

MONTHLY PROGRAM PRESENTER GUIDELINES

This compilation of monthly program presenter guidelines is not meant to be exhaustive, nor axiomatic, but is primarily designed to help you and your fellow presenters as you prepare for your scheduled program. These guidelines were based on hours of observation by in-house counsel who have attended these programs. Please note that these guidelines are subject to revision as deemed necessary.

1. **Be mindful of the audience.** ACCA-SoCal's membership is quite diverse, consisting of general counsel in a small law departments to staff attorneys in larger corporate legal departments. They come from a wide variety of companies and tend to be general corporate law practitioners rather than specialists in particular areas of law. Notwithstanding such differences, ACCA-SoCal members all share the need to keep up-to-date with legal developments affecting their companies. They need the information given to them in a clear and efficient manner that also allows them to immediately apply or make use of such information to benefit their respective companies. In-house counsel attend these programs primarily to learn enough about a certain subject to be able to spot the issues, provide sufficient advice to their client groups to resolve such issues, and to determine if they need help from outside counsel. Consequently, the presentation must be concise, yet complete; legally substantive, yet immediately accessible; long enough to cover the subject, yet short enough to be interesting.

2. **Comply with the presentation time limits.** In-house counsel are always short of time. Many of them often struggle to make the 2-hour-plus (including travel) time commitment needed to attend ACCA's monthly programs on a regular basis. Most of them have to leave at the exact time that the program is scheduled to end. Consequently, the presentation must be paced accordingly, especially if the presenters want time afterwards to meet with the various attendees.

3. **Focus on delivering two or three basic message points.** It is easy for a presenter to succumb to the temptation of giving an audience everything that he or she knows about a specific topic. Given the program's time constraints and the varying needs of the audience, such a temptation must be avoided at all costs. Consequently, you should provide enough information to make the presentation substantive and helpful, and yet leave enough material out to make the presentation interesting and tantalizing. Be prepared for questions in which the attendees are seeking very practical answers.

4. **Conduct the presentation as a corporate briefing rather than as a classroom lecture.** Although the audience may not be familiar with the area of law discussed, it does not necessarily follow that the audience will need a law school-style lecture to understand the topic. You should provide just enough background material to immediately address the key topic. Furthermore, the message must be conveyed within the context of the in-house counsel's role in his or her company.

5. **Avoid providing only case summaries and string citations in your oral presentation.** To the extent that case summaries or string citations are necessary by virtue of the presentation's subject matter, provide such case summaries and citations only in the handouts, not in the oral portion of the presentation. The oral portion is best used to highlight and discuss key concepts and legal points, rather than meander through cases and their minutiae. If certain attendees have very focused questions on specific cases, you may discuss the questions after the program or in a follow-up phone call.