://program.aom.org/>).
  - Add your session(s) to your electronic customized program.
  - Contact the authors to confirm their attendance at the session.
  - Read the papers in your session.
    - Download from online program if available.
    - Contact the authors and ask for a copy of the papers.
  - Make a “3-minute warning” sign to use during the session.

# Prepare in Advance

- Ensure a laptop is available.
  - Remind presenters to bring their laptops.
  - Bring your own laptop to the session as backup.
- Sharing a laptop works best.
  - Coordinate with presenters to see who is willing to share.
  - Ask presenters to send slides in advance, or
  - Tell presenters to bring slides on a flash drive.
- If a second assigned session leader does not show for your session then you should fill that role.



# Prepare in Advance

## ➤ When you arrive:

- Check the Online Program and the Program Addendum for any updates/changes to your session. Check for withdrawn papers.
- Check with the registration staff to see if all of the presenters in your session(s) have arrived (optional).
- Locate the room where the session is held.
- Arrive 15 minutes before the start of the session. (Presenters were given the same instructions).

# Manage the Mechanics

## *Technology and Support*

### ➤ Standard audiovisual equipment:

- HDMI LCD Projector (1920x1080 resolution – will project both 4:3 & 16:9 format slides)
- Skirted Safelock Stand for Projector
- Projection Screen – Appropriate size for meeting space
- Power Cord and HDMI and VGA Cabling run from Podium to Projector
- Laptop Cable Adapters are available on a limited basis, so please bring your own MAC and PC adapters that will accommodate an HDMI or VGA cable connection to your laptop
- Podium Microphone (for rooms that seat more than 60 people)
- Computer Audio Patch (for rooms that seat more than 60 people)

### ➤ **Technical support:**

- A technician will flow from room to room prior to start of session to check for any problem and provide assistance.

# Manage the Mechanics

## *Right Before the Session Starts*

- Before You Start the Session:
  - Check that all of the presenters in the session have arrived. Double-check for withdrawn papers.
  - Confirm correct pronunciation of all presenters' names and affiliations.
  - Review the session format with the presenters and answer any questions they have.
  - Check that the technology is working properly.
  - Be sure you have a watch to keep track of the time.
  - If necessary, ask participants from the prior session to leave so you can begin on time.
  - Ask the audience to give you their attention.

# Manage the Mechanics

## *When the Session Starts*

### ➤ Introduce the Session:

- Announce the session title.
- Introduce yourself and the **Discussant** (if there is one).
- If a presenter is absent, inform the audience.
- Explain the session format (each session is 90 minutes):
  - **Traditional paper session:** approximately 10 minutes per presentation, brief Q&A after each presentation (3 minutes); **Discussant** comments and audience discussion at end.
  - **Discussion paper session:** 5-minute synopsis of papers, feedback from assigned participant, then active discussion.

# Manage the Mechanics

## *During the Session*

- Introduce the Presenters and Papers:
  - Announce the first paper and introduce the presenter and his/her affiliation.
  - Help the speaker with the lavalier microphone if there is one.
  - Remind the speaker that you will give a 3-minute warning.
  - Take a seat in front of the presenter so that you are easily visible.

# Manage the Time

## ➤ Be Fair and Be Effective:

- From the beginning, be strict about time. Start and end each paper on time.
- Use a watch or timer.
- Give the presenter a 3-minute “warning” signal by holding up a card.
- If necessary, stand up when the time limit is reached and state that it is time to begin the next paper.
- Remember that the audience wants you to ensure that *everyone* has equal time to present and discuss their work.

# Manage the Time

- Adjusting to a “No-Show” Presenter:
  - If possible, maintain the published schedule.
  - Serve the people already in the room by:
    - Holding an impromptu open discussion to fill time.
    - Encouraging the audience to share names and research interests.
  - Serve audience members who might arrive later. Do **not** move up the next scheduled presenter.

# Manage the Conversations

- Encourage and support discussion.
- Focus on making connections rather than offering critiques.
  - Prepare a few comments or questions of your own to get the conversation started (5 minutes).
  - Encourage questions. Ask questioners to self-identify.
  - If a question takes more than 30 seconds, ask the person to get to the point quickly.
  - If necessary, repeat the questions so everyone can hear.
  - Start conversations amongst the presenters.



# Conclude the Session

- Begin closing the session 2-3 minutes before the official end time.
- Solicit applause from the audience.
- Encourage further discussion to continue outside.
- Invite the audience to continue their conversation about the session online through a blog, online networks, or other areas.
- Invite the audience to Tweet about the session by using the conference hashtag or visiting the online program at <https://program.aom.org/> to use the “tweet” icon.
- Assist the next session chair / discussant in setting up if you feel you can be helpful.



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**THANK YOU!**

**Your service is much appreciated!**