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AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Presentation Skills: Preparing for a Workshop

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Introduction

- What is a workshop?
 - Opportunity
- Why are workshops important?
 - Improve our research and teaching skills
 - Build (good) reputation
- What does a workshop day look like?
 - Norm: 75-90 minute presentation
 - Personal meetings with faculty and PhD students
 - Treat every workshop like an interview



Introduction

- Things to do
 - Before
 - During
 - After



Before a Workshop

- The obvious:
 - Know your workshop schedule
 - Know with whom you are meeting
 - Submit paper one week before workshop
 - Clean presentation slides
 - Professional attire
 - Better to be over-dressed than under-dressed!
 - Get over it: You will get lots of questions



Before the Workshop

- Perhaps the not-so-obvious:
 - Understand your audience's point of view
 - Tax vs. Non-Tax Audience
 - U.S. vs. International Audience
 - Front-End vs. Back-End focus
 - Theorists, Behavioralists, Archivalists?
 - **Helps frame why your paper is important**
 - Read and re-read your entire paper
 - Notice the central studies you cite: Read those too!
 - Be self-critical, make notes
 - What can vs. can't you say? Assumptions?



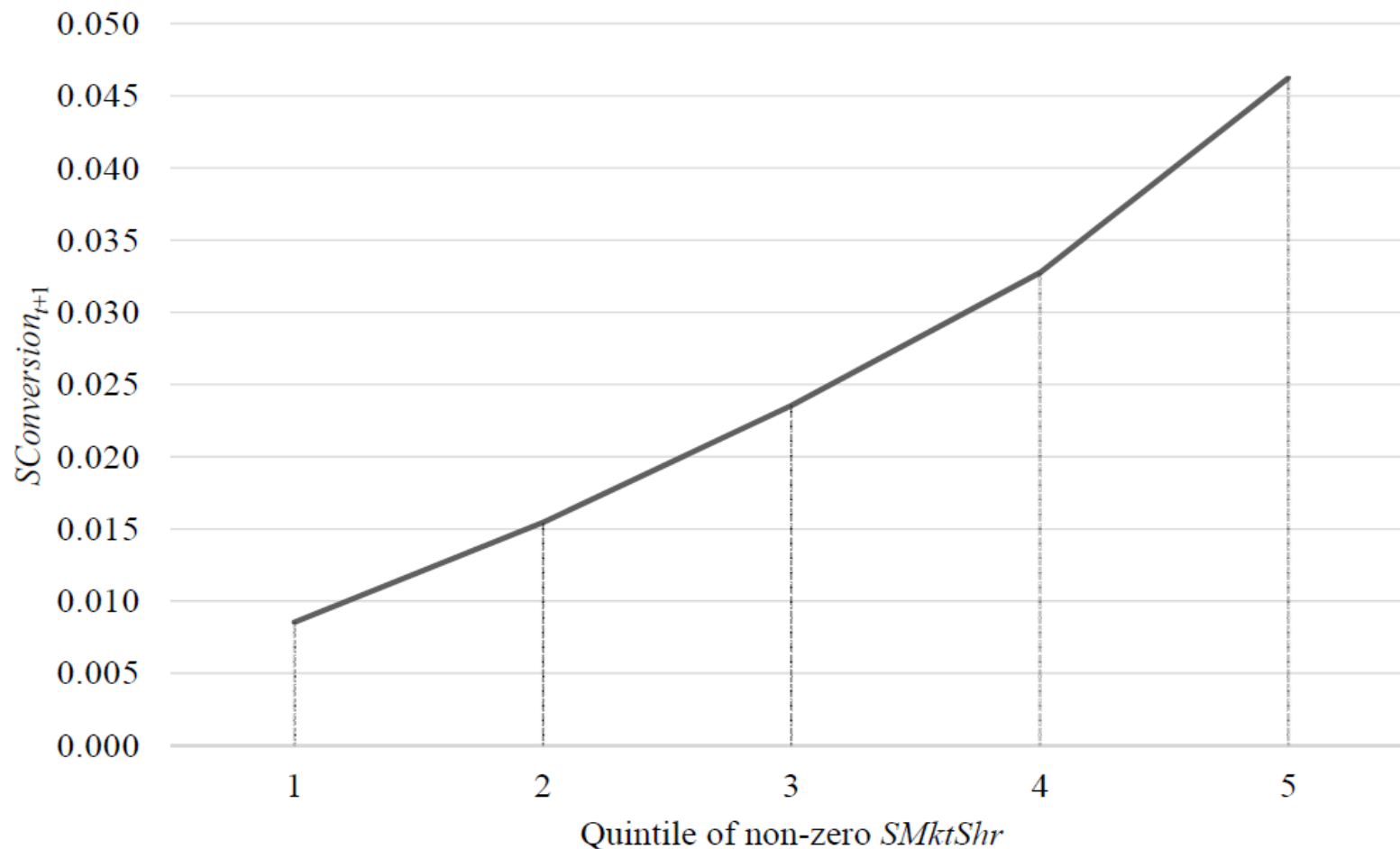
Before the Workshop

- Perhaps the not-so-obvious:
 - Generate a prep sheet with expected Q&A
 - Share with co-authors
 - Use pictures where you can
 - Cartoons
 - Simple graph of results



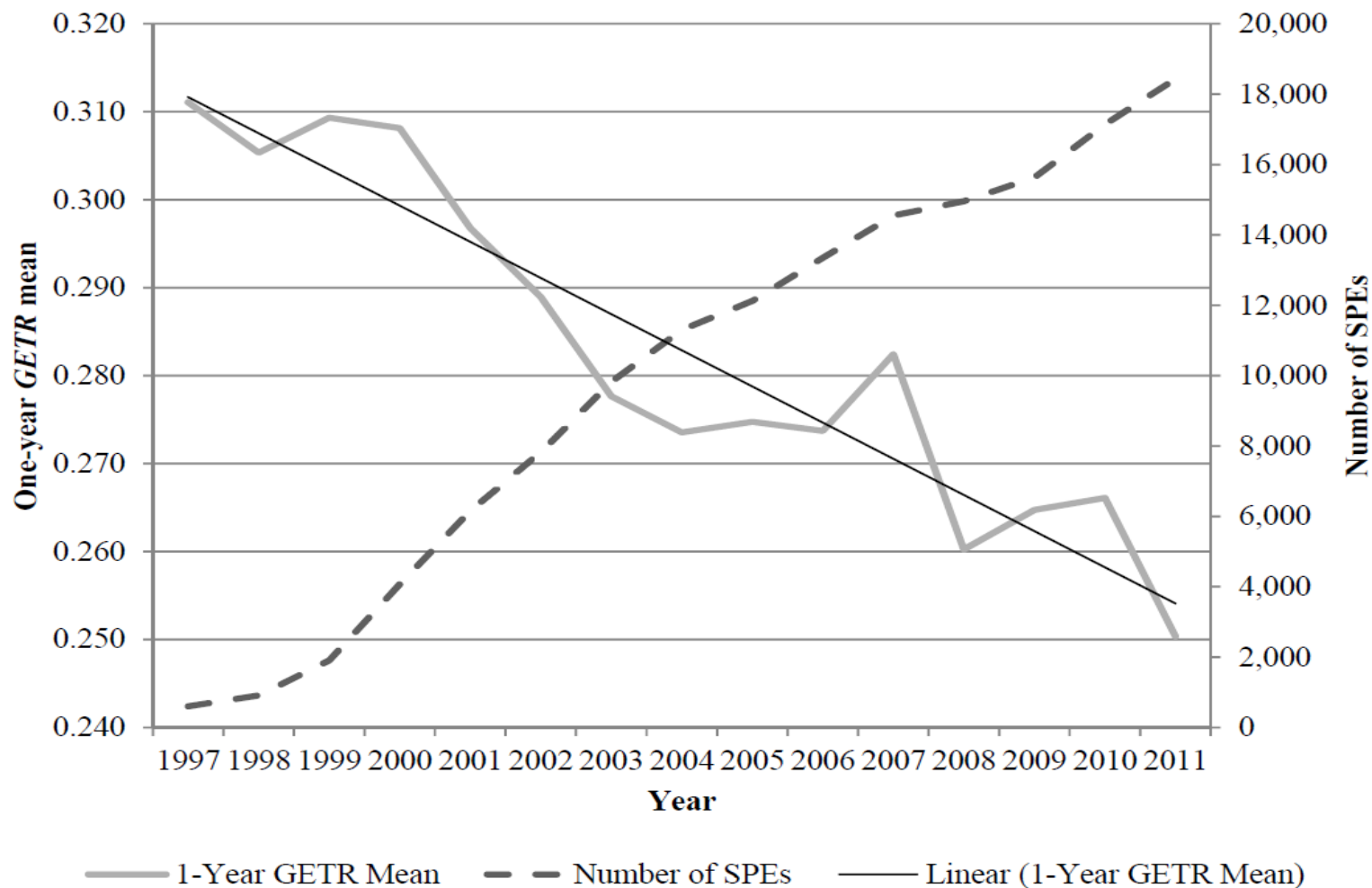
Before the Workshop

Future S corporation conversion rates by current S corporation markets



Before the Workshop

Time Trends in SPEs and One-Year *GETR*



Before the Workshop

- Perhaps the not-so-obvious:
 - Generate a prep sheet with expected Q&A
 - Share with co-authors
 - Use pictures where you can
 - Cartoons
 - Simple graph of results
 - Anecdotes might help animate paper
 - Talk to practitioners, policy makers
 - Beware pitfalls: cherry-picking, generalizability?
 - Ask someone to take notes for you
 - But take some of your own notes too (quality control)



During the Workshop

- Thank the host and audience
- Realize that not everyone likes reading tax papers
 - Heterogeneity in questions
- Maintain control over pace and focus
 - Provide responsive, but not belabored answers
 - Filibusters become obvious
 - Can focus audience on improving squishy areas
- Be respectful, but push back where needed
 - You are the expert on your paper
 - Don't take criticism of paper personally



During the Workshop

- Handling difficult questions (and people)
 - OK to say “I don’t know” or “I’ll need to check”
 - Or “I’ll get to that in n slides” (s.t. $n \neq \infty$)
 - Work through the question after the workshop
 - Ask the question back or ask for clarification
 - Think of what your expectations might be; think through the logic behind the question
 - How economically pervasive is the person’s concern?
 - Does the person’s concern actually help you
 - Build tension?
 - Because it works against you finding results?



During the Workshop

- Handling difficult questions (and people)
 - Maintain your composure!



During the Workshop

- Results slides:
 - If I could only pick one table to present, which one should I present?
 - Don't paste the entire table: ocular assault!
 - Highlight relevant result / main coefficient(s)
 - Provide economic interpretation
- For rookies:
 - Insert last slide called “Future Research”
- At conclusion, thank audience again!



After the Workshop

- So many comments...

- Co-authors will help you wade through them.



After the Workshop

- Revise paper appropriately
 - Do not feel compelled to address every comment
 - If you do not implement a suggestion, be comfortable articulating to yourself why not
 - Multiple workshops help identify what is important and what is not
 - Remember to thank the institution in your paper
- Update your slides and Q&A sheet for next time
- Lather, Rinse, Repeat!



Conclusion

- Workshops are so valuable!
- Take them seriously, but have fun too.
- Opportunity to build your reputation as a scholar *and* as an affable colleague.



Good Luck!
(and Thank You!)

