

PRESENTING WITH POWER

How to Plan and Prepare
Awesome Presentations

80 TOP EXPERTS SHARE THEIR SECRETS

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FOREWORD

At ClearSlide, our vision is to power valuable, genuine business conversations for our customers. We want to blend technology with natural human interactions so that sales professionals and customers can connect more seamlessly and have the best possible experience.

Most companies constantly seek ways to increase the productivity and impact of their sales team. Given the cost investment in people, if your company can increase its sales team's productivity and effectiveness by any meaningful percentage, that increase can have dramatic impact on your business. That's what ClearSlide does. ClearSlide is a sales engagement platform that accelerates revenue performance.

To make the best use of a service like ClearSlide, sellers need to know how to pitch with impact. This e book is about the softer skills—the art of presenting your content with confidence, conviction, and influence.

Regardless of whether you're in sales, we think you'll find the advice in this e book powerful and game changing in your every day life as you communicate and connect with others.



Al Lieb,
CEO of ClearSlide

Open clearslide. Close More Deals.

RING IN MORE SALES

ClearSlide is the **leading sales engagement platform** that transforms the way salespeople engage customers—on the phone, through email or in person, from any device.

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *PREPARATION*



**ANDREA
WALTZ**

“The key—and it’s my secret to ensuring an awesome presentation—is the passion I have for my topic.”



**DUSTIN
MATHEWS**

“Start by asking, “What do I want my audience to do? Buy my book? Sign up for a strategy session? Visit my website?” Now, everything in your presentation should further them taking that action. EVERYTHING.”



**ANNE
WARFIELD**

“Details are exit ramps out of the conversation, so make sure all details are necessary.”



**ED
BRODOW**

“The key to a successful speech is storytelling. The key to storytelling is not to memorize the words but the *experience*.”



**BRONWYN
RITCHIE**

“Simplify all of your ideas to support one focused message. ‘This is my gift to you.’”



**GARY
GUWE**

“Asking questions and responding to them is a great way to establish a closer connection with your audience.”



**CHIP
EICHELBERGER**

“Do not leave it up to the tech team to create energy in the room for you.”



**GEORGE
TOROK**

“Use rhetorical questions in your presentation to better engage your audience.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *PREPARATION*



**JANE
ATKINSON**

“The bottom line for preparing is to make your presentation about them—the audience—not yourself.”



**JIM
ANDERSON**

“It feels strange to be standing in your bathroom speaking to yourself in a mirror, but that’s nothing like how your real speech is going to feel. I’ve learned to solve this problem by cutting pictures of people out of newspapers and magazines, and then taping them to my bathroom mirror.”



**JEREMEY
DONOVAN**

“Many of the most satisfying presentations recommend that listeners take tiny actions that can lead to large personal and societal benefits.”



**MITCH
JOEL**

“Most presentations suck because the presenter didn’t put in the work. Trust me, as much as you may like U2, you do not want to be there when they first try out a song together for the first time.”



**GINI
DIETRICH**

“If I can get the audience to laugh within the first five minutes, I know I’ll be fine.”



**RICH
WATTS**

“Whether you’re inspiring, informing, entertaining, or persuading, if you understand what your audience wants to hear and build your presentation around their needs, you are guaranteed to deliver an awesome presentation.”



**IAN
BRODIE**

“So, if you’re looking to make your presentations interesting, do something interesting and talk about that.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *DELIVERY*



**ALESSANDRA
CIMATTI**

“You get more attention and engagement from your audience when you use people’s first names.”



**ANASTASIA
PRYANIKOVA**

“Visuals make your story multisensory. Whenever you set the scene, think about the sights, sounds, smells, and textures they can evoke.”



**ALEX
CEQUEA**

“I always try to get to know my audience beforehand. I’ll walk around, introduce myself, talk to them for a bit, and thank them for coming in.”



**ANGELA
DEFINIS**

“Fire is contagious and captivating. When your audience experiences your energy, they’ll naturally be engaged and eager to listen, and most important, they’ll act on your message.”



**ALEX
RISTER**

“Endicott says that presentations are a three-legged stool, and we must give equal merit and preparation time to our content, delivery, and visuals. If you put the time into making sure your presentation stool is balanced, your presentation will truly resonate.”



**ANTHONY
IANNARINO**

“Your audience wants to hear stories—namely, your story.”



**ALEXEI
KAPTEREV**

“A presentation should describe a problem-solving process—otherwise, why bother?”



**ARDATH
ALBEE**

“I decide what I want my audience to take away from my presentation upfront and focus on building a story around that.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *DELIVERY*



**BEN
DECKER**

“Commit to the details. Describe. Be involved with your story.”



**DAN
MCDADE**

“Don’t tell someone how to do something. Make them want to do it, and they will find 10 ways to do it that you would have never thought of.”



**CHARLES H.
GREEN**

“You go up to the center of the stage and stand there, stock still, not moving a muscle or saying a word, until the entire room hushes, wondering if you’ve gone catatonic. Wait one instant longer, then throw your arm out and say your line.”



**DAN
WALDSCHMIDT**

“The first words of any presentation have to be the beginning of a suspenseful story.”



**COLLEEN
FRANCIS**

“Make sure that these stories are as specific—and as relevant to your customer’s situation—as possible.”



**DAVE
KURLAN**

“Always start with a quick story that the audience can relate to.”



**CONOR
NEILL**

“What do they need to know (logos), believe about me (ethos), and feel (pathos) to take this action?”



**DAVE
PARADI**

“If you don’t get the audience to see why your message is relevant to their life or situation, they will pull out their smartphone, tablet, or laptop and find something more interesting.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *DELIVERY*



**DAVE
STEIN**

“One of the cornerstones of an unforgettable live presentation is the ‘signature story’.”



**GARR
REYNOLDS**

“In storytelling, the key is to make sure your message is about the audience, not about yourself. This may seem counter intuitive when you are telling your own story, when you are talking about your own life, but it’s actually not so hard.”



**DAVID
MEERMAN SCOTT**

“True professionals work the entire stage like a rock star.”



**GARY
GENARD**

“Frame your topic in terms of the audience’s need, and tell them where you’ll be going together.”



**DEBORAH
SHAMES
DAVID BOOTH**

“Presenting with a partner doubles your chances of succeeding. With solid execution, passing the baton appears seamless, as if the presenters have worked together for years.”



**JANICE
TOMICH**

“When we get to a place where we trust ourselves and speak from the heart, we then can connect.”



**ELLEN
FINKELSTEIN**

“Usually, I start by explaining—and showing—basic principles and some of the research behind them. Then, I provide examples.”



**JOEY
ASHER**

“Here’s a secret for great presenting. Consider what you’d like if you were in the audience, then give the audience that.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *DELIVERY*



**JOHN
ZIMMER**

“We each have our own personality and our own way of speaking. Some are flamboyant; some are professorial; some incorporate lots of humor; some are soft spoken. The list goes on. The important thing is not to try to be someone you’re not.”



**PAUL J.
RADICH**

“Solve a problem. Tell a story. Use slide layouts that reinforce the main message of each slide.”



KEENAN

“A presentation is a product, and the audience’s attention is the currency.”



**TERRY
GAULT**

“Feedback is an adventure of discovery into yourself.”



**LISA B.
MARSHALL**

“Create natural breaks by asking the audience to join in.”



**TROY
CHOLLAR**

“Provide multiple presentation options should things go wrong—presentation file, your computer, and a PDF version.”



**MATT
HEINZ**

“Tell a story first.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *PARTICIPATION*



**GAVIN
MEIKLE**

“The secret to effective audience interaction is to believe that your audience will do what you ask.”



**LISA
BRAITHWAITE**

“When the audience gets excited enough during your presentation to start talking to each other, it means you’ve got a hot topic.”



**GEETESH
BAJAJ**

“You may hear all sorts of advice about how you can become a successful presenter, but it all starts with honesty.”



**LORI
RICHARDSON**

“Lead with an interesting point, question, or statement that has a good chance of catching the audience’s attention.”



**JILL
KONRATH**

“If you can’t quickly capture their attention, they write you off as irrelevant.”



**MARK
HUNTER**

“When it comes to engaging your audience, you have to share stories that vividly back up your points, or your audience will most certainly forget your points.”



**KEN
THORESON**

“Allowing the audience to connect the dots of my program with a related physical activity keeps everyone stimulated.”



**MATT
EVENTOFF**

“Participation typically begets participation.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *PARTICIPATION*



**MAX
ATKINSON**

“If you say something that gets an audience wondering or anticipating what’s coming next, their attentiveness and involvement will increase.”



**STEPHEN
SHAPIRO**

“People remember concepts through emotion and experience. Telling people what to do has little impact on behaviors.”



**NICK
MORGAN**

“The secret to making even a speech feel interactive is to wait. Let the audience have time to respond, even if they don’t do it out loud.”



**VICKI
HITZGES**

“Laughter is contagious. If people sit too far apart, it doesn’t ‘contage.’”



**RIC
BRETSCHNEIDER**

“A great presenter arrives early and leaves late.”



**VIVEK
SINGH**

“No information should be given without making the audience feel the need for it.”



**SIMON
RAYBOULD**

“Consider replacing your single 20-minute presentation with four five-minute presentations, segued together.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *TAKE ACTION*



**GAVIN
MCMAHON**

“No matter how rational we like to think we are, we take action based on deeper triggers, and then rationalize the decision afterward.”



**JONATHAN
FARRINGTON**

“Of the three key elements in any presentation—the audience, the content, and the presenter—the presenter is the least important.”



**GUY
KAWASAKI**

“The goal is to make the adoption of your product or service as safe and easy as possible.”



**KELLEY
ROBERTSON**

“I include a Blueprint for Success plan in most of my sales training workshops because it gives people structure and focus.”



**JEREMEY
DONOVAN**

“If there is a secret to “getting” people to take action as a result of your presentation, it’s that you shouldn’t try to “get” them to do anything.”



**MARSH
MAKSTEIN**

“In most cases, the single biggest challenge in developing PowerPoint presentations is that there’s never enough time.”



**JOBY
BLUME**

“When people understand that they have a problem, you have a receptive audience.”



**MICHELLE
MAZUR**

“The audience should be a co-conspirator in your presentation.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *TAKE ACTION*



**MIKE
SCHULTZ**

“The best presenters use the power of story to mesmerize.”



**SIMON
MORTON**

“Presentations fail because they are delivered with the blind assumption that people know what to do with the information afterwards.”



**NEAL
FORD**

“The secret? Connecting with you as a person rather than a speaker.”



**SIMS
WYETH**

“One of the first questions we should ask ourselves when preparing a high-stakes presentation is, ‘Who should deliver it?’”



**NOLAN
HAIMS**

“To get people to take action, you have to give them small victories to achieve immediately.”



**TIBOR
SHANTO**

“People retain more when they write things down and even more when they act on it.”



**SHARÍ
ALEXANDER**

“Get a commitment and follow up.”



**TONY
ALESSANDRA**

“A little mild self-deprecation can go a long way toward making your audience feel at ease with you.”

MEET THE EXPERTS ON PRESENTATIONS: *TAKE ACTION*



**TRISH
BERTUZZI**

“Measurement is a part of what managers do, but it isn’t the why. The why is about people.”



**TUDOR
GIRBA**

“We crave concreteness. We want to sense. Our imagination thrives on examples. Tap that opportunity.”



**WENDY
WEISS**

“The rule in a cold call or a cold e-mail is that you must be clear.”



PART 1: HOW TO GIVE A GREAT PRESENTATION (SERIOUSLY)

HOW TO GIVE A GREAT PRESENTATION (SERIOUSLY)



MITCH JOEL

President of Twist Image

Mitch Joel is President of Twist Image – one of the largest independent Digital Marketing agencies in North America (although he prefers the title Media Hacker). Back in 2006 he was named one of the most influential authorities on blog marketing in the world. He has been called a marketing and communications visionary, interactive expert and community leader. He is also a blogger, podcaster, passionate entrepreneur and speaker who connects with people worldwide by sharing his marketing and innovation insights on the state of business.



Twitter



Website

You're doing it wrong.

People hate it when someone says, “*you’re doing it wrong,*” but trust me... you’re doing it wrong when it comes to how you prepare for a public speech. I’m sure this will upset many people, but let’s walk through the typical scenario of how someone is asked to speak and what happens next:

- **Step 1:** someone gets asked to present on a specific topic.
- **Step 2:** the presenter agrees to present.
- **Step 3:** the presenter puts it in the back of their mind that they must prepare for this event, but because speaking in public is so nerve-wracking, they put it off for the last possible moment.
- **Step 4:** in the week leading up to the presentation, the speaker starts writing down notes and building a PowerPoint deck. It could be more severe than this. Sometimes they write up the speech that they are going to read to the audience (please don’t do this).
- **Step 5:** a day or two (but mostly likely, the night before), the speaker runs through the slides and (if they’re really keeners) will practice it formally in front of a mirror a few times.
- **Step 6:** they deliver their presentation to an unsuspecting crowd.

Sound familiar?



HOW TO GIVE A GREAT PRESENTATION (SERIOUSLY)



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Twitter



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This is, without question, the worst way to ever give a public presentation, and yet this is how the vast majority do it. Why? Because the first time that the speaker is ever going to give this presentation will be the most important time and - possibly - the last time as well. Ultimately, you are taking this material for a test drive when, in fact, that audience is the grand prix. When you are asked to present, the material should already have been road tested, tweaked and perfected (as much as possible). It sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? Well, that's the point. Most presentations suck because the presenter didn't put in the work. Trust me, as much as you may like U2, you do not want to be there when they first try out a song together for the first time. It takes a lot of work to get that song to the point when it is ready for an album or live show.

This is how to really prepare for a public speech.

Setting the Stage for Success



Someone gets asked to present on a specific topic.

- ✓ Don't agree to speak unless you have enough time to prepare and test the content out live in front of a few real audiences (this can be a simple lunch and learn at your office, joining your local Toastmasters or asking some friends to endure it over some beer and pizza).
- ✓ Don't agree to the topic that is being requested. Let the people who are asking know that you will get back to them in 48 hours with some thoughts on what the topic should be.
- ✓ Spend the next day thinking about what you would like to present and how it will come together. Jot down some simple notes and top line thoughts on the subject.
- ✓ Get confirmation and finalize the speaking topic – to your satisfaction – with the event organizers.

MORE THOUGHTS ON SETTING THE STAGE FOR SUCCESS:

“The key—and it’s my secret to ensuring an awesome presentation — is the passion I have for my topic.”



ANDREA WALTZ

“When people understand that they have a problem, you have a receptive audience.”



JOBY BLUME

“Your audience wants to hear stories—namely, your story.”



ANTHONY IANNARINO

“Of the three key elements in any presentation—the audience, the content, and the presenter—the presenter is the least important.”



JONATHAN FARRINGTON

“The goal is to make the adoption of your product or service as safe and easy as possible.”



GUY KAWASAKI

“One of the first questions we should ask ourselves when preparing a high-stakes presentation is, “Who should deliver it?”



SIMS WYETH

Build a Plan to Ensure Success



Work backwards from the date of the event, and make sure to include every step.

Your plan needs to include:

- ✓ Time to prepare your content.
- ✓ Rehearsal time.
- ✓ Time to present and get feedback from colleagues.
- ✓ The event date.

“In most cases, the single biggest challenge in developing PowerPoint presentations is that there’s never enough time.”



MARSH MAKSTEIN



Your First Draft



Craft your outline and start building your presentation.

- ✓ Build an outline for your presentation. If you have never done this before, check out the work of [Nancy Duarte](#), [Nick Morgan](#) and [Garr Reynolds](#). All three of these presentation masters have tons of free content on how to structure a solid presentation.
- ✓ Build your presentation. Have no more than three areas of focus.

MORE THOUGHTS ON YOUR FIRST DRAFT:

“Visuals make your story multisensory. Whenever you set the scene, think about the sights, sounds, smells, and textures they can evoke.”



ANASTASIA PRYANIKOVA

“If you say something that gets an audience wondering or anticipating what’s coming next, their attentiveness and involvement will increase.”



MAX ATKINSON

“Details are exit ramps out of the conversation, so make sure all details are necessary.”



ANNE WARFIELD

“I decide what I want my audience to take away from my presentation upfront and focus on building a story around that.”



ARDATH ALBEE

“A presentation should describe a problem-solving process— otherwise, why bother?”



ALEXEI KAPTEREV

“If you don’t get the audience to see why your message is relevant to their life or situation, they will pull out their smartphone, tablet, or laptop and find something more interesting.”



DAVE PARADI

“Lead with an interesting point, question, or statement that has a good chance of catching the audience’s attention.”



LORI RICHARDSON

“No matter how rational we like to think we are, we take action based on deeper triggers, and then rationalize the decision afterward.”



GAVIN MCMAHON

Getting Feedback and Practicing



If you don't think that your presentation skills are up to snuff, please enlist some help. Again, Toastmasters is great, a local presentation skills coach or even a local stand-up comedian can best help you massage the content and build proper presentation skills. You will be amazed at what you can learn in just a couple of hours.

- ✓ Rehearse on your own.
 - ✓ Rehearse in front of the smaller audiences.
 - ✓ Ask them for candid feedback.
 - ✓ Integrate the feedback that makes sense.
 - ✓ Rehearse in front of another smaller audience.
 - ✓ Ask them for candid feedback.
 - ✓ Integrate the feedback that makes sense.
 - ✓ Ask one of your presentation coaches for their feedback once you have integrated everything from all of your test-run speeches.
- ✓ Integrate your coach's feedback.
 - ✓ Practice some more on your own, and watch speakers that you would consider to be great (YouTube is amazing for this). Think about what they're doing that wins you over. Try to integrate those lessons into your own presentations.
 - ✓ Step away from the content for a few days.
 - ✓ Step back in and keep practicing.

MORE THOUGHTS ON GETTING FEEDBACK AND PRACTICING:

"Consider replacing your single 20-minute presentation with four five-minute presentations, segued together."



SIMON RAYBOULD

"No information should be given without making the audience feel the need for it."



VIVEK SINGH

"Feedback is an adventure of discovery into yourself."



TERRY GAULT

Delivering Your Presentation



Present at the event... and knock 'em alive!

People are in the audience for two (main reasons):

1. To learn.
2. To be entertained while learning.

MORE THOUGHTS ON DELIVERING YOUR PRESENTATION:

“Create natural breaks by asking the audience to join in.”



LISA B. MARSHALL

“The secret to effective audience interaction is to believe that your audience will do what you ask.”



GAVIN MEIKLE

Laughter is contagious. If people sit too far apart, it doesn't “contage.”



VICKI HITZGES

“True professionals work the entire stage like a rock star.”



DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT

“I always try to get to know my audience beforehand. I'll walk around, introduce myself, talk to them for a bit, and thank them for coming in.”



ALEX CEQUEA

“Asking questions and responding to them is a great way to establish a closer connection with your audience.”



GARY GUWE

“Participation typically begets participation.”



MATT EVENTOFF

“The secret to making even a speech feel interactive is to wait. Let the audience have time to respond, even if they don't do it out loud.”



NICK MORGAN

“Fire is contagious and captivating. When your audience experiences your energy, they'll naturally be engaged and eager to listen, and most important, they'll act on your message.”



ANGELA DEFINIS

“You go up to the center of the stage and stand there, stock still, not moving a muscle or saying a word, until the entire room hushes, wondering if you've gone catatonic. Wait one instant longer, then throw your arm out and say your line.”



CHARLES H. GREEN

“We each have our own personality and our own way of speaking. Some are flamboyant; some are professorial; some incorporate lots of humor; some are soft spoken. The list goes on. The important thing is not to try to be someone you're not.”



JOHN ZIMMER

HOW TO GIVE A GREAT PRESENTATION (SERIOUSLY)



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Twitter



Website

Sounds like a lot of hard work, doesn't it?

It is. Great public speakers make it look easy. While it feels like they're presenting the content for the very first time, most of them have practiced, nurtured, tweaked and road-tested their material. They look comfortable because they are comfortable and familiar with the content.

Sadly, most presenters are so unprepared that their only goal is to either get to the end of their slides in their allotted time or read their pre-written speech from the podium without wetting their pants. What most presenters fail to realize is that nobody cares about you getting to the end of your slides or if you survived reading a document in public.

No matter how serious the event is, people don't want to be sitting all day and be bored listening to people reading from slides or reading from their printed out Word document.

So, the next time you're asked to present, don't just say "yes", unless you're willing to commit the serious time, effort and energy to do it right.

Why? Because if you don't take it seriously, you're just perpetuating a world where all of us have to endure another slew of painful meetings and presentations.

Who wants that?

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LOVE YOUR TOPIC, CHANGE PEOPLE'S MINDS



**ANDREA
WALTZ**

Author

Andrea Waltz is the coauthor of *Go for No! Yes Is the Destination, No Is How You Get There*. With her husband and business partner Richard Fenton, she seeks to liberate people from fear of failure, sharing a new mindset about hearing the word *no*. Her philosophy has been embraced by people in many industries with amazing results. Andrea's book hit #1 on Amazon's "Selling" list and has remained in the "Sales" top 20 for the past three years.



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started off being absolutely terrified to speak. By 7th grade, after a disastrous "oral report" on the dangers of smoking, I committed myself to doing whatever it took never to speak in front of any group ever again. Fast-forward to today, and I've now spoken in front of audiences of thousands. So, what changed?

The key—and it's my secret to ensuring an awesome presentation—is the passion I have for my topic. Apparently, I wasn't too excited about the dangers of smoking. But today, teaching people our strategies for overcoming fear of failure and rejection, there is nothing I'd rather talk about. I can talk about it for hours. I'm wildly in love with and passionate about changing the way people think in these areas.

So, when I prepare for a presentation, I think about the stories, examples, and passion I need to bring out to change people's thinking. Because my husband and I speak together, we make sure we tell stories of our failures and fears of rejection so that people see we are just like them. We don't speak from "on high," and we needed our message as much as the audience does now!

"The key . . . is the passion I have for my topic."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **BE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR TOPIC.**
- 2 **THINK ABOUT THE STORIES AND EXAMPLES THAT CAN CHANGE PEOPLE'S THINKING.**
- 3 **DON'T SPEAK FROM "ON HIGH."**

MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION ROCK



**ANNE
WARFIELD**
CEO

As a leading outcome strategist, Anne Warfield shows leaders how to be more influential by saying the right thing at the right time, every time. The revolutionary Outcome Thinking® is a brain-based methodology that shows you how to be transformational when you present, negotiate, sell, or lead. Anne has worked with NBC, ABC, CBS, and radio stations around the world.



Have you ever received a gift that doesn't fit who you are? What was supposed to be a gift can now be a source of irritation.

Well, your presentation should be a "gift" to the audience, one that fits the people so perfectly that they can't help but act on what you say. So, how do you make sure your presentation does that?

- State the goal from the audience's perspective. It should tell them exactly what they will get out of their time with you.
- Have a clear roadmap that answers the questions your audience has for them to say, "Yes, I can do that."
- Keep it simple. Details are exit ramps *out* of the conversation, so make sure all details are necessary. If they aren't, throw them out.
- Logic makes you think, emotions make you act. Make sure you have a compelling story, interesting fact, or intriguing question up front to open their minds.
- Talk *with* your audience, not *at* them.

Challenge yourself to review your next presentation. See it from the recipient's side, and make sure it is truly a present the audience will value.

"Details are exit ramps out of the conversation, so make sure all details are necessary."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR AUDIENCE'S SHOES.**
- 2 KEEP IT SIMPLE.**
- 3 HAVE A COMPELLING STORY TO OPEN YOUR LISTENERS' MINDS.**

IT'S NOT A SPEECH, IT'S A GIFT



BRONWYN RITCHIE

Founder, Curator,
Author, Speech Coach

Bronwyn Ritchie is a speech and presentation coach dedicated to providing resources and new ways of thinking for speakers to achieve their personal best. Bronwyn is a certified corporate trainer and speech contest judge with POWERtalk, a certified World Class Speaking coach, and has 30 years of experience encouraging, training, and coaching in public speaking. She is founder, curator, author, and coach at pivotalpublicspeaking.com.



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The success of a presentation begins with changing your definition of what you are doing. This is not a speech . . . not a presentation. Define it instead as gift giving, and make the difficulties of preparation melt away.

I realized the value of this redefinition when I was on stage presenting a gift to a male colleague. I was using eye contact, using humor I knew we both enjoyed; we were interacting, even though this was a stand-up speech. I have found that if I create every presentation as a gift, so many things (not just that engagement with audience) are so much easier and more natural.

The first step is to make the central message a statement of gift giving: “I have this [product, idea, technique, message]. It is my gift to you.” In doing so you:

- **Satisfy the WIIFM factor.** Explain why you chose it for them especially and why they will like it, why it will meet their needs. Encourage the recipients to visualize themselves using the gift with positive results.
- **Establish your credibility.** Explaining your process for choosing this gift builds trust in you as a gift-giver—and as a speaker.
- **Allay your fears.** If you see this as a gift giving—a pleasant, positive experience—you diminish the concept of a performance to be judged.
- **Create an exchange.** If your message is seen as a gift, then perhaps the audience will be predisposed to reciprocate with openness and support.
- **Simplify all of your ideas to support one focused message.** “This is my gift to you.”

“If you create every presentation as a gift, so many things . . . are so much easier and more natural.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **THE SUCCESS OF A PRESENTATION BEGINS WITH CHANGING YOUR DEFINITION OF WHAT YOU ARE DOING.**
- 2 **MAKE YOUR CENTRAL MESSAGE A STATEMENT OF GIFT GIVING.**
- 3 **SIMPLIFY YOUR IDEAS TO SUPPORT ONE FOCUSED MESSAGE.**

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION—ENGAGE!



CHIP EICHELBERGER

Motivational
Keynote Speaker

Chip Eichelberger, CSP, has switched on more than 900 conventions in the past 17 years. He engages his audiences to look in the mirror, put on the hat of personal responsibility, and get switched on! To get Eichelberger's recommended room setup and logistics guide to make your next event more engaging, contact him at chip@getswitchedon.com.



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I developed my style of engaging an audience while working for motivational speaker Tony Robbins from 1988 to 1993. My job was to lead sales teams and work with promoters who filled his events throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. I did talks to sell tickets, mostly to skeptical sales people. I had to get commitments to take action now and purchase tickets. I gave more than 1,200 talks before my first paid event.

I quickly learned the difference between presentation and persuasion. If I did a presentation, people would smile, thank me for coming, and say they would “think about it.” But if I engaged, challenged, and persuaded them, I got applause, ticket sales on the spot, and referrals. What actions are you persuading audiences to take?

Audience engagement begins before the event. Calling and interviewing participants from different levels of the organization are essential. When possible, obtain permission to use direct quotes that illustrate that you have done your homework. You want the audience to think, “Wow, how did the speaker know all that? He was really well prepared.”

When you arrive at the event, it is helpful to attend a few sessions and converse with other attendees over a meal before you speak. Introduce yourself to as many people as possible. Referencing what you learn will boost your credibility and score points with even the most skeptical audience members.

Before you go on stage, select the right music to set a fun, energetic tone for your presentation. Do not leave it up to the tech team to create energy in the room for you.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PRESENTATION AND PERSUASION.**
- 2 **AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT BEGINS BEFORE THE EVENT.**
- 3 **REFERENCING WHAT YOU LEARN FROM PRE-TALK INTERVIEW BOOSTS YOUR CREDIBILITY.**

“Do not leave it up to the tech team to create energy in the room for you.”

TAP YOUR EXPERIENCE FOR A FANTASTIC SPEECH



ED BRODOW
CEO

Ed Brodow is a top spokesman on the art of negotiation. SEC Chairman Harvey Pitt dubbed Ed “the King of Negotiators,” and *Forbes* magazine ranked him as one of America’s leading dealmakers. A nationally recognized television personality, Ed has appeared on PBS, ABC National News, and Inside Edition. He is the author of six books, including *Negotiation Boot Camp: How to Resolve Conflict, Satisfy Customers, and Make Better Deals*. Ed has enthralled audiences in Paris, Athens, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Bogota, Toronto, and New York.



The key to a successful speech is storytelling. The key to storytelling is not to memorize the *words* but the *experience*. As a trained stage and film actor, I do this using a technique called *personalization*, or tapping into an experience from my life and applying the emotional impact of that experience to the story.

For example, when Anthony Hopkins is playing the role of serial killer Hannibal Lecter in the film, *Silence of the Lambs*, he re-creates the emotional impact from an experience in his life where he was so mad that he wanted to kill someone. What we see on the screen is Hopkins as a psychopathic killer. In reality, Hopkins the actor is playing out the emotional reality of his substituted experience.

One of my best-known signature stories is the “Meatball Sandwich.” As I describe each person’s action in the story, I substitute my own behavior from a similar experience. When I relate a character’s reaction to the situation, it is I reacting. As a result, no one else can tell this story the way I do. Each time I tell the story, it is different, but it always grabs the audience, because the emotions and behavior are alive and in the moment.

“The key to storytelling is not to memorize the *words* but the *experience*.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **STORYTELLING IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL SPEECH.**
- 2 **APPLY THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF YOUR EXPERIENCES TO THE STORY.**
- 3 **KEEP THE STORIES FRESH.**

CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE



GARY GUWE

Lead Trainer

Gary Guwe is an award-winning speaker and entrepreneur from Singapore. An introvert by nature, Gary broke through his apprehension of public speaking when he realized the limitations his fear had on his life and career. Now a proud owner of three successful enterprises, he continues to inspire others to speak up and stand out by sharing his insights on public speaking as a communication skills coach. His successes have landed him a role lecturing at Singapore's top university.



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Building rapport and connecting with your audience are key to helping you succeed on stage. Here are three tips to help you connect with your audience:

- **Determine the audience's goals and interests.** An audience gathers for a reason. The people are there to achieve a specific goal or purpose, so consider these questions: What are people's life or career concerns? What are their pain and pleasure points? What solutions or interesting perspectives can you offer to help them?
- **Ask questions.** Asking questions and responding to them is a great way to establish a closer connection with your audience because (1) spontaneity suggests that it is not a rehearsed performance, so you are being genuine and sincere; (2) it suggests that you care about them; and (3) the audience members get to share their concerns.
- **Tell a good story (and deliver a point).** Stories allow you to paint vivid pictures and articulate emotions with words. They also allow you to share common concerns and experiences, which will help the audience know that you're on the same page. Use descriptive words, weave in emotions, and lead them toward a lesson.

As a final tip, end your speech on a high with recommendations or a resolution to your story!

“Asking questions and responding to them is a great way to establish a closer connection with your audience.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **BUILD A RAPPORT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.**
- 2 **DETERMINE YOUR LISTENERS' GOALS AND INTERESTS.**
- 3 **TELL A GOOD STORY.**

ASK A (RHETORICAL) QUESTION



GEORGE TOROK

Speech Coach for Executives

George Torok was a shy student who was afraid to deliver a speech to his school. Today, he delivers paid speeches for corporations and association conferences. He has delivered more than 1,000 professional presentations and trains professionals, experts, and sales teams to deliver superior presentations. George coaches executives to deliver million dollar presentations, including one client whom George helped close a \$10 million deal.



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Use rhetorical questions in your presentation to better engage your audience—a simple, yet powerful technique. It works especially well when delivering detailed technical information and when you want to persuade your listeners.

Here's how it works:

- Asking a question grabs the attention of your audience. Human beings are programmed to respond to questions.
- Your listeners might already be thinking that question. They will feel that you understand them by knowing and answering their questions.
- Posing a rhetorical question before you give important information builds anticipation for the information.
- Asking a question makes your voice more interesting, because you will naturally inflect your voice while asking the question.
- This is your secret for when you forget what comes next. Pose the question out loud to help get your brain back on track.

Here are a few examples of effective rhetorical questions:

- What's the next step?
- What are the benefits for you?
- What is our schedule for implementation?
- What have customers said about this program?
- How will this change affect you?

Sprinkle rhetorical questions throughout your presentation to recapture your listeners' attention, sound more interesting, and make your talk feel like a conversation.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **ASKING QUESTIONS GRABS YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION.**
- 2 **POSING A RHETORICAL QUESTION RAISES ANTICIPATION FOR THE ANSWER.**
- 3 **ASKING A QUESTION INFLECTS YOUR VOICE, MAKING YOUR VOICE SOUND MORE INTERESTING.**

“Human beings are programmed to respond to questions.”

LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING



GINI DIETRICH

Chief Executive Officer

Gini Dietrich is the founder and CEO of Arment Dietrich, a Chicago-based integrated marketing communications firm. She is the lead blogger at Spin Sucks and the founder of Spin Sucks Pro. She is the coauthor of *Marketing in the Round* and cohost of Inside PR. Her second book, *Spin Sucks*, is out now.



I'm an introvert. Going on stage not only scares the heck out of me, it drains all of my energy. But I'm also a type A personality and hugely competitive, so I push myself outside of my comfort zone nearly every day.

I started speaking in 2008, right before the economy crashed. I did my first speaking engagement as a favor to a client, and then, when the United States was in the middle of the Great Recession, I needed to create additional revenue streams simply so I could make payroll. I pushed myself outside of my comfort zone out of sheer necessity.

Today, speaking is the number one driver of revenue for the public relations firm side of my business. So, my team won't let me stop!

But here's my secret: I overprepare for every engagement. I may have done the same speech a thousand times, but I add something new for a specific audience, I research the companies in attendance and use examples from their online communications during the keynote, or I rehearse for the millionth time. If I can get the audience to laugh within the first five minutes, I know I'll be fine.

"If I can get the audience to laugh within the first five minutes, I know I'll be fine."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **OVERPREPARE FOR EVERY ENGAGEMENT.**
- 2 **ADD ELEMENTS SPECIFIC TO YOUR AUDIENCE.**
- 3 **TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE.**

A LIFE WORTH TALKING ABOUT



IAN BRODIE

Managing
Director

Ian Brodie works with consultants, coaches, and other professionals to help them attract and win more clients. In a world increasingly filled with hype, exaggeration, and “shiny new objects,” Ian’s simple strategies help busy professionals be more confident and competent at marketing and sales and—most importantly—get results. Recently named one of the Top 50 Global Thought Leaders in Marketing and Sales by *Top Sales World* magazine, his Web site is a “Resource of the Decade” for professional services marketing.



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The secret to delivering awesome, interesting, non-boring presentations, in my experience, happens way before you step on stage.

You see, if you want to deliver an awesome, interesting presentation, you have to have something awesome and interesting to talk about.

No amount of presentation skills or verbal fireworks can cover for dull material.

How do you come up with that great material? Well, the standard advice you’ll get is to tell stories. Bring up funny anecdotes and dramatic experiences from your past that illustrate your points. The problem for most of us is that we don’t have many of those anecdotes, stories, or experiences. Those we do have may not fit the topic we’re talking about.

So, what do you do if you don’t have interesting experiences to share? You make them.

If you’re a leadership coach, for example, rather than trotting out the theory of great leadership or dredging up the same examples as everyone else, take up a voluntary and challenging leadership role yourself and use your experiences to illustrate your story. Years ago, I decided that the topic I was most interested in and most wanted to talk about was how to become known as an expert in your field. I had done a ton of research and interviewed many leading experts, but what really brought my talks alive was when I tried the methods on myself and used the talks to report on my own successes and failures. Those real-world experiences and stories hit much, much harder than anything from academic research or second-hand data on others.

So, if you’re looking to make your presentations interesting, do something interesting and talk about that.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **TELL STORIES.**
- 2 **USE ANECDOTES TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR POINTS.**
- 3 **REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES HAVE MORE IMPACT THAN SECOND-HAND RESEARCH.**

“No amount of presentation skills or verbal fireworks can cover for dull material.”

BE GIVING, BE KIND, BE THERE



JANE ATKINSON
Author

Jane Atkinson has been helping speakers catapult their businesses for more than 20 years. As a former speaker's agent, she has represented numerous speakers, celebrities, and best-selling authors. Today, Jane coaches some of the industry's hottest stars, who have vaulted to the top 3 percent of the field. Her book, *The Wealthy Speaker 2.0*, has been called "the bible" of the speaking industry. Her follow-up, *The Epic Keynote*, is due out in early 2014.



My presentations are primarily to groups of professional speakers. Sometimes, that can feel quite daunting, especially when I know there are going to be a good number of seasoned pros in the house. But I've learned a thing or two about preparation and pre-gig mantras from my clients and colleagues over the years, and I lean heavily on those when the stakes are high.

Here are my three tips for hitting it out of the park:

- **Know your stuff.** When the rubber hits the road, knowing your material is the best way to ease the nerves. Because I have 20 years of experience, it's rare that I feel nervous any more. But in the early days, I would prepare like crazy. The more relevant your material to the audience, the less likely they are to judge your speaking style.
- **Rehearse your key elements.** Victoria Labalme talks about not memorizing every bit of your presentation or it may come off false. It's better to get your key parts "in your bones" (so they sound conversational), especially your opening and closing stories.
- **Develop a formula.** If you can pull all of your content into a neat package or formula, you'll allow people to digest it more easily. Lou Heckler says that three points work, and I believe him. The goal is that when people walk out of the room, they can easily remember and repeat your formula for success.

The bottom line for preparing is to make your presentation about them—the audience—not yourself. That's why I have a mantra when stepping on stage that revolves around being giving, being kind, and being there for them.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **KNOW YOUR STUFF.**
- 2 **REHEARSE YOUR KEY ELEMENTS.**
- 3 **DEVELOP A FORMULA.**

"The goal is that when people walk out of the room, they can easily remember and repeat your formula for success."

TO (WHAT) SO THAT (WHY)



JEREMEY DONOVAN

Principal

Jeremy Donovan is Chief Marketing Officer of American Management Association International. He is the author of four books, including the international public speaking best seller, *How to Deliver a TED Talk*.



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The mission of most presentations is to call listeners to action in a way that makes their lives better. Many of the most satisfying presentations recommend that listeners take tiny actions that can lead to large personal and societal benefits. Since people are naturally stuck in their ways, the tiny actions suggested need to be fast, cheap, and easy.

One of my favorite examples is Joe Smith, who started his talk at TEDxConcordiaUPortland in 2012 with the following: “If we [Americans] could reduce the usage of paper towels, one paper towel per person per day, 571,230,000 pounds of paper [would] not [be] used.”

While there is no single best way to phrase your idea worth spreading, there is an excellent way to think about it during the planning stages. To impose good discipline, the format I recommend is: “To (what) so that (why).” The “what” is the action you want your audience to take; the “why” is the benefit that action provides to them or planet.

While you may or may not explicitly state that objective in your talk, having it in your mind provides a guide to what must go into your presentation and what must be edited out.

“The mission of most presentations is to call listeners to action in a way that makes their lives better.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **MAKE CALLS TO ACTION FAST, CHEAP, AND EASY.**
- 2 **HAVE A CLEAR OBJECTIVE IN MIND FOR YOUR TALK.**
- 3 **THERE IS NO SINGLE BEST WAY TO PHRASE YOUR IDEA.**

TALKING TO THE PRESIDENT



JIM ANDERSON
President

Over the past 25 years, Dr. Jim Anderson has transformed failing public speakers worldwide. In his blog, "[The Accidental Communicator](#)", Jim shares the knowledge that he has gained while working with individual speakers and audiences. His refreshing sense of humor, deep technical knowledge about how we communicate, and superb communication skills drive what you'll find in his blog.



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Blog

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e all know that before you give a presentation, you need to practice, practice, practice, but it turns out that doing so can be difficult. It feels strange to be standing in your bathroom speaking to yourself in a mirror, but that's nothing like how your real speech is going to feel.

I've learned to solve this problem by cutting pictures of people out of newspapers and magazines, and then taping them to my bathroom mirror. I can't tell you how many times I've practiced a speech with Sir Richard Branson, Madonna, Lady Gaga, and President Obama in my "audience."

Yes, this is a little silly, but you would be amazed at how much it will help you to relax and practice things like making good eye contact. Cut out some pictures and give it a try!

"It feels strange to be standing in your bathroom speaking to yourself in a mirror, but that's nothing like how your real speech is going to feel."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.**
- 2 PASTE PICTURES OF PEOPLE ON A MIRROR TO PRACTICE YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS.**

KNOW THY AUDIENCE



RICH WATTS

UK Business Speaker of the Year, 2012

Rich Watts is the U.K. Business Speaker of the Year (awarded by the U.K. Speechwriters Guild) and a double national public speaking champion. He runs Rich Public Speaking, delivering original training sessions to help businesses overcome their toughest public speaking challenges. Rich lives with his girlfriend and their dog, Shadow, in the beautiful New Forest in the United Kingdom.



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One question is all you need to ensure an awesome presentation. This question ensures that you deliver a presentation that engages, enthralls, and resonates.

It banishes nerves.

It gives total confidence in what you are about to deliver.

It is, “What does my audience want to hear?”

As speakers, we often believe that it’s all about us. We’re on stage, we’re in the spotlight, we are the star. For example, a poor sales presenter stands in front of his customer and lists all 800 amazing features of his new product, the Dustbuster 9000. Wow.

Alternatively, the awesome sales presenter asks, “What does my audience want to hear?” and realizes that his audience wants to know how the Dustbuster solves their problems. He applies five of the product’s features to problems the customer is currently experiencing. The customer sees the value of the product and places a large order for the Dustbuster 9000.

The best speakers deliver awesome presentations by always asking and understanding exactly what their audience wants to hear. Whether you’re inspiring, informing, entertaining, or persuading, if you understand what your audience wants to hear and build your presentation around their needs, you are guaranteed to deliver an awesome presentation.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **KNOW WHAT YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS TO HEAR.**
- 2 **APPLY PRODUCT FEATURES TO PROBLEMS YOUR CUSTOMER IS FACING.**

“The best speakers deliver awesome presentations by always asking and understanding exactly what their audience wants to hear.”

DO IT... BACKWARDS



DUSTIN MATHEWS

Speaker Coach of the Year

Dustin Mathews is a direct response marketing expert, speaker and author, based in the United States. He specializes in speaking and direct response marketing. Mathews is best known for the management and marketing expertise he applied while managing ForeclosuresDaily and Speaking Empire. Mathews is currently the CEO of Speaking Empire. The company is primarily a speaker training company, but also offers services in speaker marketing. He is regularly featured by the media in news stories about webinars and how to increase revenue from them. He has also been featured by USA Today, Fox Business and INC magazine in news stories about marketing and sales related topics.



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Blog

Fortune favors the bold. Most folks create virtual presentation suicide and don't realize it.

The core fundamentals remain unchanged. Superior credibility, believable social proof, entertaining stories, a mouth-watering offer, etc. are vital to every talk. But here's what's changed... Your Audience.

Anyone speaking from stage and webinars, needs to understand the shift taking place in the audience's mind. What worked in the past won't fly in today's marketplace.

That's why we always start backwards, or said differently... with the end in mind a.k.a. "the Close."

Start by asking, "What do I want my audience to do? Buy my book? Sign up for a strategy session? Visit my website?"

Now, everything in your presentation should further them taking that action. EVERYTHING.

After an on-the-spot challenge, we coached a brand new, "unpolished" speaker to sell 21% of the room... despite his fear of public speaking.

In addition, this level of thinking generated nearly \$14 million dollars in sales and the number 35 spot on Inc. 500 Magazine's "Fastest Growing Private Companies in America."

No matter your experience, as long as you start backwards, you can expect to see a dramatic shift in results, especially if you are selling.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **START BY FIGURING OUT WHAT YOU WANT YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO DO.**
- 2 **ELIMINATE EVERYTHING IN YOUR PRESENTATION THAT DOESN'T HELP THE AUDIENCE TAKE THAT ACTION.**

"No matter your experience, as long as you start backwards, you can expect to see a dramatic shift in results, especially if you are selling."

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MAKE IT PERSONAL AND REAL: USE PROPER NAMES



**ALESSANDRA
CIMATTI**
Marketing and
Presentation
Consultant / Trainer

Alessandra Cimatti helps companies with their marketing, presentations and social media by providing training, coaching, and consulting services. She has helped Autodesk Maya with the delivery of marketing training to EMEA channel partners; VMware, Tellabs, and BASF with effective presentations; and Italian companies with training and consulting services. Before going freelance, she spent 25 years in international marketing and business development roles with IBM, USRobotics, and 3Com. She is based in Milan, Italy.



Twitter



Website



Blog

I have found that you get more attention and engagement from you audience when you use people's first names. When your presentation shows a case study or another example, do not be neutral and nonspecific when describing the situation. Don't say, "A secretary at a company we worked for was experiencing technical difficulties when her manager decided to..." Make it real: Use proper names. How about starting with, "Mary is an executive secretary at Pinco Corporation in Atlanta, Georgia. Last February, Susan, her manager, wanted her to"

Use proper names for people, companies, products, locations, dates, and events. Even if the people in the audience do not know Mary, the effect of mentioning her name makes the explanation more realistic and concrete, and people will pay more attention.

The same tip applies when you are telling stories, even without slides. Use proper names, and the story will come to life. Think of children's stories. They are specific, full of names, not generic, and children pay attention and remember them all their lives.

"You get more attention and engagement from your audience when you use people's first names."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE PEOPLE'S FIRST NAMES TO GET THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION.**
- 2 USE PROPER NAMES WHEN YOU TELL STORIES.**

DODGING TOMATOES: GIVING CONVERSATIONAL TALKS



ALEX CEQUEA

Owner and Editor in Chief of iPhone Life Magazine

Alex Cequea is the editor in chief of *iPhone Life* and owner of Mango Life Media. Alex has presented to audiences small and large and placed in the top 200 speakers worldwide in the 2011 Toastmasters International Inspirational Speech Contest. In June 2013, he attempted to break the Guinness World Record for Longest Speech Marathon by giving back-to-back presentations for 37 hours straight. His work and projects have been featured on TIME.com, Discovery Tech, NBC, ABC, Univision, and CBS.



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I always try to get to know my audience beforehand. I'll walk around, introduce myself, talk to them for a bit, and thank them for coming in. This small gesture turns scary strangers into new friends, and it helps me be more natural on stage. Sometimes, this pretalk activity can also help me increase engagement and turnout.

At one conference I spoke at last year, I was faced with a small turnout for the last presentation of the day. Out of about 75 available seats, maybe five or six people had sat down. To make matters worse, they were all sitting far away from each other. When you're presenting, there's nothing worse than seeing a sea of empty seats (except perhaps having to dodge tomatoes—but then you at least get a workout!). I walked around, got to know them, and kindly asked if they could sit close to the front, as the crowd was so small. I started to give a more conversational talk just for them, but when others saw that they were up close and engaged, new people joined. By the end, two-thirds of the seats were filled, and I got great testimonials!

“When you're presenting, there's nothing worse than seeing a sea of empty seats.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **GET TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE BEFOREHAND.**
- 2 **WHEN GIVING A TALK TO A SMALL GROUP, HAVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS SIT TOGETHER AT THE FRONT OF THE ROOM.**

KEEPING A BALANCED STOOL



ALEX RISTER

Instructor and Chair of Public Speaking

Alex Rister is an eternal student dedicated to teaching and learning. Since 2007, Alex has worked with on-campus and online students in written, verbal, and visual communication. She is on staff in the English Department at Full Sail University and is chair of Public Speaking, where she leads a team of instructors and manages curriculum development. In her spare time, Alex enjoys volunteering with the Junior League of Greater Orlando as well as reading, writing, and running.



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One important secret from Jim Endicott ensures that a speaker will deliver a strong presentation. Endicott says that presentations are a three-legged stool, and we must give equal merit and preparation time to our content, delivery, and visuals. I read the “presentation stool” metaphor for the first time in *slide:ology* by

Nancy Duarte, and it changed both my presentations and the presentations that my students deliver.

My students, like most presenters, are naturally talented in one or more legs of the presentation stool. For example, some students have charisma that leads to great speech delivery. However, if those presenters rely on their delivery alone, they don't tend to the other two equally important legs of the presentation stool, and their speeches wobble. Even when presenters possess natural talent in one area, they should prepare and practice all three legs to have a strong, effective presentation.

First, put a lot of effort into crafting your message. Research, analyze your audience, organize and reorganize your points, and incorporate storytelling. Next, design visually driven slides to support your content. Third, practice and rehearse until your delivery comes naturally. On speech day, if you put the time into making sure your presentation stool is balanced, your presentation will truly resonate.

“If you put the time into making sure your presentation stool is balanced, your presentation will truly resonate.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 GIVE EQUAL MERIT TO PREPARATION, DELIVERY, AND VISUALS.**
- 2 PUT EFFORT INTO CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE.**
- 3 DESIGN VISUALLY DRIVEN SLIDES TO SUPPORT THE CONTENT.**

THERE ARE NO SECRETS: SPEAKING WITH COMMON SENSE



**ALEXEI
KAPTEREV**

CEO / Founder

Alexei Kapterev is one of the world's leading experts on presentations. Having many years of experience with international and Russian consulting firms, he decided to focus exclusively on presentations in 2007. The same year, he published a presentation called *Death by PowerPoint*, which saw more than 1 million views, all with no advertising or promotion. In 2011, his book *Presentation Secrets* was published by Wiley.



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was invited to “share an amazing secret about how to capture the imagination and engage your audience.” Let me share that secret—perhaps the most important secret in the whole presentation business: *There are no secrets*. There are tweaks, shortcuts, hacks, and knowledge about what button you push in PowerPoint to reformat a graph, but there are no secrets.

This is probably quite strange coming from the author of the book *Presentation Secrets*, but this in fact is the most profound discovery I made while writing the book. There's nothing in the book that is a secret to anybody. Everything there could be deduced by any sensible person who chooses to sit down and think about presentations for any period of time. It's mostly common sense. The problem with most business and academic presentations is that they make little sense. This in part has to do with the overly complex subject matter, but it also happens because people too often rely on “presentation secrets” without trying to understand whether they apply to their situation.

There are no secrets with regard to capturing the audience's attention. The golden rule here is obvious: A presentation should describe a problem-solving process—otherwise, why bother? Describe an interesting problem—preferably with a solution, too. Watching somebody solve an interesting problem is itself interesting, and people will follow that, especially if the solution is nontrivial. Frankly, I don't think you need to capture anyone's imagination. Capture your own imagination. Solve interesting problems in interesting ways. Be creative in life, then describe it in your presentations.

“A presentation should describe a problem-solving process—otherwise, why bother?”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 GIVING PRESENTATIONS IS A MATTER OF COMMON SENSE.**
- 2 PRESENTATIONS SHOULD DESCRIBE A PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS.**
- 3 SOLVE PROBLEMS IN INTERESTING WAYS, THEN DESCRIBE THE PROCESS YOU USED.**

ANIMATING YOUR AUDIENCE WITH VISUALS



**ANASTASIA
PRYANIKOVA**

Founder / Member

Anastasia Pryanikova, M.A., J.D., is the founder of E-Studio, LLC, a coaching, training, and consulting company that translates neuroscience insights into tools and solutions for communication, conflict management, public speaking, presenting, and transmedia storytelling. She is a Certified World Class Speaking Coach and a cofounder of the Bookphoria platform, which enables authors, experts, and speakers to convert their books and expert content into online courses and multimedia products to grow their business.



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Technology offers speakers and presenters an opportunity to make their stories come alive and thrive in multimedia. Break down your story into elements, and map them to several virtual platforms to magnify your message. For example, I like to use Instagram for visual storytelling because it allows me to capture the exclusive, “behind-the-scenes” elements of my stories.

I recently had the honor of meeting Brian Tracy, the legend of personal and professional development, when I appeared as a guest on *The Brian Tracy Show*. The photos from the event are part of my story. Visuals make your story multisensory. Whenever you set the scene, think about the sights, sounds, smells, and textures they can evoke. To add fun and variety, you can develop an animation or cartoon to introduce your story.

I also like to co-create content with my virtual audience. I may ask questions and collect opinions in advance and use the audience’s comments in my upcoming presentations in the form of an infographic, for example. Express your main ideas in catchy phrases under 140 characters that are easy to share on social media. As they are shared, they will build your brand as a reflection of your values, core messages, and perceptions.

“Break down your story into elements, and map them to several virtual platforms to magnify your message.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 MAP THE ELEMENTS OF YOUR STORY TO VIRTUAL PLATFORMS.**
- 2 VISUALS MAKE YOUR STORY MULTISENSORY.**
- 3 EXPRESS YOUR MAIN IDEAS IN CATCHY PHRASES UNDER 140 CHARACTERS.**

BUILDING A FIRE: USING YOUR ENERGY TO CAPTIVATE YOUR AUDIENCE



**ANGELA
DEFINIS**
CEO

Angela DeFinis is the president of DeFinis Communications, a presentation skills training company that offers a core curriculum of professional public speaking programs and services to companies in all industries. Specializing in group training and executive speech coaching, the firm helps business leaders find solutions to their communication challenges so they can successfully compete in a demanding marketplace.



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You know how some speakers just radiate confidence and captivate an entire audience? Have you ever been drawn in by that kind of performance or given one yourself? That's engagement. As an executive speech coach and owner of a presentation skills company, I tell my clients that the most engaging presentations are more than just intellectual aerobics. They enlist the audience at a gut level—physically, mentally, and emotionally. That's how ideas and knowledge are transferred and used by others.

At DeFinis Communications, we use the powerful metaphor of fire to illustrate how to “Create Performance Combustion” so speakers at all levels can light a fire in the belly of any audience. But to do this successfully you must first have that fire burning in your own belly. What's the secret? Energy. You must be able to generate, build, and sustain energy in every aspect of your delivery—physically, vocally, and verbally. And you must know how to convey that energy to your audience.

Fire is contagious and captivating. When your audience experiences your energy, they'll naturally be engaged and eager to listen, and most important, they'll act on your message. If you want your audience to be involved and alive, then you must use your performance energy to ignite a connection with them. That's the secret to real engagement.

“The most engaging presentations are more than just intellectual aerobics. They enlist the audience at a gut level.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 ENGAGING PRESENTATIONS ENLIST THE AUDIENCE AT A GUT LEVEL.**
- 2 YOU MUST BE ABLE TO GENERATE, BUILD, AND SUSTAIN ENERGY IN EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR DELIVERY.**

BE BRAVE, GET REAL



ANTHONY IANNARINO

Entrepreneur,
Speaker, Author,
and Coach

An author, international speaker, and entrepreneur, Anthony Iannarino is the managing director of B2B Sales Coach & Consultancy and the president and chief sales officer of Solutions Staffing. He also teaches Professional Selling, Persuasive Marketing, and Social Media Marketing at Capital University's School of Management and Leadership. Anthony was named one of the 50 most influential people in sales by *Top Sales World*. He writes daily at *The Sales Blog*.



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Do you want to give your audience an entertaining and compelling presentation? Do you want them hanging on to the edge of their seats in anticipation of what comes next? Then, you are going to have to be brave, and you are going to have to get real.

Your audience wants to hear stories—namely, your story. They want to know how you discovered the insight that you are going to share with them. They want to know about the mistakes you made and how you recovered from those mistakes. They want to know that what you are sharing is possible for them, that they can do what you are going to ask them to do at the end of your presentation. They need to see the arc.

Most people don't believe that their story is compelling enough or interesting enough to share. But in fact, it is the most interesting story they can tell. To do this, you are going to have to be vulnerable. You are going to have to share more than you are presently comfortable sharing. And being vulnerable is the ultimate act of bravery.

Be brave. Get real. Share your story. We're waiting.

“Your audience wants to hear stories—namely, your story.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS TO HEAR YOUR STORY, HOW YOU DISCOVERED YOUR INSIGHTS.**
- 2 SOMEONE'S STORY IS THE MOST INTERESTING THING THEY CAN TELL.**
- 3 TO BE REAL, YOU MUST BE VULNERABLE.**

KEEPING YOUR AUDIENCE'S INTEREST IN THE FACE OF TECHNOLOGY



ARDATH ALBEE

B2B Content
Marketing Strategist

Ardath Albee works with B2B companies that have complex sales to help them create e-marketing strategies that use contagious content platforms to turn prospects into buyers. She wrote the book *eMarketing Strategies for the Complex Sale*, published by McGraw-Hill, and has been one of the Top 50 Influencers in Sales and Lead Management for the past three years.



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In an age of multitasking and always being connected, capturing the attention of your audience definitely means you can't be boring. One of the things I worry about is that people will lose interest and leave during my presentations—whether online or off. So, there are a few things I focus on specifically to help counteract the urge for my audience to divide their attention between me and their smartphones, e-mail, or social media streams:

- I jump right into the reason they're there. If they want to know about me, they can Google me.
- I spend a lot of time looking for just the right graphics that set context but maybe not in the most obvious of ways.
- I search for words that allow me to use minimal text.
- I decide what I want my audience to take away from my presentation upfront and focus on building a story around that.

One of the biggest lessons for me was when I was presenting a Webinar last summer and the slide technology malfunctioned. I did the entire Webinar without slides, describing what the audience would see as I went. It was one of the most fulfilling sessions I've ever presented.

“In an age of multitasking and always being connected, capturing the attention of your audience definitely means you can't be boring.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 BEGIN THE PRESENTATION WITH THE REASON THE AUDIENCE IS THERE.**
- 2 SEARCH FOR WORDS THAT ALLOW YOU TO USE MINIMAL TEXT.**
- 3 DECIDE IN ADVANCE WHAT YOU WANT YOUR AUDIENCE TO TAKE AWAY FROM THE PRESENTATION.**

THE DEAL IS IN THE DETAILS



BEN DECKER
CEO

The leading business communications expert, Ben Decker bridges the gap between executive leaders and their teams. As CEO of Decker Communications, Ben has worked with hundreds of leaders in Fortune 500 companies to strategize and implement communications solutions that are practical, direct, and attainable. He also coaches C-level executives from major organizations, including Charles Schwab, McKesson, Cisco, Bacardi, and Kaiser Permanente as well as start-ups and portfolio companies seeking to raise capital.



Just last week, I heard, “Someone in my family was dealing with a health issue. I helped her, and she got better.” It’s vague, cloudy. Nothing stands out.

This bland summary happens all too often. I call it whitewashing, or glossing over the details. Instead, commit to the details. Describe. Be involved with your story. What was the day? The symptoms? The pain? Specifically, what did you do? What else was happening at the same time? What were the specific obstacles? How did the other person feel?

Use the details to help your listener get it.

The difference is subtle but important. Adding those concrete details makes the story real to your listener. When the story feels real, it grows in credibility.

What should you include?

- **Human-scale details.** Relate a cost to the price of a gallon of gas or a trip to Disneyland.
- **Brand names.** “Her Tesla” packs way more punch than “her car.”
- **Actual names of meetings or initiatives.** Use “Global Technology Initiative” rather than “the project we’re working on.”

By no means is that an exhaustive list. Think back to a recent story you heard. What stuck in your head?

“Commit to the details. Describe. Be involved with your story.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **PROVIDE HUMAN-SCALE DETAILS.**
- 2 **USE BRAND NAMES.**
- 3 **USE ACTUAL NAMES OF MEETINGS OR INITIATIVES.**

MAKING A FIRST IMPRESSION ON YOUR AUDIENCE



CHARLES H. GREEN

CEO / Founder

Charles H. Green is an author, speaker, and consultant on the subject of trust in business relationships. He co-wrote the classic *The Trusted Advisor* as well as *Trust-based Selling* and the *Trusted Advisor Fieldbook*. Charlie founded Trusted Advisor Associates and works with the globe's leading professional services firms and financial services and sales organizations. A Harvard MBA, Charlie drove a taxi in New York while majoring in philosophy in college at Columbia.



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The great speaking coach Patricia Fripp gave me a wonderful gift. She helped me select an opening story from my own experience, and we scripted a beginning to it: “There I was, a newly promoted manager in a consulting firm in Boston” We then turned to other matters.

Toward the end of my session, I said, “Now, help me with the very first words I should say.”

“We’ve already done that: ‘There I was, a newly promoted manager’ she said.

“No,” I replied. “I mean, when the guy says my name and I walk on stage—what are the very first words I should utter?”

She glared at me: “Read my lips,” she said. “There I was, a newly promoted manager”

“You’re kidding,” I said, “really?”

“Listen. You go up to the center of the stage and stand there, stock still, not moving a muscle or saying a word, until the entire room hushes, wondering if you’ve gone catatonic. Wait one instant longer, then throw your arm out and say your line.”

I couldn’t imagine behaving so dramatically, but I tried it the next week. I stood stock still. The room quieted; and as I threw my arm out, I immediately knew she was right.

It worked that night and has worked for me for more than a decade now.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **SCRIPT YOUR OPENING WORDS.**
- 2 **USE A DRAMATIC OPENING TO GET YOUR AUDIENCE’S ATTENTION.**

“You go up to the center of the stage and stand there, stock still, not moving a muscle or saying a word, until the entire room hushes, wondering if you’ve gone catatonic. Wait one instant longer, then throw your arm out and say your line.”

MAKING YOUR STORIES RELEVANT



COLLEEN FRANCIS

Founder and President

Colleen Francis is driven by a passion for sales—and results. A successful sales leader for more than 20 years, she understands the challenges of selling in today's market. Clients who work with Colleen note her frank, no-nonsense approach to solving problems and addressing opportunities. Colleen is a Certified Sales Professional and an inductee into the Speaking Hall of Fame. *Sales and Marketing Management Magazine* has called Colleen and Engage Selling: One of the top 5 most effective sales training organizations in the market today.



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One of the mistakes I see sales professionals make is fabricating or exaggerating references or examples of how their products are being used in the field. Earlier this year, I witnessed a sales presentation where the rep told a story that was supposed to be an example of how well his product works. The only problem was, his story was so outlandish and so obviously fake that everyone lost interest as he kept going on and on. An informal poll after the session showed that not one of the 12 buyers who were at the table believed the story. As a result, that rep's credibility was irreversibly damaged in their eyes.

Do use real life examples, quotes, stories, and testimonials. They're critical to making your story come alive and persuading people to buy your products or services. Just make sure that these stories are as specific—and as relevant to your customer's situation—as possible.

After all, no matter how much you love that favorite anecdote about what happened at last year's BBQ at your Uncle Fred's house, unless it involves your customers' problems or challenges or your solution for them, a business presentation probably isn't the best place to tell it.

“Make sure that these stories are as specific—and as relevant to your customer's situation—as possible.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 DON'T EXAGGERATE REFERENCE OR EXAMPLES OF HOW YOUR PRODUCT IS USED IN THE FIELD.**
- 2 USE REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES, QUOTES, STORIES, AND TESTIMONIALS THAT ARE SPECIFIC TO THE SITUATION.**

X MARKS THE SPOT: GETTING THE AUDIENCE TO TAKE ACTION



CONOR NEILL
Professor

Conor Neill runs Persuasive Communications seminars at IESE Business School, one of the world's top MBA schools. Conor has trained more than 10,000 C-level executives, doctors, MBAs, entrepreneurs, politicians, and directors. He is founder of four companies and a past area director, West Europe, for Entrepreneurs' Organization. He runs a popular blog at <http://www.conorneill.com>.



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The most important question I ask myself before preparing any presentation is what I call point X. Point X is the statement, "When I have finished speaking, my audience will . . .," finished with a specific, tangible, and realistic action.

For example, when I give a speech to entrepreneurs, my point X is often, "When I have finished speaking, my audience will switch on their Webcam and practice their pitch."

Point X forces me to see the presentation from their point of view: What do they need to know (logos), believe about me (ethos), and feel (pathos) to take this action? Most communication fails here. If I as a speaker am not clear on what I want, there is zero chance the audience will be clear.

What's your point X?

"If I as a speaker am not clear on what I want, there is zero chance the audience will be clear."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 AS YOURSELF WHAT ACTION THE AUDIENCE WILL TAKE AFTER THE TALK IS OVER.**
- 2 SEE THE PRESENTATION FROM THE AUDIENCE'S POINT OF VIEW.**

SHORT-CIRCUITING YOUR RETICULAR ACTIVATOR



DAN MCDADE
President & CEO

Dan McDade founded PointClear in 1997 to help B2B companies with complex sales processes drive more revenue through effective prospect development. His vision and innovative strategies have assured 100 percent of leads delivered to PointClear clients are sales qualified. The Sales Lead Management Association named Dan to the inaugural SLMA College of Fellows in 2013, and has been one of the 50 Most Influential People in sales lead management for five consecutive years.



You function by—and are limited by—your reticular activator.

The *reticular activator* is a part of the brain that never sleeps. On the plus side, it is what causes you to wake up when you hear a strange noise at night. On the minus side, your reticular activator causes you to notice the things you always notice and ignore the things you have always ignored. The reticular activator is what allows you to concentrate on the conversation at your table when you are in a busy, noisy restaurant. Without the reticular activator, you would hear everything going on in the room and be unable to concentrate on any one thing.

Understanding this concept, content providers need to short-circuit their audiences' reticular activators before asking them to embrace new concepts. How? By establishing a mutual goal. Sell the goal, and the reticular activator will allow the individual to focus on it and accomplish it. A guy I worked for years ago used to say, "Don't tell someone how to do something, make them want to do it, and they will find 10 ways to do it that you would have never thought of."

“Don't tell someone how to do something, make them want to do it, and they will find 10 ways to do it that you would have never thought of.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 ESTABLISH A MUTUAL GOAL.**
- 2 SELL THE GOAL, AND THE RETICULAR ACTIVATOR WILL ALLOW THE INDIVIDUAL TO FOCUS ON IT AND ACCOMPLISH IT.**

THE STORY MATTERS



DAN WALDSCHMIDT

Managing Partner

Dan Waldschmidt is a business strategist, speaker, author, and extreme athlete. His consulting firm solves marketing and business strategy problems for companies all over the world. Dow Jones calls his Edgy Conversations blog one of the top sales sites on the Internet. He's been profiled in *Business Week*, *Inc. Magazine*, and the BBC; has been a guest on many radio programs; and is the author of the upcoming *Edgy Conversations: How Ordinary People Achieve Outrageous Success*.



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The first words of any presentation have to be the beginning of a suspenseful story. Like a movie trailer that draws in the viewer from the first few seconds, your presentation needs to create enough intrigue that the audience is waiting eagerly to know how the story will end.

When I was offered the opportunity to speak in front of thousands of donors for their annual fundraising retreat, I wondered what I could say to these generous people that they did not already know.

So, instead of walking through bullet points on a rather ordinary PowerPoint presentation, I told the story of Hazel Miner, a young student at a rural, one-room North Dakota school who died while protecting her 10-year-old brother, Emmet, and 8-year-old sister, Myrdith, during a spring blizzard in 1920.

When I was finished, I noticed through the lights shining back at the stage that many in the audience were wiping away tears. The gripping lessons of a young lady who “gave all she had” were a better presentation than anything else I could have shared.

The story matters. Tell one.

“The first words of any presentation have to be the beginning of a suspenseful story.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **TELL A GRIPPING STORY.**
- 2 **MAKE THE FIRST WORDS OF YOUR PRESENTATION SUSPENSEFUL.**

CATCHING THEM WITH A STORY



DAVE KURLAN
CEO

Dave Kurlan is a top-rated speaker, best-selling author, radio show host, successful entrepreneur, and sales development industry pioneer. He is the founder and CEO of Objective Management Group, Inc., the leader in sales candidate assessments and sales force evaluations, and CEO of Kurlan & Associates, Inc., an international consulting firm specializing in sales force development. He has been named three times to the Inc. 5000. His popular blog, *Understanding the Sales Force*, won Top Sales & Marketing Blog for 2011–2013.



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I always start with a quick story that the audience can relate to. In a recent talk, one guy walked up to me as I was being introduced and told me, “Don’t suck.”

When I arrived on the stage, I immediately wove that incident into a story about worst introductions ever, and the audience roared in appreciation. For the next 45 minutes, each time that guy smiled or nodded in approval, I checked in with him and asked if I sucked yet. It kept the audience even more engaged than usual.

“Always start with a quick story that the audience can relate to.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 START YOUR PRESENTATION WITH A STORY THAT THE AUDIENCE CAN RELATE TO.**
- 2 USE HUMOR TO KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE ENGAGED.**

HOOKING YOUR AUDIENCE



DAVE PARADI

Presentation
Expert, Author,
Speaker

The author of many books on effective PowerPoint presentations, Dave Paradi consults on high-stakes presentations, including one used to brief one of President Obama's cabinet secretaries. Dave is one of only 12 people in North America to be recognized with the Microsoft PowerPoint Most Valuable Professional Award for his contributions to the PowerPoint presentation community. Attendees to his workshops say that they will never be able to look at another PowerPoint presentation the same way again.



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teach that you should never start your presentation with “credits.” The analogy is to a TV show. At the top of the hour, the show does not start with a list of all the actors, producers, and so on. Rather, it starts with a scene that gets you involved in the story. The show needs to get you engaged right away, because you can easily change the channel to something more interesting.

When we present, we should not start with a list of all the staff who worked on the analysis, their effort, and how proud we are—the “credits” for the presentation. Start with why the information you are presenting matters to this audience. If you don't get the audience to see why your message is relevant to their life or situation, they will pull out their smartphone, tablet, or laptop and find something more interesting—the equivalent of using the remote to change the channel when watching TV.

When I start a workshop, I show examples of slide makeovers from the presentations the group has submitted. The audience immediately sees how the ideas I will be sharing apply to the type of presentations they create, and they are eager to pay attention for the day.

“If you don't get the audience to see why your message is relevant to their life or situation, they will pull out their smartphone, tablet, or laptop and find something more interesting.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 DON'T START YOUR PRESENTATION WITH THE “CREDITS.”**
- 2 START WITH WHY THE INFORMATION YOU'RE PRESENTING MATTERS.**

NAILING IT: STAYING MEMORABLE TO YOUR AUDIENCE



DAVE STEIN

Competitive Sales Strategist, Columnist, Author, Angel Investor

Dave Stein is recognized as the world's leading expert in sales training. After a successful career in sales, management, international operations, marketing, coaching, consulting, and training, Dave founded ES Research Group, Inc., in 2005. Dave now focuses his time on helping smaller companies build effective sales capabilities and helping larger companies win big, competitive sales opportunities.



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One of the cornerstones of an unforgettable live presentation is the “signature story.” When designing a presentation, I typically select one of the four I’ve developed over the years to imprint a message that I want my audience to remember forever. With the help of a coach, I wrote these accounts of real events that drive my point, entertain my audience, and enable them to see me as a human being and not just an expert. It makes me that much more believable.

The story about seeking common ground with a senior executive from NEC at a restaurant in Tokyo engages my audience like nothing else can.

When I recount losing electrical power in an airplane I was piloting during a moonless night over Boston, the audience gasps as I reveal what my potentially life-saving backup plan was. A black slide is the backdrop for this one.

I’ve delivered these stories hundreds of times. I’ve rehearsed every word, expression, and movement until I was able to deliver it perfectly.

When people come up to me in airports telling me that they retold my story to family and friends, I thank them and ask, “But do you remember the rest of the content of the presentation?” Amazing how they nail it every time.

“One of the cornerstones of an unforgettable live presentation is the “signature story.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 IMPRINT A MESSAGE ON YOUR AUDIENCE WITH A SIGNATURE STORY.**
- 2 A SIGNATURE STORY MAKES YOU MORE HUMAN TO YOUR AUDIENCE.**

MOVE LIKE A ROCK STAR



DAVID MEERMAN SCOTT

Marketing and Sales Strategist

David Meerman Scott is a leader at showing businesses how to tap the tremendous opportunities of today's communications revolution to stand out, get noticed, spread ideas, win hearts and minds, drive sales, and grow business. His groundbreaking strategies don't just slap social media onto dusty old strategies, they reinvent the way business engages the marketplace.

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Most public speakers either stand in front of the podium or, if they venture out, just hang out near the center of the stage. Some go back and forth to the corners like a metronome. True professionals work the entire stage like a rock star.

I model my live presentations on the stage performances of the masters. Starting as a teenager, I've seen 554 live shows (nerd that I am, I keep a spreadsheet). In my talks, I apply lessons learned from Mick Jagger, Bob Marley, Joey Ramone, Frank Zappa, Madonna, David Byrne, Michael Jackson, Pink, Perry Farrell, and Matt Berninger.

In summer 2013, I went to two Rolling Stones shows in Boston, a "field trip" to catch Sir Mick working the stage. Jagger knows exactly where he is at every moment. There is not a wasted gesture, move, or step. He knows where the other Stones are, where the spotlight is, and most of all what the audience is doing. He's probably the most self-aware performer I've ever witnessed. I want that, too!

"True professionals work the entire stage like a rock star."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE THE ENTIRE STAGE WHEN YOU PRESENT.**
- 2 BE AWARE OF SUCH ELEMENTS AS WHERE THE SPOTLIGHT IS AND WHAT THE AUDIENCE IS DOING.**

TEAM PRESENTING: LIGHTNING IN A BOTTLE



DEBORAH SHAMES AND DAVID BOOTH

Co-founders

Deborah Shames and David Booth are co-founders of Eloqui, a business communication and presentation training firm based in southern California. They are field trained as directors and have translated performance techniques from the entertainment industry for business professionals. Their book, *Own the Room: Business Presentations that Persuade, Engage and Get Results*, was published by McGraw-Hill in September 2009 and has become a business bestseller. It is in its third printing.



Website

When companies make it to final pitches or beauty contests, they are fairly evenly matched. What sets them apart is not the size of the company, name recognition, or resume but successful hand-offs. The same is true when two individual speakers want to better connect with an audience.

Presenting with a partner doubles your chances of succeeding. With solid execution, passing the baton appears seamless, as if the presenters have worked together for years. It demonstrates how well you function as a team, your unique process, and solid ethos. And from the speakers' point of view, handing off allows one to relax, collect his or her thoughts, and gather energy for a new attack.

Eloqui employs hand-off techniques from repertory ensembles, where this performance skill is essential to captivating audiences. Tips include:

- **Roles.** Divide the content. Have one of you handle the big picture, the other detail, or the nuts and bolts.
- **Cue pick-up.** When you complete a sentence, use a downward inflection and pause to signal your partner to speak.
- **Second chair.** As the listener, face your partner so that the audience does, as well.
- **Inclusion.** While speaking, include your partner in your eye-line, but conclude statements by looking at the audience. Only when you hear your partner speak do you then turn to them.
- **Body positions.** Stand or sit on the same plane as your partner, about an arm's length apart to exhibit warmth and respect.

“Presenting with a partner doubles your chances of succeeding.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **SUCCESSFUL HAND-OFFS SET COMPANIES APART FROM ONE ANOTHER.**
- 2 **PRESENT WITH A PARTNER TO DOUBLE YOUR CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING.**
- 3 **DIVIDE THE CONTENT INTO ROLES, WITH ONE SPEAKER HANDLING THE BIG PICTURE AND THE OTHER HANDLING THE DETAILS.**

BEFORE AND AFTER: MAKING SURE YOUR AUDIENCE GETS IT



ELLEN FINKELSTEIN
Owner

Ellen Finkelstein is an expert trainer on using PowerPoint and presentation skills to communicate clearly and powerfully. One of only 11 PowerPoint MVPs in the United States, her well-known Web site (www.ellenfinkelstein.com) offers hundreds of PowerPoint tips, and she specializes in training individuals and teams to convert Death by PowerPoint to Life by PowerPoint. Ellen is the author of *PowerPoint 2013 Essentials*, *PowerPoint for Teachers: Dynamic Presentations and Interactive Classroom Projects*, and *How to Do Everything with PowerPoint 2007*.



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I do a lot of presentation training. Usually, I start by explaining—and showing—basic principles and some of the research behind them. Then, I provide examples. But there’s one thing I do that also engages and delights the audience: I invite them to submit presentations to me in advance for a makeover. I do this when I train within an organization and also when I do training that is open to the public.

In the section of my presentation where I provide examples, I display the before and after slides. As I do so, I explain how the after slides use the principles that I have explained. These makeovers work as practical examples of what I have taught. I usually ask the people who submitted slides to make a comment about what they were trying to say and note whether the makeover is an improvement for them. (They always say yes!) The result is that the audience sees real-world examples that are relevant to them. After the presentation, I send the people who submitted slides the makeovers that I did for them. They seem to love it. The comments I get often mention how helpful the makeovers were.

“I invite attendees to submit presentations to me in advance for a makeover.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES OF WHAT YOU’RE TALKING ABOUT TO DRIVE YOUR POINTS HOME.**
- 2 EXPLAIN HOW THE EXAMPLES YOU OFFER SUPPORT WHAT YOU’RE SAYING.**

SHARE YOUR OWN STORY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



GARR REYNOLDS

Communications
Consultant and
Author

Garr Reynolds is an acclaimed consultant and the best-selling author of *Presentation Zen* and the *Naked Presenter*. Garr's approach to communication uses principles from the Zen arts to reveal simple, concrete tips for communicating better. A sought-after speaker and consultant as well as an award-winning designer, writer, and musician, he is currently professor of Management and Design at Kansai Gaidai University. Garr is a former corporate trainer for Sumitomo Electric Industries in Osaka, Japan, and manager for Worldwide User Group Relations at Apple in California.



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Blog

Two wonderful examples of telling your own story on stage came from the TEDxKyoto 2013 event, which I attended. In storytelling, the key is to make sure that your message is about the audience, not about yourself. This may seem counterintuitive when you're telling your own story, talking about your own life, but it's actually not so difficult. Of course, when I say, "about your audience," I really mean for your audience. Even when you are sharing aspects of your own life, it's in the spirit of contribution. The best presentations are always about contribution. The important thing is to choose a theme from your own life that is clearly relevant for the audience. Whether your aim is to inform, inspire, persuade, or a mix of all of these, your theme should be something that people can relate to, something they can take away with them and ponder.

In both cases, the presenters told you what happened in their past to bring them to where they are today, but those details, however interesting they may be, were not the key theme. The particulars of the events were not the main point to take away. For example, Patrick Linehan's point really had nothing to do with being a gay man. Similarly, Megumi Nishikura's message was not only for those in biracial or bicultural families. The themes of both presenters were really for anyone who had struggled with feeling "different" or feeling alienated and alone (which would include just about everyone at some point). The theme of embracing one's own difference—and the resilience needed to do so—is a message for almost everyone. These themes clearly resonated with the largely Japanese audience in Kyoto: I hope they resonate with you, as well.

"Even when you are sharing aspects of your own life, it's in the spirit of contribution. The best presentations are always about contribution."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 MAKE SURE THAT YOUR MESSAGE IS ABOUT THE AUDIENCE, NOT ABOUT YOURSELF.**
- 2 CHOOSE A THEME FROM YOUR OWN LIFE THAT YOU THINK WILL RESONATE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE.**

WINNING FRIENDS AND INFLUENCING PEOPLE: PRESENTATIONS THAT COUNT



**GARY GENARD,
PH.D.**
President

Dr. Gary Genard is founder and president of Boston-based The Genard Method of performance-based public speaking training. A professional actor, Dr. Genard has more than 35 years of experience as a speech and communications expert. Through his unique training system, he provides worldwide coaching and skills development in executive presence, leadership, and presentation skills. He is the author of *How to Give a Speech* (2007) and *Fearless Speaking: Beat Your Anxiety, Build Your Confidence, Change Your Life* (2014).



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Self-improvement guru Dale Carnegie once gave this famous advice about public speaking: “Tell the audience what you’re going to say, say it; then tell them what you’ve said.” Do his words hold up today?

“Tell the audience what you’re going to say.” Many people think Carnegie meant, “Say something to your audience three times.” Yet, Carnegie was too astute an observer of human behavior to make that mistake.

Instead, “Tell the audience what you’re going to say” is essential wisdom if it means, “Frame your topic in terms of the audience’s need, and tell them where you’ll be going together.” Do that, and you give listeners the big picture and let them feel they’re in good hands.

“Say it.” Now, tell your story. Use examples, comparisons, case studies, and human interest to illustrate your points. This is your topic as you’ve framed it in your introduction. This portion of your talk is as easy as that.

“Tell them what you’ve said.” When it’s time to wrap up, you need to say something that will resonate in listeners’ minds, so your message continues to inform their thoughts and behavior. Remind them of your core message in a way that’s vivid and memorable. Do that, and you may just win friends and influence people.

“Frame your topic in terms of the audience’s need, and tell them where you’ll be going together.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 FRAME YOUR TOPIC SO THAT IT ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE’S NEED.**
- 2 USE COMPARISONS, CASE STUDIES, AND HUMAN INTEREST TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR POINTS.**
- 3 END WITH SOMETHING THAT WILL RESONATE WITH YOUR LISTENERS.**

SPEAKING FROM THE HEART



**JANICE
TOMICH**

Executive
communication
coach

Janice Tomich is a speaker and executive communication coach who works with professionals to create presentations that stick. She coaches thought provokers to build powerful voices, both in her hometown of Vancouver, Canada, and online, helping people who are doing good things change how we look at the world.



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“Be yourself; everyone else is taken” is especially true when it comes to presenters and their presentations. There is nothing more boring than a presenter who delivers playing a persona . . . playing a role.

We all want to deliver a presentation that will leave a lasting impression. It's both very easy and extremely difficult. To stand in front of our audience and be naked is a giant leap of faith, a chasm to jump over. When we get to a place where we trust ourselves and speak from the heart, we then can connect. From that place of vulnerability, we are our most memorable.

We catch the audience's attention. We affect them.

The pressure we often receive is that we must be “professional.” We feel cajoled to speak in that buttoned-up manner of corporate speak. However, eyes roll back in boredom and fingers often quickly hit smartphones when staid and “proper” words are spoken.

We meet others eye to eye when we deliver from the heart. We connect with them.

Speak with vulnerability, humbleness, and emotion. Your next presentation will not be boring.

“When we get to a place where we trust ourselves and speak from the heart, we then can connect.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **SPEAK FROM THE HEART.**
- 2 **YOUR VULNERABILITY MAKES YOU MEMORABLE.**

PRACTICING THE GOLDEN RULE OF PRESENTING



JOEY ASHER

President

Joey Asher is president of Speechworks, a selling and communication skills coaching company in Atlanta, Georgia. He has worked with thousands of business people, helping them learn how to communicate in a way that connects with clients. His new book, *15 Minutes Including Q&A: a Plan to Save the World from Lousy Presentations*, is available now. He is also the author three previous books, including *How to Win a Pitch: The Five Fundamentals That Will Distinguish You from the Competition*.



Website

The next time you have to give a speech, don't be boring. Instead, follow the Golden Rule of Presenting: "Present unto others as you would have others present unto you."

In other words, put yourself in the shoes of your listeners.

How would you feel if the presenter started with an irrelevant, marginally funny joke? Or would you prefer an opening where the speaker showed that she understood a key problem that you face every day in your practice? How would you like it if someone delivered a presentation to you with 15 major points? Or would you prefer he kept it simple, with three key takeaways?

How would you feel if you were sentenced to endure a speaker who constantly cited and read from the Code of Federal Regulations? or even worse, quoted long passages from opinions written by dead judges? Wouldn't you prefer that the speaker just tell interesting and relevant stories?

Is there a single human being on Earth (and I'm including your mother) who wants to hear you speak nonstop for an hour?

Here's a secret for great presenting. Consider what you'd like if you were in the audience, then give the audience that.

"Present unto others as you would have others present unto you."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 PUT YOURSELF IN YOUR AUDIENCE MEMBERS' SHOES WHEN YOU PRESENT.**
- 2 DON'T OVERLOAD YOUR AUDIENCE WITH POINTS.**
- 3 KEEP YOUR PRESENTATIONS RELEVANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE'S NEEDS.**

KNOW THE AUDIENCE BUT BE YOURSELF



JOHN ZIMMER

Speaker, consultant
and trainer

A Canadian who now lives in Geneva, Switzerland, John Zimmer holds degrees in International Relations and Law and has more than 20 years of public speaking and presentation experience in a variety of business and legal forums. John has addressed courts and tribunals, business conferences, and the United Nations and is a guest lecturer on public speaking and presentation skills for the MBA and Executive MBA programs at universities in Switzerland, France, and Spain.



Ts speakers, we should know as much as possible about our audiences—their needs, their interests, their hopes, their challenges—so that we can make our speeches and presentations relevant and interesting. We also have to know ourselves. And when we step on stage, we have to be ourselves.

We each have our own personality and our own way of speaking. Some are flamboyant; some are professorial; some incorporate lots of humor; some are soft spoken. The list goes on. The important thing is not to try to be someone you're not.

When I was a young lawyer, one of the best pieces of advice I got was to develop my own style in court. “Watch other lawyers and learn from them,” a senior partner told me, “but never try to copy them. It won't work.” The same holds true for public speaking.

This does not mean that we should shy away from those aspects of public speaking in which we aren't as strong. On the contrary: We should work on areas that need improvement. But we need to cultivate a style that is natural for us.

Sometimes, when I speak with audience members after my talks, someone will remark that I am the same in person as I am on stage. I take that as a big compliment, because it means that I was truly “in the moment” for my audience. And when you're in the moment, great things happen.

Be yourself. Your audience will appreciate it. Besides, as Oscar Wilde quipped, everyone else is already taken.

“Know your audience, but be yourself.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND KNOW YOURSELF.**
- 2 **DON'T TRY TO EMULATE OTHER SPEAKERS: BE YOURSELF.**
- 3 **WORK ON AREAS OF YOUR PRESENTATION SKILLS THAT NEED IT.**

EDUCATE, MOTIVATE, CHALLENGE, INSPIRE



KEENAN

CEO

Finder of the elephant in the room.

It all starts with the audience. My goal is to deliver a presentation that provides information the audience wants to hear. I spend an immense amount of time trying to understand why my audience is coming to see me, what problems they are facing, and what I can send them home with that would have them saying, “That was awesome.”

I’ve come to learn that a presentation is a product, and the audience’s attention is the currency. A presentation is a deal, a contract. Audiences make a conscious decision to give up their time in exchange for something, usually information. Knowing exactly what the audience is looking for in exchange for that time is the secret to a killer presentation.

There are four elements to a great presentation: educate, motivate, challenge, and inspire. You must tie all of these elements together. First, provide information the audience didn’t have (educate). That information has to challenge their conventional wisdom and thought processes—get them thinking. Then, inspire the audience to be creative, to change, grow, try new things, think differently. Without inspiration, little comes from the presentation. After tapping into the inspiration, you have to motivate the audience to take action. Finally, all of this has to happen in an entertaining, fun, engaging way. You can’t accomplish much with an audience if you aren’t entertaining. This is where creativity comes in.

My personal secret is a recipe of all of the above. I study stand-up comedians to understand delivery and humor. I submerge myself in the content and industry of my audience. I study psychology to understand how people respond to information and how to inspire and motivate. Finally, I am comfortable being uncomfortable; therefore, I push and am not afraid to go places others won’t to push my audience outside of their comfort zone.

Educate, challenge, inspire, motivate and entertain, and you have the winning secret to a killer presentation.



KEY LESSONS

- 1 **PROVIDE INFORMATION YOUR AUDIENCE DIDN'T HAVE.**
- 2 **INSPIRE THE AUDIENCE TO BE CREATIVE.**
- 3 **MOTIVATE THE AUDIENCE TO TAKE ACTION.**

“A presentation is a product, and the audience’s attention is the currency.”

3.5 SECRETS TO ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE



LISA B. MARSHALL

Professional Development

Most people know Lisa B. Marshall as the host of the *Public Speaker* podcast, which has earned more than 11 million downloads, and of *Smart Talk: Inspiring Conversations with Exceptional People*, but she primarily delivers professional development consulting, workshops, and speeches to such clients as Johns Hopkins Medicine, Harvard University, Genentech, and Roche. Her work has been featured on CBS Money Watch and Ragan.com. Visit www.smarttalksuccess.com for information on her latest book.



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Here are my best 3.5 secrets to effortlessly engaging an audience:

1. Show passion. When I was in high school, I saw Bob Seger in concert. I still remember the band on stage, acting as if they were just young boys practicing music and horsing around! The playful fun and intense passion made the experience incredibly engaging. I always strive to deliver a “Bob Seger experience.”

2. Make it conversational. Research has shown that it’s difficult to maintain attention. I create natural breaks by asking my audience to join in. I invariably include a slide in my deck that says, “Interrupt me, please.” I’ve noticed that people are more likely to join in, share their stories or knowledge, and feel like an integral part of the presentation.

3. Tell stories. I love using personal stories to connect and engage listeners. Detailed, true stories are like mini-movies in the audience’s head. Well-told stories help listeners reflect on their own lives while internalizing and acting on the messages. In addition, stories make it easy for listeners to explain and share your messages with others. That’s true engagement!

And secret 3.5, keep going after you’re “done.”

“Create natural breaks by asking the audience to join in.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 SHOW PASSION IN YOUR PRESENTATIONS.**
- 2 MAKE YOUR TALK CONVERSATIONAL.**
- 3 TELL STORIES TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE.**

HOOKING YOUR AUDIENCE



MATT HEINZ

President

Matt Heinz brings more than 15 years of marketing, business development, and sales experience from a variety of organizations, industries, and company sizes. His career has focused on delivering measurable results—greater sales, revenue growth, product success, and customer loyalty. Matt has held positions at Microsoft, Weber Shandwick, Boeing, The Seattle Mariners, Market Leader, and Verdiem. In 2007, Matt began Heinz Marketing to help clients focus their business on market and customer opportunities.



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There's one thing I've learned that immediately gets the audience focused and engaged: Tell a story first.

It's amazing. When I get on stage and the first words I use are, "Let me tell you a story," you can see the audience stop what they were doing, put down their phones, lean in, and listen. At this point, you have their attention. It's up to you to keep it with great content (and stories), but this is a great way to immediately get an audience engaged.

"Tell a story first."

KEY LESSON

- 1 START WITH A STORY TO PULL YOUR AUDIENCE IN.**

SOLVE A PROBLEM. TELL A STORY.



PAUL J. RADICH
Master Trainer

Paul Radich is an adjunct professor of Marketing and Ethics in Business and Economics at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. Recently named to the Ethics Committee of the American Marketing Association, he has been working with Dr. Andrew Abela on the development and delivery of the Extreme Presentation and Extreme Insight Generation workshops since their inception. He provides consulting and education services to major corporations on insight generation as well as effective communication of complex information.



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How can you engage your audience? The first answer to the question is, it depends on what kind of presentation you're making to what kind of audience. If you're trying to entertain or inform a large audience, use rich, relevant visuals; project it; and use minimal text. If you're trying to persuade or educate a smaller audience, use extensive, relevant detail; distribute it, don't project it; and make sure the overall layout of each slide communicates the main message of the slide. Why not project? Research shows that to persuade your audience, they need details, and the projection medium does not allow sufficient detail.

If you really want to make an impact, don't use more bells and whistles but rather a central route: Make sure that your presentation solves a problem for your audience. Otherwise, why are they listening to you? Show them how your proposal will help them solve a problem.

Finally, harness storytelling on three levels:

- Employ small stories or anecdotes at key points in your presentation to drive home a point or illustrate a key takeaway.
- Weave all of your information into an overarching story that solves a problem for your audience, anticipates their next objections, answers them by revealing details of your solution, and transforms your presentation into a dialogue.
- After you have your story line set, unleash the power of visual storytelling. Make sure that the layout of each slide is not a list of bullet points but rather a layout that communicates the main message of your slide.

“Solve a problem. Tell a story. Use slide layouts that reinforce the main message of each slide.”

KEY LESSON

- 1 USE STORIES OR ANECDOTES AT KEY POINTS TO DRIVE YOUR POINT HOME.**
- 2 WEAVE YOUR INFORMATION INTO AN OVERARCHING STORY THAT SOLVES A PROBLEM.**
- 3 USE VISUAL STORYTELLING.**

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: LEARNING FROM FEEDBACK



TERRY GAULT

Managing Partner
and VP of Services

Terry Gault oversees all curriculum and services at The Henderson Group and is responsible for the selection, training, and development of all of its trainers and facilitators. Terry has a 20-year career in film, television, radio, and theatre as well as being director of customer service in manufacturing companies. He recently co-launched a video production company designed to help companies “illustrate your complex message in a simple, fun way so that anyone can understand it in 3 minutes or less.”



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Blog

Receiving frank assessments about yourself from others is often not easy and can be an emotional experience. Here are a few tips on how best to prepare yourself to receive feedback, to be receptive and leverage the value of the comments you receive from others:

- **Relax.** Feedback is an adventure of discovery into yourself. Be willing to entertain new ideas about yourself. Some of the comments you receive might be useful, others not. Even if not all that's said is accurate, you just might learn something from the small part that is.
- **Be a sponge.** Resist the urge to explain. Listen respectfully, acknowledge the comments, and avoid explaining your actions. When you explain, you are likely to be perceived as defensive.
- **Ask for clarification.** Ask if there were certain words, gestures, or expressions that created the impression the listener received from you. Listen carefully to these details.
- **Write down the comments.** This information will be even more valuable after a couple of days, and you might find it easier to get past any emotionally charged words or issues you had at the time the comments were made.
- **Practice Kaizen.** “Continuous improvement.” Embrace the philosophy that has made Toyota the world's premier auto manufacturer. When you practice this mindset, you will begin to see that all feedback is an invaluable gift—an invitation to examine yourself with fresh eyes.

Let us heed the words of poet Robert Browning: “Oh what a gift he could give us; to see ourselves as others see us.”

“Feedback is an adventure of discovery into yourself.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **BE WILLING TO ENTERTAIN NEW IDEAS ABOUT YOURSELF.**
- 2 **RESIST THE URGE TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF.**
- 3 **WRITE DOWN THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVE.**

DON'T BE BORING, AND DON'T BE "THAT GUY"



TROY CHOLLAR

President and Co-founder

Troy Chollar is the president and co-founder of TLC Creative Services, where he leads a team of talented designers in a studio that specializes in presentation design. He has been awarded by Microsoft as an MVP for PowerPoint annually since 2004. Troy enjoys all aspects of visual design and has a special focus on speaker support presentations that involve dynamic animation, multimedia integration, high-impact visuals, and collaboration with AV teams to make it all come together.



Website



Blog

As a presenter, you focus on your message, pacing, smile, and (my specialty) presentation graphics. But all presenters need some inside information so they don't become "that guy." Let me explain. The event audiovisual (AV) team is responsible for your presentation, microphone, announcement, videos, lighting, and how the audience experiences you. This behind-the-scenes team is either going to save you when things go awry or after the meeting talk about "that guy."

What should you, the presenter, do when arriving at a meeting?

- Say hello to the AV team; become a person to them, not another item on their checklist. Focus on this team first, and while they are making you look great, you can focus on your audience.
- Know what version of PowerPoint, Keynote, or Prezi the meeting is using, and use the same.
- Provide multiple presentation options should things go wrong—the presentation file, your computer, and a PDF version.
- Test your presentation file. Check fonts, video, audio, animations, etc.
- Wear microphone-friendly clothes. Have a belt, pockets, or waistline for the microphone pack.
- Take off your (reflective) conference name badge, especially for the camera.
- Don't take off, turn off, or mute your microphone unless the AV team gives the okay, but do get the audio person (to whom you already said hello) to confirm that you are muted until you are on stage.

Have the audience remember you and your topic. From my experience backstage, that starts with the AV team. Have them like you and not talk about "that guy!"

KEY LESSONS

- 1 MAKE SURE YOU GET TO KNOW THE AV TEAM FOR YOUR PRESENTATION.**
- 2 USE THE SAME VERSION OF POWERPOINT, KEYNOTE, OR PREZI AS THE AV TEAM.**
- 3 PROVIDE OPTIONS SHOULD THINGS GO WRONG.**

"Provide multiple presentation options should things go wrong—the presentation file, your computer, and a PDF version."

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ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE



GAVIN MEIKLE

Presentation Skills
Trainer and
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Gavin Meikle is an engaging presenter and trainer who has a wealth of interpersonal communication and presentation skills training experience. He also blogs extensively about presentation skills and related topics. Gavin recently released the first in a series of bite-sized business books called *The Presenters Edge* on Amazon Kindle. He runs a small communication skills training consultancy in Southampton in the United Kingdom. When not speaking or coaching, Gavin loves to walk by the sea.



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Blog

think the secret to effective audience interaction is to believe that your audience will do what you ask.

Some years ago, I was standing for election as an international officer in JCI. There were 24 candidates; each had to make a five-minute speech to 3,000 delegates, and I was drawn 15th. Listening to the preceding speakers, I realized that I would need to do something different. With five minutes to go, I “got an idea” and tore up my speech.

I walked confidently on stage and asked everyone in the audience to stand and stretch. When everyone did I was delighted. Then, I asked them to remain standing and to sit down only if they could answer “yes” to the question, “Have you been a member for less than one year?” I went on to ask several other questions that were designed get more and more people sitting until only I was left standing. Finally, I concluded by saying, “Now you have a good idea of my experience, and if you like my style, vote for me.” And you know what? They did! I was told afterwards that the audience interaction was the key.

“The secret to effective audience interaction is to believe that your audience will do what you ask.”

KEY LESSON

- AUDIENCE INTERACTION IS THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL PRESENTATION.**

THE HONEST TRUTH



**GEETESH
BAJAJ**

Principal / Owner

Geetesh Bajaj has been a Microsoft PowerPoint MVP for 13 years. He has been designing and training with PowerPoint for 15 years and heads Indezine, a presentation design studio and content-development organization based out of Hyderabad, India. Geetesh believes that any PowerPoint presentation is a sum of its elements, including abstract elements like concept, color, interactivity, and navigation, and also slide elements, like shapes, graphics, charts, text, sound, video, and animation.



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You may hear all sorts of advice about how you can become a successful presenter, but it all starts with honesty. And by *honesty*, I don't just mean that you have to be honest with your audience. You must also be honest with yourself. Sometimes, that may be difficult, but this is one of those things that you just have to do.

I remember traveling to another city to do a training session. The organizers had assured me that the audience wanted to learn advanced skills in slide design, and they were all aware of the basics. I felt that there was something wrong around five minutes after my session began, however. The audience was looking blank—and this was even before I started engaging them.

The solution was easy: Start by asking them about basic slide design skills. That was enough to realize that I would have to start from the beginning, but the problem was that the audience was promised a completely different set of skills!

It was time to be honest—with the audience and with myself. So, that's what I did. I told them that I could get started with the basics, and, depending on how much they learned, I would try to cover all skills promised to them, but we wouldn't rush them with these skills. The audience agreed.

Fortunately, this was a two-day session, and we were able to cover lost ground. The audience was with me all through those two days, because they supported my honesty. So, that's how we made a hopeless situation end up as a win-win result for all of us.

“You may hear all sorts of advice about how you can become a successful presenter, but it all starts with honesty.”

KEY LESSON

- 1 BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF AND YOUR AUDIENCE.**

A NIGHT AT THE IMPROV: USING IMPROVISATION TO TEACH EFFECTIVE SALES SKILLS



JILL KONRATH
CEO

Jill Konrath is the author of *AGILE SELLING*, *SNAP Selling and Selling to Big Companies*. Using fresh strategies that actually work with today's crazy-busy buyers, she helps sellers create new opportunities, sell more to existing clients and speed up sales cycles. Jill's blog is read by more than 125,000 salespeople globally, and she's a frequent speaker at sales kick-off meetings and conferences. Her expertise has been featured by ABC News, *Fortune*, *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *Entrepreneur* and *Inc.*



I live in fear of being boring. I speak to a tough audience—experienced sales pros. If you can't quickly capture their attention, they write you off as irrelevant.

That's why I've taken to using improvisation early in my presentations. I have a fake office set up on stage, complete with a phone and computer. The scenario? A morning in the life of their targeted prospect, who just happens to be me. I rope in five people from the session to play my colleagues, each of whom gets just one minute to prep for their role.

The improv begins with me giving a quick overview of what I'm working on that day. Then, one by one, my colleagues come into my office with a problem. I deal with it the best I can, and they quickly move on. By the time they've all visited me, my schedule for the day is ruined.

What happens? First of all, everyone has a good time with the improv. It's edgy, and no one knows what's coming next (me included). Plus, it's their buddies on stage. That's fun. But more than that, it makes a key point: Today's crazy-busy prospects have no tolerance for blathering, ill-prepared salespeople.

Now, they're ready to listen to my ideas!

“If you can't quickly capture their attention, they write you off as irrelevant.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE IMPROVISATION EARLY IN YOUR PRESENTATIONS.**
- 2 USE THE IMPROVISATION TO MAKE A KEY POINT ABOUT THE AUDIENCE MEMBERS' TARGET FOR SALES.**

MAKING IT HAPPEN: BUILDING A PROGRAM TO YOUR ENGAGEMENT



KEN THORESON

Founder

During the past 15 years, Ken Thoreson's consulting, advisory, and platform services have illuminated, motivated, and rejuvenated organizations throughout the world, and Ken is recognized as an expert in sales execution, revenue generation, compensation, forecasting, recruitment, and training within the sales function. In addition to three books based on his *Sales Management Guru* series, Ken's blog has been rated in the top 10 sales blogs in the United States.



Twitter



Website



Blog

Engaging the audience is always the secret of a successful keynote, whether it's emotional or a physical act where attendees are actively involved with your program. Obviously, platform work is involved, body language, voice inflection, but to increase the power of your program, I believe you need to build to your engagement.

In my program, *Gourmet Living: Creating a Menu for your Life*, I discuss various aspects of creating a more successful life—both professionally and personally. The talk is based around my hobby of cooking and life experiences; I show a variety of food pictures and tell a variety of stories. During the session, I discuss the three ingredients that I believe lead to a gourmet life and discuss the need for life balance—then, I bring out a Personal and Professional Pizza for each attendee, each pizza having eight slices.

(In reality, the pizzas are in paper format.)

I then ask each person to score him- or herself personally and professionally by each of the eight categories (slices of life) so the attendees can see where they are in balance and where they need to focus to create a gourmet life. Each person leaves with this assessment and a recipe card that they can use to remember the event and begin a life enrichment program.

Allowing the audience to connect the dots of my program with a physical activity that is related keeps everyone stimulated—with memory.

“Allowing the audience to connect the dots of my program with a related physical activity keeps everyone stimulated.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 BUILD YOUR PROGRAM TO YOUR ENGAGEMENT.**
- 2 GIVE THE AUDIENCE A PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THAT IS RELATED TO YOUR TALK.**

USING AUDIENCE CHATTER TO YOUR ADVANTAGE



**LISA
BRAITHWAITE**

Public Speaking
Coach

Lisa Braithwaite started performing at the tender age of three, when, confronted by her mother about why there was Comet cleanser all over the bathroom, she responded, “Out, damn’d spot! Out, I say!” She’s been traumatized by bathrooms ever since. Lisa’s philosophy of public speaking: That it’s fun, that it’s an awesome way to express yourself creatively, and that passion and enthusiasm are worth more than a thousand techniques. See her site at coachlisab.com/coachbio.html for more information.



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A lot of speakers find it disruptive when the audience starts murmuring and talking amongst themselves while the speaker is trying to pontificate or make an important point. If this is something that flusters and annoys you, reframe it as an opportunity rather than a bother.

When the audience gets excited enough during your presentation to start talking to each other, it means you’ve got a hot topic. This used to happen to me a lot when my primary audience was teenagers. So, I learned to make the most of this opportunity by harnessing that energy and my audience’s desire to share their experiences in the moment.

First, stop talking. Then, tell the audience that you’d like to take a few moments for discussion. Break them up into small groups or pairs, and ask them to informally discuss the topic for two or three minutes. Then, come back and have one person from each group or pair share what was discussed.

Ideally, you will already have audience interaction built into your presentation. This tip is for those times when you’re caught off guard! View this distraction as a way to channel your audience’s enthusiasm and put it to work for you. They will be more engaged if you treat them as collaborators rather than troublemakers.

“When the audience gets excited enough during your presentation to start talking to each other, it means you’ve got a hot topic.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE AUDIENCE CONVERSATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY RATHER THAN A NUISANCE.**
- 2 USE THIS CONVERSATION AS A CHANCE FOR DISCUSSION.**
- 3 USE SMALL GROUPS OR PAIRS, AND HAVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS SHARE WHAT THEY DISCUSSED.**

LEADING YOUR AUDIENCE: MAKING YOUR TALK RELEVANT



LORI RICHARDSON

Revenue Generation Expert

Lori Richardson helps sales professionals at mid-sized technology companies grow revenue by uncovering opportunities and finding creative answers to age-old issues. She has published three books on selling and is the author of an award-winning blog. Lori is also president of the group Sales Shebang for top women B2B sales experts.



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hen was the last time you sat in a ridiculously boring presentation? If you're like me, it happens far too often. Combat this business affliction by helping create better presentations yourself.

Focus on what is important to the audience in front of you, and attempt to pique their curiosity.

Because I present to multitasking sellers who are often participating more as “prisoners” than willing participants, there is no time for long, drawn-out, self-focused talking. Right from the start, I’ve found that a two-fold strategy is critical. I must admit that I’m far from perfect but seem to get better as time goes on, because the real key is in understanding your audience. My audience is much more specific now than it used to be. Hence, I’m starting to “get” them.

First, you must lead with an interesting point, question, or statement that has a good chance of catching the audience’s attention. Here’s an example from a Webinar to new inside sales professionals:

“Did you know that four out of five new sales positions are for inside sales and that you have the opportunity to grow sales quicker (and make more money) than your outside counterparts?”

Start off strong, talking about them, not you. If you talk about you, have it relate to them. Next, work to incorporate something of interest—something challenging or amazing.

If you do this, chances are the rest will fall into place.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOUR AUDIENCE.**
- 2 **LEAD WITH AN INTERESTING POINT, QUESTION, OR STATEMENT.**

“Lead with an interesting point, question, or statement that has a good chance of catching the audience’s attention.”

BACKING UP YOUR POINTS WITH STORIES



MARK HUNTER

Founder

Mark Hunter helps companies identify better prospects, close more sales, and profitably build more long-term customer relationships. Since 1998, Mark has conducted thousands of training programs and keynotes in sales. He is best known for his ability to motivate and move an organization through his high-energy presentations.



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You must share stories that drive your points home if you want to engage your audience and get them to participate.

For example, when I talk about the importance of listening, I always share an experience I had when I went with a client on a sales call so that I could better understand the client's industry. This particular sales rep was calling on physicians' offices. As she approached the front desk, she asked for a certain physician.

The receptionist said, "The doctor is not here. He is *in* the hospital." The sales rep did not listen well and instantly assumed that what the receptionist meant was that the physician was at the hospital making rounds, so she asked when he would return.

The receptionist had said, though, that the physician was in the hospital. He had actually had a stroke and was not expected to regain consciousness. Understandably, the sales rep was embarrassed by her poor listening skills. Sharing this story was an incredibly effective way to illustrate my point about listening skills.

When it comes to engaging your audience, you have to share stories that vividly back up your points, or your audience will most certainly forget your points.

"When it comes to engaging your audience, you have to share stories that vividly back up your points."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 SHARE STORIES THAT DRIVE YOUR POINTS HOME.**
- 2 OFFER STORIES THAT VIVIDLY BACK UP YOUR POINTS.**

ENSURING PARTICIPATION IN YOUR PRESENTATIONS



**MATT
EVENTOFF**

Founder

As the owner of Princeton Public Speaking, Matt Eventoff has conducted communication and public speaking training for clients in the United States and abroad, including Central America, the Middle East, and Asia. Matt has been cited by *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Forbes* and has lectured about communication, messaging, and public speaking at universities. He is the professional advisor to the Princeton University student organization, Speak with Style.



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In any presentation, a key to audience participation is establishing a connection with members of the audience. I'm a firm believer that you can establish a connection before you even begin to formally present!

A presentation can begin before an individual takes the stage or reaches the front of the room. A presentation begins the first time an audience member encounters the speaker. And this can be used to your benefit the next time you speak.

So, how can you establish this connection and the participation that follows?

Introduce yourself before your presentation is scheduled to begin. "Hi, I'm Matt Eventoff. It's a pleasure to meet you."

Whether speaking to 30 or 300, I try to arrive as early as possible and position myself at the entrance of the room in which I'm presenting and introduce myself. If that isn't possible and I am already in the room, I try to meet the few people surrounding me. This changes the mood in the room immediately, as now I am no longer speaking to a room full of strangers. There are now at least a few friendly faces and a few folks on whom I can count to participate—and participation typically begets participation.

"Participation typically begets participation."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 ESTABLISH A CONNECTION WITH THE AUDIENCE BY INTRODUCING YOURSELF BEFORE YOU BEGIN TALKING.**
- 2 ARRIVE AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE, AND GREET PEOPLE AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE ROOM IN WHICH YOU'LL BE SPEAKING.**

INCREASE YOUR AUDIENCE'S ATTENTIVENESS WITH RHETORICAL QUESTIONS



MAX ATKINSON

Founder & proprietor

Max Atkinson is a British communications researcher and consultant who runs courses, coaches speakers, blogs, and writes books on presentation and public speaking, further details of which can be found on his Web site and blog.



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The more you use key rhetorical techniques like contrasts, three-part lists, and rhetorical questions, the less likely you are to bore your audience. If you say something that gets an audience wondering or anticipating what's coming next, their attentiveness and involvement will increase.

But it's not always quite so easy to find an example that provides a clear demonstration of how a rhetorical question actually works—until television editors come to the rescue, as happens [in this clip from the speech](#) by U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron at his party conference.

When Mr. Cameron pauses at the end of his three-part rhetorical question, the camera cuts away to the audience, where a woman on the left of the screen nods in agreement with his anticipated answer. You don't have to be an expert lip-reader to see that she says, "Yes," about two seconds before the same answer from Cameron triggers a more generalized display of agreement (applause).

It's also worth noting that there are people like this woman who respond more visibly than others in most audiences—and very useful they are, too, because they provide a continuing barometer of how well (or badly) you're doing.

"If you say something that gets an audience wondering or anticipating what's coming next, their attentiveness and involvement will increase."

KEY LESSON

- 1 USING RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES KEEPS YOUR AUDIENCE ENGAGED.**

WAITING FOR AN ANSWER: GIVING YOUR AUDIENCE TIME TO RESPOND



NICK MORGAN, PH.D.
President

Dr. Nick Morgan is one of America's top communication theorists and coaches. A passionate teacher, he is committed to helping people find clarity in their thinking and ideas, and then delivering them with panache. He has been commissioned by Fortune 50 companies to write for many CEOs and presidents and has coached people to give congressional testimony and to take on the investment community. Nick is a former Fellow at the Center for Public Leadership at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.



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hat's the difference between a conversation and a speech? Everyone wants to have conversations, but how many people want to sit through a boring one-way speech during which the speaker dumps information on captive listeners until they yearn for death?

So, the right question to ask yourself if you don't want to be boring is, how can you make your speech into a genuine conversation with your audience? The answer is surprisingly simple. There is a secret, and you can put it into practice with your next speech.

Here's how it works. Many speakers begin their talks with some lame variation of, "How are you today in (NAME OF LOCALE)?" They're trying to make conversation, but it doesn't feel like a real one. Why? Because they don't wait for the answer. They're caught up in their own adrenaline, pumped up or terrified to be standing in front of the audience. So, they ask they question and plunge on in a nanosecond, without waiting for the audience to respond.

The secret to making even a speech feel interactive is to wait. Let the audience have time to respond—even if they don't do it out loud. Wait to see the recognition in their eyes or in their body language. Only once they have responded to your questions, comments, and insights should you continue. If you let the audience in by waiting for them, you will make even a speech feel like a conversation, and you won't be boring.

“The secret to making even a speech feel interactive is to wait. Let the audience have time to respond, even if they don't do it out loud.”

KEY LESSON

- 1 ASK QUESTIONS, THEN GIVE YOUR AUDIENCE TIME TO ANSWER IT RATHER THAN RUSHING ON.**

ARRIVING EARLY, STAYING LATE



**RIC
BRETSCHNEIDER**

Bon Vivant
Consultant

Ric Bretschneider is a technologist and problem solver whose interests outstretch his available time by a significant magnitude. Currently, he consults, making the world a safer place through better presenters. Ric spent 17 years on the Microsoft PowerPoint team, building features you love and fear. After leaving, Microsoft awarded him PowerPoint MVP status, and he's been active in that program for four years. Ric blogs at ricbret.wordpress.com.



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A great presenter arrives early and leaves late. Be sure not to mix that up. Arriving early, go out into the audience and greet them. Don't chat with management, the show organizers, or other presenters. Your audience is more important.

Talk to as many as you can, and get to know them. What's their name, their background? Why are they here today? What do they need to get from your presentation?

Be sincere: This is not a trick. Believe that you're going to make their lives better. For every person you chat with, 10 to 20 others will notice and listen in. It's surprising how much empathy and support you can gather this way.

I recently spoke before a group of administrative assistants from 30 city offices in the Bay Area of California. For the most part, my knowledge of them was abstract, from some summaries I'd received. In the few minutes before the presentation, through a half-dozen conversations, I had relevant backgrounds that I used to compose targeted questions and suggestions. Our interactive dialogue went smoothly, with tremendous participation.

When people know you understand them, they open up more.

And stay late, past any formal Q&A, to take additional direct questions. Not everyone feels comfortable talking in front of an audience. A hallway contact can lead to more opportunities.

"A great presenter arrives early and leaves late."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **ARRIVE EARLY AND LEAVE LATE.**
- 2 **MAKE A POINT TO TALK TO AUDIENCE MEMBERS BEFORE AND AFTER THE PRESENTATION.**

POINTING THE WAY: USING SIGNPOSTING TO KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE ON TRACK



**SIMON
RAYBOULD,
PH.D.**
Director

Dr. Simon Raybould is one of the United Kingdom's leading presentation trainers. He earned his Ph.D. in statistics, where he realized that the problem most people have is that although their content might be *really* interesting, if they can't convince people of that, nothing they do matters!

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Presentations are about engaging your audience. If you don't do that, you're better off sending a memo. One of the big problems is the audience's ability to concentrate.

Here's a trick.

Consider replacing your single 20-minute presentation with four five-minute presentations, segued together. Think of them as clearly marked chapters, with titles and blank pages—just like a book. And also like in a book, each chapter naturally leads to the next, but each is independent and can be read on its own.

Before you get carried away, though, remember that (just like in a book) your audience needs a table of contents before you start to know what the overall story is. Give your audience the structure!

Ask yourself what signposting you can use to help everyone know where they are in your “story”: Slides with chapter titles are useful (and black slides can be even better). Changing medium is good, too, as is just moving from one side of the stage to another.

To help the audience keep track of the “chapters,” I've used almost every trick for signposting under the sun, including having an assistant bring real signposts on to the stage. (Hat tip to Clare for being both slick *and* funny when she did it.)

“Consider replacing your single 20-minute presentation with four five-minute presentations, segued together.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 THINK OF YOUR PRESENTATION AS A BOOK WITH CHAPTERS, AND DIVIDE YOUR TALK INTO SHORTER PRESENTATIONS (THE CHAPTERS).**
- 2 PROVIDE THE AUDIENCE WITH A “TABLE OF CONTENTS” FOR THE TALK.**
- 3 INCLUDE SIGNPOSTING TO KEEP THE AUDIENCE ON TRACK.**

GET BUY-IN FROM THE HEART FIRST, THEN THE HEAD



STEPHEN SHAPIRO

Innovation Evangelist

Stephen Shapiro is an innovation evangelist who has spoken to more than 450,000 people in 44 countries. He is the author of five books, including the award-winning *Best Practices Are Stupid: 40 Ways to Out Innovate the Competition*, which has been featured on ABC News, CBS Interactive's BNET, and more. Stephen's clients include Nike, Microsoft, Staples, GE, NASA, BP, Johnson & Johnson, Pearson Education, and Bristol-Myers Squibb.



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Tell them what you will tell them, tell them, and tell them what you told them." For years, this is the approach that many speakers have used. From my perspective, it's bad advice. Instead, I prefer to follow Aristotle, who suggested, "Ethos, pathos, logos"—credibility, empathy, logic. His belief was that the best way to engage people is first to establish your credibility and build an emotional connection. Only after you have that do you give people the solution or logic.

I speak about innovation. Instead of telling audiences up front how to innovate (logos), I start with examples. Only when I have a strong emotional (ethos) buy-in do I tell them the point. For example, when I speak about problem definition, I start with an example of a company that used a common innovation technique . . . and failed. I then use a second example that seemed like a good idea but again had unintended consequences. Next, I use a third example that apparently addressed the issues of the first two failures but in fact went terribly wrong.

At this point, there is a lot of nervous laughter in the audience. I've talked about all of the things most companies do when they innovate. The pain has been created, and everyone wants to know how to do it properly, but I don't give the solution just yet. Instead, I share several examples of companies that got it right.

I'm 20 minutes into the topic, and I still haven't given the audience the answer. Only after people have completely bought in (emotionally and intellectually) through six or seven examples do I give them the punch line.

I say, "All of these examples—the successes and failures—make an important point: Don't think outside the box, find a better box." I dig deeper into what that means, how to make it a reality, and why it drives a 10x improvement on innovation return on investment.

People remember concepts through emotion and experience. Telling people what to do has little impact on behaviors. You need to speak to them at a much deeper level.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED YOUR CREDIBILITY SHOULD YOU GIVE PEOPLE THE SOLUTION.**
- 2 **PEOPLE REMEMBER CONCEPTS THROUGH EMOTION AND EXPERIENCE.**
- 3 **TELLING PEOPLE WHAT TO DO HAS LITTLE IMPACT ON BEHAVIORS.**

"People remember concepts through emotion and experience. Telling people what to do has little impact on behaviors."

AMAZING SECRETS FOR HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE



VICKI HITZGES

International Speaker

Vicki Hitzges loves people, and it shows. She landed her first job in the front office of the Dallas Cowboys where she was discovered by KTVT, who hired her to anchor the morning news in Dallas. She ultimately left TV to become a publicist. In 2004, Vickie earned the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, the highest designation awarded by the National Speakers Association. Vicki's clients include Chase Bank, New York Life, the CIA, and Microsoft.

You'll enjoy Vicki. (And, if you want to hear fun, behind-the-scenes scoop from her years of reporting about celebrities like singer Bette Midler, comedian Bill Cosby or actor-director Ron Howard...just ask!)



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- Laughter is contagious. If people sit too far apart, it doesn't "contage."
- Get down there with them, but make sure they can see you! If you're too low or you have your back to people, you'll lose 'em.
- Be positive! If you aren't sold on your activities, your group won't be, either.
- Divide people into groups of three instead of four to rev up the interaction. Always add, "Don't leave anybody out!"
- People don't want to look like a goof. If you plan to put anyone on the spot, explain privately what you'd like them to do, and get their permission before you speak.

I have a talk about zapping stress, and as I discuss each tip, audience members do all kinds of stress-zapping activities—many in front of the room.

Because speaking in public alarms most people, one activity requires that I ask three people in advance to come onstage after they hear what I want them to do. To demonstrate that talking relieves stress, I have the three each yell, "You know what *really* makes me mad?" We yell back, "No! What?" Each one rants his or her reply. It's fun and funny to hear what they say.

This activity can be intimidating. By finding live wires ahead of time, there's no resistance, and participants give fabulous answers. Everyone laughs and learns.

"Laughter is contagious. If people sit too far apart, it doesn't "contage."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **BE POSITIVE: IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE, YOUR AUDIENCE WON'T, EITHER.**
- 2 **IF YOU'RE GOING TO PUT SOMEONE ON THE SPOT, GET THEIR PERMISSION AHEAD OF TIME.**

NO UNNECESSARY INFORMATION



VIVEK SINGH

Communications
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Vivek Singh is a communications consultant based in India. He has been working with clients and running a popular blog for more than five years, offering a pragmatic approach to presentation.



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I use various techniques (sometimes together) to engage my audience. One, I ask a lot of questions. Two, I challenge the audience to predict what comes next in the presentation. Three, I reward the audience for active participation in exciting ways.

Once, I was presenting to a groups of students about how TV advertisements are made. Most presenters would go step by step and cover the entire subject. I chose a different route in which the audience did most of the talking. I asked my audience to imagine that they needed to make an advertisement right now. How would they do that? What steps would they follow?

I put the audience members in a real-life situation. I kept covering all the steps slowly and asking questions. What will you do now and why? This method worked wonders, and everyone actively participated. I ensured that everyone was involved, challenged, and given a chance to think and contribute.

I follow the advice that no information should be given without making the audience feel the need for it. Ask them questions, and make them realize that they need to know the answer. Make them commit to an answer, and then reveal the correct answer.

“No information should be given without making the audience feel the need for it.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS.**
- 2 **CHALLENGE THE AUDIENCE TO PREDICT WHAT COMES NEXT IN THE PRESENTATION.**
- 3 **REWARD AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION.**

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MAKE IT ABOUT THEM



**GAVIN
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Gavin McMahon is a founding partner at fassforward Consulting Group. He blogs about PowerPoint, presenting, communication, and message discipline at makeapowerfulpoint.com. You can follow him on Twitter @powerfulpoint.



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ake it about them. A few years ago, a major advertising agency came to us and told us, “We have great creative work, but our clients don’t sign off on it. How do we make them like the creative?” The answer, it turned out, was simple: Make the work about them.

No matter how rational we like to think we are, we take action based on deeper triggers, and then rationalize the decision afterward. Emotional triggers work well, but the ones that really work are when you make it personal and make it relatable.

The smallest details can matter. Calling something a *fiscal cliff* sounds way more ominous than *raising the debt ceiling*. A cliff we can fall over; there’s nothing dangerous about a ceiling. Saying that we’ve increased our churn by 0.2% doesn’t sound like too big a problem. We lost 3,000 customers last month? That’s something we can act on.

“No matter how rational we like to think we are, we take action based on deeper triggers, and then rationalize the decision afterward.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **MAKE YOUR PRESENTATIONS PERSONAL AND RELATABLE.**
- 2 **THE SMALLEST DETAILS CAN MATTER.**

GETTING PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION



GUY KAWASAKI

Author, Publisher,
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Guy Kawasaki is a special advisor to the Motorola business unit of Google. He is also the author of *APE*, *What the Plus!*, *Enchantment*, and nine other books. Previously, he was the chief evangelist of Apple. Kawasaki has a B.A. from Stanford University and an MBA from the University of California, Los Angeles, as well as an honorary doctorate from Babson College.



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ake Prospects Talk

If prospects are open to buying your product or services, they will usually tell you what it will take to close them. All you have to do is (a) ask questions to get them talking about their needs, (b) shut up, (c) listen, and then (d) explain how your product or service fills their needs (if indeed it does). Most salespeople can't do this because (a) they're not prepared to ask good questions, (b) they're too stupid to shut up, and (c) they don't know their product or service well enough to know whether it can in fact fill the customer's needs. When it comes to rainmaking, there's clearly a reason why we have two ears but only one mouth.

Provide a Safe, Easy First Step

Unfortunately, "unsuccessful rainmakers" (an oxymoron?) make it difficult for prospective customers to adopt their products or services. I've been guilty of it myself—for example, asking Fortune 500 companies to throw out all their MS-DOS machines in favor of a new IT infrastructure based on Macintosh computers. (What can I say? I was young then.) The goal is to make the adoption of your product or service as safe and easy as possible. If you combine this stress-free approach with a compelling product or service, you've got it made. If your prospects have to jump through hoops to adopt your product or service, then you must convince them that doing so is worth the effort. Incidentally, this is why it's so much easier to be a blogger than to be an entrepreneur.

"The goal is to make the adoption of your product or service as safe and easy as possible."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **MAKE YOUR PROSPECTS TALK SO THAT YOU CAN ASSESS THEIR NEEDS.**
- 2 **MAKE THE ADOPTION OF YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE AS SAFE AND EASY AS POSSIBLE.**

TRYING NOT TO TRY: ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE WITHOUT FEAR



JEREMEY DONOVAN

Principal

Jeremy Donovan is Chief Marketing Officer of American Management Association International. He is the author of four books, including the international public speaking best seller, *How to Deliver a TED Talk*.



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If there is a secret to “getting” people to take action as a result of your presentation, it’s that you should not try to “get” them to do anything. Just tell a story—a personal story—with authenticity. If they feel what you felt, they will take action.

Of course, being an authentic storyteller is easier said than done. Although I have no more than an armchair understanding of Buddhism, the core concepts of mindfulness and compassion that comprise enlightenment strike me as the keys to authenticity.

Using Noel Burch’s “Conscious Competence” learning model, let’s explore this analogy:

- **Stage I:** Unconscious incompetence. A public speaker in this stage stands up without fear, delivers a terrible presentation, and then sits back down without awareness of how poor his or her speech went.
- **Stage II:** Conscious incompetence. An individual knows that public speaking is a critical part of sharing ideas worth spreading, but they have not yet learned *how* to be an effective communicator.
- **Stage III:** Conscious competence. I refer to individuals in this stage as “expert speakers.” They know, for example, to speak loudly and slowly or to make deliberate eye contact for three seconds in a random pattern.
- **Stage IV:** Unconscious competence. Here is where Buddhism comes back into the picture. Individuals in this stage are “enlightened speakers;” they are “experts who speak” rather than “expert speakers.” To be mindful in a public speaking context is to be one with your content, free of expectations of what may result from your speech.

The fascinating thing about being in Stage IV is that you do not get there by learning. You get there by *unlearning*. Watch young children speak: They inspire with great passion and know no fear. Enlightened speaking is inside all of us; we simply have to share stories and ideas we are passionate about with people we care about and without regard for what came before or what will come after.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **TELL A PERSONAL STORY TO HELP YOUR AUDIENCE EMPATHIZE.**
- 2 **INSPIRE YOUR AUDIENCE WITH PASSION AND WITHOUT FEAR.**
- 3 **SHARE STORIES AND IDEAS YOU’RE PASSIONATE ABOUT.**

“If there is a secret to “getting” people to take action as a result of your presentation, it’s that you shouldn’t try to “get” them to do anything.”

WHY CHANGE? MAKING THE AUDIENCE SEE THE PROBLEM



JOBY BLUME
Managing Consultant

Joby Blume is managing consultant and co-founder at BrightCarbon, a specialist B2B sales presentation agency in Europe, the United States, and Asia. He has been working on sales messaging for presentations for the past seven years; during that time, he has helped clients to win billions of dollars in new business. Joby holds a first-class degree in PPE from the University of Oxford, an M.A. in Education from the Hebrew University, and an MBA from Manchester Business School.



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To get an audience to take action, you need to answer the question, “Why change?” But before the audience will listen, they need to feel that they actually might have a problem. Convincing people that they have a problem when they aren’t really listening can be tough.

I helped a client build a sales presentation for software that used complex algorithms to solve procurement problems. The problem they had was that buyers didn’t realize that they often solved these complex multivendor situations in a suboptimal way. It can be difficult to buy from the right vendors when you are trying to simultaneously consider quality, transport costs, volume discounts, storage costs, and input costs.

To bring home to their audience how difficult it was, we worked with the client to design a puzzle that seemed simple—a few products, a handful of suppliers, some price quotes—and they offered \$20 to whoever got the correct answer first. It looked easy. When audience members couldn’t get the answer for this simple case, they immediately understood that they would be wasting huge amounts of money on more complex procurements and might need software to help.

A puzzle brings interactivity, keeps energy levels up; the prize creates interest, and then when people understand they have a problem, you have a receptive audience. That’s the first step to encouraging an audience to take action.

“When people understand that they have a problem, you have a receptive audience.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 THE AUDIENCE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY HAVE A PROBLEM.**
- 2 USE A PUZZLE TO ADD INTERACTIVITY TO YOUR TALK AND KEEP ENERGY LEVELS UP.**
- 3 ADD A PRIZE THAT CREATES INTEREST TO WHOEVER SOLVES THE PUZZLE FIRST.**

FIGHTING FEAR: CHANNELING YOUR ANXIETY FOR BETTER PRESENTATIONS



JONATHAN FARRINGTON

Chairman, CEO,
Author, Mentor, Sales
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Jonathan Farrington is the CEO of Top Sales World and the managing partner of Jonathan Farrington & Associates, where their philosophy is, “Continued education enriches sales performance and personal growth.” Jonathan posts daily on his award-winning blog, *The JF Blogit*, which attracts visitors from all around the globe and affords him the opportunity to share knowledge gained from 40 years of experience in sales and marketing.



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The *Book of Lists* has accumulated and ranked a dazzling assortment of fascinating topics. Among them is the list of “mankind’s worst fears.” Many think that death is our greatest fear, but no, that’s tied for sixth place with sickness. Rather, our greatest fear is the prospect of having to stand up in front of an audience and give a presentation.

Interestingly, the most common problem among inexperienced presenters is the “fear of fear,” the feeling that they will be unable to overcome this nervousness, but the adoption of certain basic principles can help to control nerves:

- **Learn to control your anxiety and use it to fuel your enthusiasm.** Identify what you are afraid of (e.g., forgetting your lines, the audience’s size), then establish whether you can control it. Learn how to control your nerves and reduce your anxiety. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare; know what is going to happen and when.
- **Visualize.** Get into the habit of visualizing how the presentation will go. That way, the environment will feel familiar, even if it’s your first time. Imagine the end of your presentation and your audience smiling with appreciation.
- **Drying up.** Make bullet point notes on individual postcards to prompt you. You may not need them, but they will give you that “comfort zone.” Remember to number them, just in case you accidentally shuffle them.
- **Relaxation.** Before your presentation, take some time to relax, breathe deeply, go out into the fresh air, and clear your head. Don’t rehearse the entire presentation in your head; instead, simply concentrate on your opening lines.

Finally, practice, practice, practice!

Remember that of the three key elements in any presentation—the audience, the content, and the presenter—the presenter is the least important.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING IS NATURAL: LEARN TO CONTROL THE ANXIETY AND USE IT TO FUEL YOUR TALK.**
- 2 **PRACTICE ONLY THE OPENING OF YOUR PRESENTATION, NOT THE WHOLE TALK.**
- 3 **USE RELAXATION TECHNIQUES BEFORE YOU TAKE THE STAGE.**

“Of the three key elements in any presentation—the audience, the content, and the presenter—the presenter is the least important.”

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: APPLYING CONCEPTS FROM PRESENTATIONS



KELLEY ROBERTSON
President

Kelley Robertson is passionate about helping sales people improve their results and earn more money. He helps sales people master face-to-face sales calls and meetings, and in the past 18 years, he has conducted hundreds of workshops for thousands of sales people in a wide range of industries. He is the author of two books, numerous articles, a weekly newsletter, and a regular blog. Get a free copy of *100 Ways to Increase Your Sales* by signing up for his free newsletter.



Getting participants in my workshops or presentations to take action is one of the biggest challenges I face as a sales trainer. Sometimes it's because they are glued to their routine or because they don't know how to apply the information.

This hit me about 15 years ago, when a sales person asked, "You've given us a lot of information; how do we actually apply it?"

I suggested that he take one concept and focus on integrating it into his routine for one full week, and then repeat the process until he had applied all of the key concepts from the program. Several months later, he called and reported that he had seen a noticeable change in his results. Since then, I have included a Blueprint for Success plan in most of my sales training workshops because it gives people structure and focus.

People often expect instant results, so it's important to remind them that they won't achieve perfection when they first apply a new concept, but like any new hobby or skill, the more they practice, the more proficient they will become. When people start to see results, they will be more motivated to continue taking action.

"Of the three key elements in any presentation—the audience, the content, and the presenter—the presenter is the least important."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 INCLUDE A PLAN IN YOUR WORKSHOPS OR PRESENTATIONS TO GIVE ATTENDEES STRUCTURE AND FOCUS.**
- 2 REMIND ATTENDEES NOT TO EXPECT INSTANT RESULTS.**

MEETING DEATH BY POOR PLANNING



MARSH MAKSTEIN

Presentation
Design Consultant

As a longtime true believer in the power of a well-designed presentation, Marsh Makstein initiated the concept that would become eSlide. While the business world was on the “death by PowerPoint” bandwagon, Marsh felt strongly enough about good presentations that he created a company that specializes in PowerPoint design and production. Marsh brings a unique combination of creative, technical, and managerial talent that provides clients with effective and efficiently produced visual media.



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For years there has been talk about “death by PowerPoint.” Presentation industry experts know that PowerPoint has never killed anyone, but “bad PowerPoint” has killed many meetings, most often because of poor preparation.

After 25 years in the business of designing and producing presentation visuals, in most cases the single biggest challenge in developing PowerPoint presentations is that there is never enough time. Preparing PowerPoint visuals is often one of the last tasks in a big project. Clients may have worked on a research project for 10 years before finally being given the opportunity to present their findings to investors. In some cases, a group of people worked on and negotiated a merger for 10 months and in the final stages need to present the plan to the board of the two companies to seal the multi-million-dollar deal.

In all likelihood, the success of the merger comes down to a single presentation, and the PowerPoint visuals can play an important role in communicating the key points effectively. However, the presenter has often forgotten or doesn’t understand that preparing good PowerPoint visuals takes time. The creative efforts to ensure that visuals assist in the critical communication rather than becoming a distraction or communication killer can quickly eat up time, especially when he or she has a fast-approaching, critical meeting deadline.

Whether you are presenting at an event to 500 or 1,000 people or to a small group of busy board members, you cannot change the scheduled presentation date or time. It’s do or die. You have one shot to make your message come alive and move people to action. Be sure you leave plenty of time to prepare the PowerPoint visuals and practice presenting them. Bring your ideas to life with preparation and practice.

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **GOOD VISUALS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN COMMUNICATING KEY POINTS.**
- 2 **LEAVE ENOUGH TIME TO PREPARE YOUR POWERPOINT VISUALS AND PRACTICE PRESENTING THEM.**

“In most cases, the single biggest challenge in developing PowerPoint presentations is that there’s never enough time.”

TRADING IN THE RHETORIC: USING SIMPLE QUESTIONS TO ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE



MICHELLE MAZUR, PH.D.

Communication
Consultant &
Speech Coach

Dr. Michelle Mazur helps introverted entrepreneurs and business professionals step into the spotlight and bring their message center stage, one compelling presentation at a time. She has a Ph.D. in Communication and is the author of the upcoming book, *Speak Up for Your Business*. She resides in Seattle, Washington, with her loving fiancé, two obsessive felines, and a huge collection of Duran Duran memorabilia.



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To move your audience to action, the key is to get them interacting early in your presentation. The audience should be a coconspirator in your presentation. The more they take small actions throughout your talk, the more willing they will be to take a larger one later.

The easiest way to ensure audience engagement is to trade in the typical rhetorical question for a question that they actually answer during the presentation. I give a presentation on creativity; one of the first questions I pose to the audience is, “What did you want to be when you grew up?” This answer is instantly accessible to listeners. The trick is using a question that is easy to answer. Some audience members shout out their answer even before I ask them to! If you’re speaking to a large audience, ask them to share their answer with a new friend. Then, keep the interaction going throughout the presentation. The more involved they feel in your presentation and the more a part of the experience they are, the more likely they’ll take action after your talk.

“The audience should be a coconspirator in your presentation.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 GET YOUR AUDIENCE INTERACTING EARLY IN YOUR PRESENTATION.**
- 2 USE A SIMPLE QUESTION THAT THE AUDIENCE CAN ANSWER RATHER THAN A RHETORICAL QUESTION.**

MESMERIZING YOUR AUDIENCE WITH STORYTELLING



MIKE SCHULTZ
President

Mike Schultz is president of RAIN Group, a sales training, consulting, and coaching firm. He helps companies around the world unleash the sales potential of their teams. Mike is also author of the *Wall Street Journal* bestselling, *Rainmaking Conversations: Influence, Persuade and Sell in Any Situation*, and publisher of RainToday.com.



In the latter half of the 1700s, German astrologist and physician Franz Anton Mesmer treated his patients by looking deeply into their eyes and waving magnets in front of their faces. Mesmer believed that barriers in our bodies disrupted the natural flow of the processes that gave us life and health. He further believed that his penetrating eye gazing and object waving restored the natural order inside his patients and relieved all sorts of maladies.

In fact, he is reported to have cured headaches, swooning, blindness, paralysis, and a long list of additional ailments (yes, even hemorrhoids). He became quite the celebrity, at one point touring major cities across Europe to demonstrate the efficacy and power of his medical advances. It is reported that as he worked with his patients, he would gain complete control not just of their actions but of their thoughts, perceptions of reality, and feelings.

When he did this, the patients were said to be . . . *mesmerized*. Thus, a new word was born. Why should you care?

- You're unlikely to forget the origin of the word *mesmerized* because you learned about it in the context of a story. (At least, you're more likely to remember it than if I simply said, "The word *mesmerized* originates from Dr. Franz Mesmer, whose techniques became the basis for modern-day hypnotism.")
- The best presenters use the power of story to mesmerize, doing what the good doctor did to his patients but without the magnet waving and creepy staring.

When buyers (or anyone) hear a story, they tend to relate it to their own experiences and conjure memories that stir emotions. People who can tell a convincing story are the best at connecting with audiences deeply and inspiring action.

* Edited and excerpted from *Insight Selling: Surprising New Research on What Sales Winners Do Differently* by Mike Schultz and John E. Doerr (Wiley, 2014).

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **LISTENERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO REMEMBER A KEY POINT IF IT'S EMBEDDED IN AN INTERESTING STORY.**
- 2 **PRESENTERS WHO CAN TELL A CONVINCING STORY ARE BETTER AT CONNECTING WITH AUDIENCES.**

"The best presenters use the power of story to mesmerize."

DRAINING THE MOAT: CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE



NEAL FORD

Director / Software Architect / Meme Wrangler

Neal Ford is director, software architect, and meme wrangler at ThoughtWorks, a global IT consultancy with an exclusive focus on end-to-end software development and delivery. He is also the designer and developer of applications, magazine articles, video/DVD presentations as well as the author or editor of eight books spanning a variety of subjects and technologies, including *Presentation Patterns*. Neal is an internationally acclaimed speaker, having delivered more than 2,000 presentations. Check out his Web site at nealford.com.



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The secret? Connecting with you as a person rather than as a speaker. Don't stand on a stage, which creates a moat, but on the same level as your audience. If you can get them to laugh (with appropriate, contextualized) humor in the first five minutes, they'll loosen up and follow you anywhere.

“The secret? Connecting with you as a person rather than a speaker.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 TALK FROM THE SAME PHYSICAL LEVEL AS YOUR AUDIENCE.**
- 2 GET YOUR LISTENERS TO LAUGH.**

GETTING THE PICTURE: HELPING YOUR AUDIENCE ACHIEVE SMALL VICTORIES



NOLAN HAIMS
Owner

With more than 20 years of experience in visual communications, Nolan Haims helps organizations and individuals show up differently and tell better stories with fewer words. Nolan speaks at national conferences and writes extensively on visual storytelling. Microsoft has recognized him as one of only 11 PowerPoint MVPs in the United States for his contributions to the presentation community. Read more at his site, PresentYourStory.com.



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Don't ask your audiences to go out and change the world. I know this goes against the trend of ultra-inspiring TED Talks, but to get people to take action, you have to give them small victories that they can achieve immediately. What can you give your audiences that they can go back to their desk and instantly put into practice?

I focus on making organizations better visual communicators, and this has the potential to become a heady and idealistic topic that, if presented only in this way, can lead to little if any actual change. But my approach is a balanced one in which I alternate between theory and the practical: I might first discuss the *Picture Superiority Effect*—a scientific principal that demonstrates that people process information far better as images than they do as text—but then I offer a handful of tips for actually using imagery effectively in PowerPoint presentations. Or, I'll discuss the importance of finding the story within one's data, and then immediately show how to use Excel to create a more effective chart.

By all means, inspire people to change the world. Just tell them how to take the first step.

“To get people to take action, you have to give them small victories that they can achieve immediately.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 TO GET PEOPLE TO TAKE ACTION, GIVE THEM SMALL VICTORIES THAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE IMMEDIATELY.**
- 2 PEOPLE PROCESS INFORMATION BETTER AS IMAGES THAN AS TEXT.**

FOLLOWING UP WITH YOUR AUDIENCE



SHARÍ ALEXANDER

Influence Specialist /
Professional Speaker

Shari Alexander is a self-proclaimed influence junkie. She has built her career as a speaker, writer, trainer, and coach by revealing secrets of enhanced communication techniques. She has made it her mission to discover the influential techniques that masterful communicators use and translate them to practical and strategic use in modern business. Certified in neurolinguistic programming, microexpressions, and body language, Shari's clients include Fortune 100 companies, CEOs, politicians, an NFL player, and New York Times bestselling authors.



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If “taking action” is your goal for your audiences, then here are your essential steps.

First, identify their problem and make them feel the pain. Humans are more likely to move away from pain than toward pleasure. People become numb to pain (big and small), so your first challenge is to use the power of your words to make them feel the discomfort of their problem.

The next step is probably the most intuitive one for speakers and trainers: Give solutions and action steps.

The next two steps, however, are what most people miss entirely: Get a commitment, and follow up. Yes, this is more work for you as a speaker, but if you want action, then this is what you need to do. Get a verbal or written commitment from your audience members. Then, have a system to follow up with them afterward. The least work-intensive version is to have them write out their action steps in a letter. Then, you mail that letter back to them 30 days after your presentation.

Get creative with your commitment, and follow up. You will see some amazing results from your audiences.

“Get a commitment, and follow up.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **IDENTIFY YOUR AUDIENCE'S PROBLEM, AND MAKE THEM FEEL IT.**
- 2 **PROVIDE SOLUTIONS AND ACTION STEPS.**
- 3 **GET A COMMITMENT FROM YOUR AUDIENCE MEMBERS, AND FOLLOW UP.**

GIVING PRESENTATIONS WITH A PURPOSE



SIMON MORTON

Founder and MD

Simon Morton's early career as an executive for an international technology company exposed him to more PowerPoint presentations than was good for him. A lesser man may have crumbled, but Simon opted for the "poacher-turned-gamekeeper" approach and decided to do something about it. In 2004, Simon founded Eyeful Presentations with two aims in mind: ridding the world of "death by PowerPoint" and enjoying a relaxing, self-employed, family future. He is currently awaiting publication of his first book, *The Presentation Lab: Learn The Formula Behind Powerful Presentations*.



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Presentations fail because they are delivered with the blind assumption that people know what to do with the information afterward. The reality is that unless you have a sure-fire way to excite or infuriate them into action, you're simply giving them the opportunity to ignore you.

The reliance here is on purely expressive communication; without stimulating its opposing force—receptive communication—you're unlikely to succeed.

Effective presentations need to be planned, from the very beginning, to stimulate a conversation in which every stakeholder can experience both sides of the communication process. Setting this as your goal from the start ensures that your audience is an integral part of your presentation and brings impressive results.

Conversations draw people in; they naturally include questions and answers (thus avoiding clumsy calls to action and "no-decision" conclusions). Conversations deviate to satisfy curiosity and explore connections. Conversations are interesting and engaging because they are not "delivered": They're experienced. And with modern technology on side, conversations no longer have to involve people being in the same room or even the same continent.

Everyone knows that a presentation has a purpose. The journey to that point is

"Presentations fail because they are delivered with the blind assumption that people know what to do with the information afterward."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS NEED TO BE PLANNED TO STIMULATE CONVERSATION.**
- 2 **CONVERSATIONS DRAW PEOPLE IN.**

BUILDING TRUST BY SELECTING THE RIGHT SPEAKER



SIMS WYETH

Founder

A graduate of Princeton University and the State University of New York, Sims Wyeth taught acting, voice, and speech at the Actor's and Director's Lab at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and served on the faculty of The New School for Social Research, where he taught Public Speaking and Training the Speaking Voice. Sims has worked with corporations to help executives and leaders convey clear, compelling messages to audiences.



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A presentation is a tool made of words, designed to help an audience make a decision or prediction, but the audience must trust the source of those words—the speaker. One of the first questions we should ask ourselves when preparing a high-stakes presentation is, “Who should deliver it.”

Years ago, a client asked me to help prepare a presentation to a regulatory body in Washington, D.C. The presentation, if successful, could earn the company hundreds of millions of dollars and possibly save the lives of many children.

Several accomplished senior executives volunteered to deliver the talk, but I selected two young women, both Ph.D.s in chemistry. One was a free-spirited Californian with a radiant smile, the other was born in the heart of Brooklyn—with the accent to prove it—and a heart of gold: She truly cared about the science and the people who would be affected by the decision. Unlike the executives who might have been seen as business oriented, these two people—a tag team of presenters—came across as having no motive other than to do what they felt was right.

Long story short, they won. The company was granted the right to proceed, saved many lives, and made a pretty penny. In the theater world, they say that casting is nine-tenths of directing. In the presentation world, you have a better chance of moving people to action if they trust you and your motives.

“One of the first questions we should ask ourselves when preparing a high-stakes presentation is, “Who should deliver it?”

KEY LESSON

- 1 THE AUDIENCE MUST TRUST THE SPEAKER.

COMMITTING TO ACT: CHALLENGING YOUR AUDIENCE TO SUCCEED



TIBOR SHANTO
Principal

A sales leader for more than 25 years and a principal with Renbor Sales Solutions, Tibor Shanto has been called a brilliant sales tactician and the top sales trainer in Canada, helping sales teams and organizations better execute their sales processes. Tibor is co-author of the award-winning book on trigger events and recently earned a gold medal for Top Sales and Marketing Blog in *Top Sales World's* 2013 Top Sales and Marketing Awards for his blog, *The Pipeline*.



The key is to engage the audience early and throughout the presentation. The challenge is doing it in a way that is unique for everyone in the audience, not as part of a mass. Many are looking for and respond to a personal experience. How, then, do you deliver a unique, individual experience?

I engage individuals directly and avoid the cookie cutter experience by leveraging something I learned back in school. People retain more when they write things down and even more when they act on it. I challenge the audience to write down things I say that strike a chord with them; it doesn't matter if it's new or something they knew but stopped doing. At the end of my presentation, I ask them to pick three of the things they wrote down that they commit to put into action. I encourage them to share it with someone or e-mail it to me. People will act if they feel accountable. I've handed out 3x5 cards, suggesting that they pin it up, look at it every morning, and ask, "What progress have I made toward my commitment?"

The outcome is unique to each participant. I don't tell them what to write down, which three to commit to: That's down to them. I just challenge them to listen, commit, and act. They choose, they own it.

"People retain more when they write things down and even more when they act on it."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 PEOPLE RESPOND TO A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.**
- 2 PEOPLE RETAIN MORE INFORMATION WHEN THEY WRITE THINGS DOWN.**
- 3 CHALLENGE YOUR AUDIENCE TO LISTEN, COMMIT, AND ACT.**

LEAVE 'EM LAUGHING: USING HUMOR IN YOUR PRESENTATIONS



**TONY
ALESSANDRA,
PH.D.**
CEO

Dr. Tony Alessandra helps companies turn prospects into promoters. As one client put it, Dr. Alessandra delivers college lectures in a comedy store format. In addition to being president of Assessment Business Center, a company that offers online 360-degree assessments, he is a founding partner in the Platinum Rule Group, a company that has successfully combined cutting-edge technology and proven psychology to give salespeople the ability to build and maintain positive relationships with hundreds of clients and prospects.



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hile being wheeled into the operating room after being shot by a would-be assassin, President Ronald Reagan got a chuckle when he wisecracked, “I hope the doctor is a Republican.” We may not all be so cool in a crisis, but we can all profit from a good sense of humor.

My suggestions for improving your sense of humor are as follows:

- Find out what your strong suit is, humor-wise. Ask a friend who’ll be honest with you.
- Research your audience. Find out who they are, what’s made them laugh previously.
- Work on your timing. Try out your best lines on your family, friends, and associates.
- If humor hasn’t previously been in your repertoire, proceed slowly. It’s better to use humor sparingly than to be remembered as a buffoon or insensitive.
- Sprinkle humor throughout your talk, not just at the beginning or end.
- Make it relevant to the subject, not just a funny line you paste onto your speech for laughs.
- Remember that some of the best stories are those you tell on yourself. A little mild self-deprecation can go a long way toward making your audience feel at ease with you.

Such conversational first aid not only makes the group more persuadable but helps you both keep your perspective.

“A little mild self-deprecation can go a long way toward making your audience feel at ease with you.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 FIND OUT WHAT YOUR HUMOR STRONG SUIT IS**
- 2 RESEARCH YOUR AUDIENCE.**
- 3 MAKE YOUR HUMOR RELEVANT TO THE SUBJECT.**

MAKING YOUR POINT THROUGH QUOTES



TRISH BERTUZZI
President

Author Jonathan Franzen said, “One-half of a passion is obsession, the other half is love.” With that in mind, ask anyone who’s met Trish Bertuzzi and they’ll tell you, she is passionate about inside sales. Since founding The Bridge Group in 1998, Trish has promoted inside sales as a community, profession, and engine for revenue growth. In the process, she and her team have worked with more than 225 B2B companies to build, expand, and optimize inside sales efforts.



I’m a fan of using quotations in presentations. They can serve as powerful launching pads for making your case or as points of emphasis to hammer home a message. I recently discovered a way to use quotations that sticks in an audience’s memory and, most importantly, gets them to take action. I call it the *coin technique*.

In short, I’ll share a quote that everyone in the audience is familiar with. This is the “familiar side” of the coin. Then, I’ll share a less well-known quote that instantly rings true but also challenges the first. This is the “flip side” of the coin. The ultimate point is for the audience members to challenge their own thinking and commit to taking action.

As an example, if I were presenting on inside sales management, I might share the following: “You can’t manage what you can’t measure.” That quote is instantly familiar and gets heads nodding. I might then share this less-known quote from Rear Admiral Grace Hopper: “You manage things; you lead people.”

It instantly clarifies the first. Measurement is a part of what managers do, but it isn’t the why. The why is about people.

“Measurement is a part of what managers do, but it isn’t the why. The why is about people.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 USE QUOTATIONS IN YOUR PRESENTATIONS AS LAUNCH PADS FOR YOUR KEY POINTS.**
- 2 USE TWO QUOTES: ONE FAMILIAR, ONE LESS SO.**

DEMO YOUR STORY



**TUDOR
GÎRBA, PH.D.**

Innovation Lead

Dr. Tudor Gîrba received his Ph.D. from the University of Berne, and he now works as innovation lead at CompuGroup Medical Schweiz and as an independent consultant. Dr. Gîrba advocates that assessment must be recognized as a critical software engineering activity. He developed the humane assessment method and is helping companies rethink the way they manage complex software systems and data sets.

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Facts are boring. Stories make them interesting. It's one thing to expose the facts about climate change and another to tell a story about it. One leaves the audience indifferent, and one gets the audience excited. Al Gore tried the first one for decades. He had all the right data, but it took him to dress it in a story to get noticed. Yet, what truly brought it to life was him climbing on a stage crane to show what an off-the-charts value truly means. That's the power of a demo.

We crave concreteness. We want to sense. Our imagination thrives on examples. Tap that opportunity. Get the audience to experience your story. Don't just talk about it: Demo it.

A good demo materializes your story and puts energies in motion. But demoing is more than just marketing. It's a design tool, too: When you demo, you cannot get away with big words. You have to show your story's worth. It's the best feedback mechanism you have available.

Demoing is a skill, and like any skill, it can be trained. Regardless of the subject, there is always an exciting demo lurking underneath. It just takes you to find it . . . and to do it.

“We crave concreteness. We want to sense. Our imagination thrives on examples. Tap that opportunity.”

KEY LESSONS

- 1 GET THE AUDIENCE TO EXPERIENCE YOUR STORY THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS.**
- 2 SHOW YOUR STORY'S WORTH.**

3 RULES FOR GETTING A RESPONSE TO YOUR PROSPECTING E-MAIL



WENDY WEISS

President

Wendy Weiss is the Queen of Cold Calling. She is an author, speaker, sales trainer, and sales coach recognized as a leading authority on lead generation, cold calling, and new-business development. Her clients include Avon Products, ADP, Sprint, and thousands of entrepreneurs throughout the country. Wendy has been featured in the *New York Times*, *BusinessWeek*, and *Entrepreneur Magazine* and is the author of *Cold Calling for Women: Opening Doors & Closing Sales*.



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Prospecting E-mails vs. Marketing E-mails

Propecting E-mails vs. Marketing E-mails
There is a difference between marketing e-mails and prospecting e-mails. A *marketing e-mail* is one communication going to many. A *prospecting e-mail* is one communication going to one individual. Your prospecting e-mail must sound like it was written by you, not your marketing department.

Be Clear

The rule in a cold call or a cold e-mail is that you must be clear. If your prospect does not understand what you are talking about, that prospect will simply delete your e-mail. On the phone, your prospect will say, "I'm not interested" and hang up.

Craft Your Message

Focus your e-mail on challenges you resolve for customers or outcomes you're able to achieve for customers. Take time upfront to ensure that you're communicating exactly what you want to be communicating.

Although these three rules will not guarantee a response, following them increases the possibility that your prospect will see you as someone who is credible with an interesting offering and thus will be more likely to respond. If you'd like help increasing the number of appointments you're able to schedule, I invite you to download my complimentary eBook, *The Cold Calling Survival Guide: Start Setting Appointments in the Next 24 Hours*.

"The rule in a cold call or a cold e-mail is that you must be clear."

KEY LESSONS

- 1 **UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PROSPECTING E-MAIL AND A MARKETING E-MAIL.**
- 2 **BE CLEAR, AND CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE.**

FINAL REMARKS

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading this book. Did any of the essays spark your imagination? Have you been inspired to try something new? If so, then we've succeeded.

First, I want to thank the good folks at ClearSlide for making this book possible. Their generous support for this project is just one small example of their ongoing commitment to transforming the workplace. I also want to thank each of our presentation experts for taking the time to share their thoughts and insights. Most importantly, I want to thank you for taking the time to teach, share new ideas, and lead people.

Although tools can make a world of difference in how we communicate and work together, it's people like you who are changing our world for the better. I hope the ideas in this book will help you make an even bigger impact.



All the best,
David Rogelberg,
Editor

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Open clearslide. Close More Deals.



CRUSH YOUR NUMBER

Transform the way your sales team engages customers



Over the **Phone**



Through **Email**



In-Person