10 Steps to Delivering a Successful Presentation
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## Presentations Today

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Presentations Today
10 Steps to Delivering a Successful Presentation

PRESENTATIONS TODAY

Being able to give a strong and clear presentation is fundamental to career success. However, creating a presentation and effectively delivering it is a task easier said than done. So many careers rely on a person's ability to speak and present in front of a group of people, whether in person or virtually, yet very few people are comfortable doing so. The fear of public speaking, glossophobia, is at the top of the list of most common phobias in the world, and 74% of people suffer from some sort of speech anxiety. Unfortunately for these people, if you appear nervous while presenting it can negatively affect your credibility and prevent your story from resonating with your audience.

The key to giving a successful presentation is to be well prepared and confident. Almost everyone has created a presentation in PowerPoint at least once, but this tool has grown stale. There are a variety of options out there that people are using in place of PowerPoint; some are even using PDFs because they are smoother and more reliable.

However, it's not just the tools you use to present that need to be improved. The content, the way you present, and how you interact with the audience is just as important. It is important to stay engaging and make sure your message sticks with your audience even after they leave or log off.

Carmine Gallo, a keynote speaker, author and communication coach, explains the following...
“In the information age you are only as valuable as the ideas you have to share. Poor presentation skills mean that leaders fail to inspire their teams, products fail to sell, entrepreneurs fail to attract funding, and careers fail to soar.” The points Gallo makes are spot on.

Poor presentation skills can do a lot of damage to a career and a business, especially if it means you are not making your arguments clear. Being a confident presenter immediately lets you step out from the crowd and be remembered.

**Making Presentations Together**

The process of creating a presentation in today’s business world often involves not only more than one person, but more than one department. The classic “too many cooks” problem occurs, and things can get messy. Marketing teams are usually responsible for arming the sales team with the most effective, on-brand deck to use when doing their sales pitch. The two teams work together, outline the story to be told, design the deck according to brand standards, and the sales team can go sell. Sounds easy, right?

Well, if you’ve ever been a part of this storyline, you know it is not that simple. According to CSO Insights, marketers spend many hours each week creating decks, but 90% of this collateral is never used by sales reps. They report that salespeople spend around 30 hours per month searching for and creating their own selling materials. All of this wasted time won’t happen if the presentation creation process is smooth and aligned on the front end.
The Ten Steps
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THE TEN STEPS

Preparing for and creating an effective presentation does not have to be a daunting task. Here we will go through 10 steps that have been proven to help you deliver the presentations of your life.

STEP ONE: Research

The first thing to do when you are preparing for any type of presentation is to do research. Whether you have the topic picked out or not, digging in will help you zero in on your story. Ask yourself some important questions up front: What are you going to be presenting on? What information will support you? There are statistics out there for anything you can imaging, so do your due diligence and find recent ones. There is nothing that can hurt your presentation more than being called out on a statistic that is 5 years old.

Let the information you find during your research guide the story in your presentation. Don’t veer dramatically off course, but keep in mind that you are looking to educate yourself so that you can educate your audience.

If you haven’t determined a title (if you need one), this step will help. A useful tool that may also help is Hubspot’s Blog Topic Generator. You provide three nouns and it generates five possible titles for you to use. For example, typing in presentations, sales, and technology, generates the following:

- How to Solve the Biggest Problems with Sales
- 7 Things about Presentations Your Boss Wants to Know
- 10 Things your Competitors Can Teach you About Technology

These are excellent blog titles, you can see how they’d be helpful in shaping your presentation as well.
Tool Tips!

**Marketing Charts** - Marketing data + charts for marketers, analysts, consultants. They give the option to download the spreadsheets and slide decks of information to incorporate into your presentations.

**Industry Dive** - A digital media company that publishes business news and original analysis for people in all industries. They have separate publications focused on marketing, healthcare, retail, HR, education, and others.

**eMarketer** - An independent market research company that provides data and trends related to digital marketing, media and commerce. They have articles, interviews, and even publish what reports will be coming soon.

**Forrester** - An independent company that focuses on technology and market research. They provide advice on the existing and potential impact of technology, to its clients and the public.

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**TIP:** A very important note to make about statistics! Don’t go overboard, as too many stats is not just annoying to viewers, it’s not necessary. After a presentation, 63% of attendees remember stories; only 5% remember statistics. So even if you found 20 amazing stats while you were doing your research, they are not all necessary. Pick and choose which ones to use wisely.
STEP TWO: Outline

An outline is critical to communicate your ideas as efficiently as possible. You are telling a story and an outline lets you see the overall flow and double check that it works. If you are getting your presentation approved by a third party, an outline is a great way to show the big picture.

When creating your outline, don't be afraid to put sticky notes on a whiteboard! Choose your 3 to 5 high-level topics, and the points that go under each, kind of like writing an essay in school.

There is a website called thinkoutsidetheslide.com that has some great presentation tips. The following diagram is from there and is one example of how to create your outline. Visualizing can be extremely helpful in this case, and you'll see this outline breaks it down into topics, points, and supporting information.
STEP THREE: Expand Your Outline

Once your outline is approved, it's time to begin adding in all the research and ideas you have collected up to this point. As you do this, you'll see the life of the presentation come to light. Some presenters try and skip this step to save on time, but your final deck can actually take longer to build if you don't get it all down on paper before hand.

A best practice to use is to turn your outline into numbers, and then treat each as though it is a slide. It's just like creating a website; you wouldn't start building unless you knew the content and layout you wanted. The same rule applies here with presentations.
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STEP FOUR: **Build Your Deck**

Now it is time to put your expanded outline into an actual deck. This can be whatever tool you prefer, whether it is PowerPoint, Keynote, or Photoshop. You can always use a presentation tool like Ecos that will allow you to track the analytics of your presentation and see how people are engaging and interacting.

A lot of these tools have some helpful features to build out your decks easily if you have already created your outline. For example, PowerPoint has a feature to create slides based on an outline you upload. It works best with a simple outline, and can save you some time.

STEP FIVE: **Simplify**

Now that you’ve dumped all your ideas, statistics, and information into your deck, you need to go through with a fine toothed comb. Just because you are going to say it out loud, doesn’t mean you have to put it in writing on your slide.

There is nothing worse than watching someone do a long-winded presentation. The audience’s eyes start to glaze over or they stare at the clock. If it is a virtual presentation, your audience could simply drop off or do other things on a different screen. Reiterate to yourself over and over, less is more.
Instead of referencing the “attention span smaller than a goldfish’s” stat, it is more worthwhile to your presentation creation to keep the 10-minute attention span in mind. The 10-minute attention span is about how your audience’s attention drops continuously throughout your presentation.

John Medina is the analyst who first uncovered this data. He wrote a book called “Brain Rules” and his advice is to break up your presentation into 10-minute chunks. When creating your presentation, ask yourself if there is a smooth way to do something emotionally relevant or take a short pause from content at 10 minute marks. Whether it is a personal story or a question to the audience, find what works for your presentation.
STEP SIX: **Design**

Images, videos, and graphs are critical to the visual engagement of your presentation. Some of the statistics you came across during the research step probably have supporting graphs or charts; use those. Same goes for video – one minute of video is worth 1.8 million words, according to Forrester Research. So don’t be afraid to incorporate video into your presentation.

New research shows that visuals are processed 60,000 times faster in your brain than text. Many advertisements today don’t even use text, they stick with images as that is all it takes to get a message across. Referencing back to the 10-minute attention span, try incorporating images or video at the 10 minute mark to invoke emotion.

**TOOL TIPS!**

Here are some tools for you to check out that will be useful during the design step:

- **ThinkStock** *(subscription)*
- **123rf** *(credit-based)*
- **StockSnap.io** *(free)*
- **placeit.net** *(number of downloads)*
- **Google “labeled for reuse” image search***
STEP SEVEN: Set Up

The biggest flub presenters make is not knowing the technical aspects of their set up. Speakers walk into a room 5 minutes before a presentation and panic when they realize they don’t know how to connect their laptop, or need a USB drive to put their presentation on a master computer, or any other number of problems.

It gets even messier when you move this to a virtual space, like a webinar or webex, and you have more than one speaker in different locations. That is when you need to start answering the questions – Who will be clicking to the next slide? Can everyone have presentation control? How will the question and answer section be handled? What if audio goes out for one speaker? It is far better to be prepared ahead of time. If you are going to be calm, cool and collected before a presentation, knowing your set up beforehand is key.

Here are some helpful questions to run through at least one week before a presentation:

- Where are you doing the presentation?
- Do you need it on a USB drive?
- Are you using a projector?
- Do you need an adapter?
- Will you need a microphone?
- Will you present via a web connection?
- How will you run your Q & A?
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STEP EIGHT: Dress Rehearsal

Get into the space where you will be doing the presentation and run-through, start to finish. This is how you'll become more comfortable saying it all out loud. If you can't physically be in the location where you'll be doing the presentation ahead of time, find somewhere similar to do your rehearsal. A room of the same size, or same set up, will still help.

It's important not to do your dress rehearsal alone. Bring a friend or colleague to listen and give you feedback. This is when you'll find out if the overall flow works, if the videos work, and if your jokes work. Plus, just speaking in front of someone else is helpful to mentally prepare for speaking in front of a large group of people, which doesn't come easily to all.

This quote by Somers White, says it all: “90% of how well the talk will go is determined before the speaker steps on the platform.”

“90% of how well the talk will go is determined before the speaker steps on the platform.”
– Somers White
STEP NINE: **Present**

When it's time to do your presentation, you'll be confident and successful if you've completed all steps leading up to this one. Doing the work on the front end, researching and knowing your set up, will leave you feeling comfortable and prepared.

*One of the most important tips to keep in mind during your presentation: DON'T BE A ROBOT.*

If you show that you have a personality, people will be far more engaged. A presentation is a story, and there is a reason that professional storytellers are so animated and sometimes even dress up. They do that to make the story real and relatable.

Another best practice to use while you are presenting is making your statistics easier for your audience to understand. You found amazing data and statistics while researching, and you scrubbed through to make sure you didn't have too many. However, sometimes the numbers we uncover aren't easy to comprehend.

The tip here is to use this phrase: “that's the equivalent of.” Those four words can bring life to the most obscure numbers. For example, “5,000 acres of land were affected - that’s the equivalent of 5.75 Central Parks. People are more familiar with how big Central Park is and will better understand the information.”
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STEP TEN: **Follow Up**

The final step is your follow up. You gave a great presentation, people were engaged and were asking questions. However, what happens when the presentation ends? Everyone signs off or leaves and they immediately start thinking about the thousands of other things going on in their lives. So if you want to make sure your audience gets something out of your presentation, a follow up is key.

A good practice to follow is to give the audience any materials you referenced or discussed during the presentation. Sometimes this could also mean sending the deck itself. There are times when presenters have created a deck for the live presentation, and a different deck to send as the follow up. The live deck is minimal, with mostly images and charts to speak to, and the follow-up deck has more information and text for the audience to better remember the material you covered. Whatever route you choose, any follow-up is better than none at all!

**TOOL TIPS!**

*Doing a presentation at a live event?* It’s always a good idea to bring Social in and engage your audience in real-time. Here are a few tips to take engagement to the next level:

- **EventsTag**: A live Instagram feed that pulls in a specific hashtag for your event to display on a big screen for everyone to see.
- **TweetBeam**: Display photos posted to Instagram live at your event, conference, concert, wedding, or store.
- **HootFeed**: A live Twitter stream that can be displayed on screens around your event.
- **Twtpoll**: Create surveys on social media where users don’t need an account to be able to vote on a topic.
Takeaway

The one thing to remember is that everyone is capable of giving a great presentation. You just need to follow the right steps and be sure to do all the required work on the front end. The most important thing is to make sure your message sticks with the audience. Carl W. Buechner said it perfectly:

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”

– Carl W. Buechner
Want to know more about Ecos?

Ecos is a presentation tool that keeps teams aligned and on-brand. It is a platform for Marketing to arm Sales with the most up-to-date and on-brand content so everyone can create presentations quickly and close more deals.

We help you save time and protect the brand without changing the way your team works.

Find out more at ecosprez.com