

## Top 8 Tips for Orals Success

1. *Plan the menu – Select key personnel based on audience; It is important presenters are both respected and liked*
2. *Source great ingredients – Get the best people to develop the solution and deliver the presentation*
3. *Cook low and slow – Develop and iterate solutions early, focusing on storyboarding every slide and creating graphics*
4. *Marinate – Involve presenters in slide creation early for the most effective delivery*
5. *Skip the fancy garnish – Minimize executive roles; evaluators want to hear from the delivery team*
6. *Recipes are just a baseline – Develop bullets, not scripts, and allow presenters to use their own words for natural delivery*
7. *Heat up the grill – Build rehearsals into the schedule before finalizing slides*
8. *Do not leave the grill unattended – Leave cell phones at home or in your car; No exceptions*

## Summer Guide to Better BBQ and Orals

- 🐾 Focus on substance! Compelling content is (still) key and anchors winning presentations and deliveries
- 🐾 Approach orals like a written proposal – use graphics and narrative to tell your story and avoid the dreaded “wall of text” at all costs
- 🐾 Less is more with respect to number of slides and content – do not feel like you must put everything on the slide
- 🐾 Presentation skills matter – presenters should inspire trust, confidence, and deliver a clear message to evaluators
- 🐾 Begin practicing early! Brute force on a compressed timeline is not sustainable and does not yield positive results
- 🐾 Be prepared for anything – test problems for evaluators to observe how the team collaborates, Q&As, etc.

### Foil, Towel, Cooler

The orals proposal trend continues to sizzle, and is becoming the norm, not exception, for programs that are complex and/or support mission critical functions. It is imperative that contractors sharpen their orals skills. Treating orals as an afterthought by merely throwing together a PPT deck after the proposal team has packaged a thoughtful solution in the written volumes is just as tragic as drowning a beautifully 6hr slow-smoked brisket in a bottled BBQ sauce from 7-Eleven. Wolf Den’s *Think, Draw, Write* proposal development paradigm applies to orals, just as it does to traditional/written proposals. The best presentations, like their written counterparts, include graphics illustrating the approach on at least 75% of slides, enabling the presenter to focus on telling (not reading) the story, key takeaways, and themes.

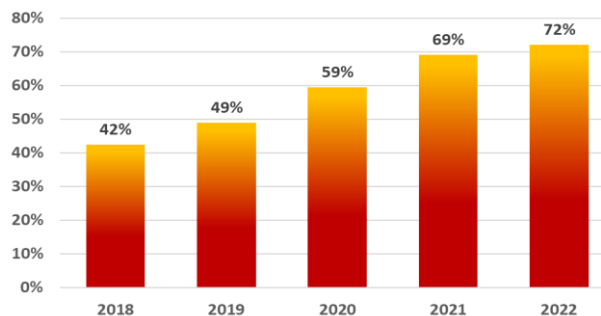
### Marinades, Rubs, and Mops

Similar to understanding the science behind cooking to achieve the best texture and flavor, it is important to consider the type of orals, such as technical challenges, scenarios, solution demonstrations, and pitches to pull off a win. Some of these are more formal than others, and some, like FEDSIM proposals, come with highly prescriptive requirements. Presentations can be delivered in any combination of live, in-person, virtual, or video-recorded methods, each with its own set of unique challenges and considerations. The latter two have become increasingly popular with the remote work trend. Regardless of the type or modality, contractors should accord the presentation, both slides and delivery, the same degree of review, scrutiny, and iteration as every other part of the proposal. It takes time to shape an excellent and compelling delivery, and there is no substitute for practice.

### Charcoal or Pellets

Understanding the nuances and challenges associated with the variations of remote delivery is necessary with the prevalence of this method. It is more difficult to take the temperature of the room, connect with the audience, and establish trust in a virtual setting, and impossible with a video recorded submission. With limited or absent view of the audience, the presenters lose the ability to stay motivated using the energy of the audience, let alone know if anyone is even listening or watching. The remote nature tends to create a false sense of security in preparation. Presenters can easily fall victim to taking orals less seriously than they should, reading scripts instead of connecting with the audience. Bidders must find ways to compensate for the lost advantages of the face-to-face interaction with evaluators.

### Wolf Den Proposals With an Orals Requirement



The federal government’s increasing use of orals has trickled down to Wolf Den as we see our customers seek additional guidance on strategy and execution.

### Competition vs Backyard BBQ

An orals presentation is far more than a high-pressure public speaking engagement. Selecting key personnel who understand program and solution and who “present well” are both critical to a successful delivery. The best leaders and smartest SMEs are often not the best presenters. Evaluators will size up the team based on their “performance,” observing their impressions of confidence, commitment to partnership, collaboration, leadership skills, and technical competence and understanding. Practice is a challenge with other work obligations, so Key Personnel must dedicate the time it deserves. Coaches should be methodical and disciplined, training presenters not just on how to look, but also what to say, how to say it, and when to engage with the audience. Successful bidders use orals coaches with the gravitas to effectively speak truth to power and put winning ahead of presenters’ feelings.