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Presenting at Conferences

Sarah Simpson

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Presenting at Conferences
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1 Introduction

"I passionately believe that's it's not just what you say that counts, it's also how you say it – that the success of your argument critically depends on your manner of presenting it".

Alain de Botton

Conference presenting affords you a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Professional and personal standing can be greatly enhanced by a confident, well prepared, audience friendly and engaging delivery. It is however, a skill rarely taught and the result can be a presenter that looks (and sounds) truly terrified. This hesitant delivery does not pick up on audience cues (verbal and non verbal), is often read verbatim, is poorly designed and leaves an audience feeling uncomfortable or bored.

Giving a great presentation starts when you have your topic, title or subject and not when you stand up in front of your expectant audience. Planning therefore is key to your success and this book will examine; planning techniques, tools and tips as well as exercises and examples of good and poor practice.

By taking on board the contents of this book and finding your own style you will become a more confident, effective presenter and you will ensure you are remembered for all the right reasons!

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2 The 'Science Bit'

"There are two types of speakers in the world; the nervous and the liars".

Mark Twain

The fear of presenting can feel irrational and we can all struggle to comprehend why we should feel so apprehensive. After all what's the worst that could happen?

I often find people are reassured when they realise there is a physiological reason behind this state and further more if you learn to control these feelings they can be used to produce a presentation which is enthusiastic, passionate and engaging.

2.1 Fear and nerves.

The main concern that people have when presenting is their nerves. In my experience this can range from slight apprehension to full blown paralysis.

The good news is that you are not alone. Speech anxiety or glossy phobia is believed to effect up to 75% of the population.

As Jerry Seinfeld so eloquently puts it *"According to most studies, people's number one fear is public speaking. Number two is death. Death is number two. Does that sound right? This means to the average person, if you go to a funeral, you're better off in the casket than doing the eulogy!"*

So, where does this fear come from?

I often ask students and delegates to complete this phrase "*The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you….* "Without fail they write "die!". The actual phrase is "*The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public." – George Jessel*. Whilst this always raises a laugh and a knowing nod of the head, by understanding the science behind it we can control it rather than the other way around

2.2 Brain Structure

Fear of public speaking often feels like it comes out of nowhere and we can feel like the only person it affects. This is particularly true if you work in an environment with people who don't appear to have this trepidation.

When you experience fear it triggers your body's primeval fight-or-flight response – an instinctive, immediate reaction to danger that prepares your body to defend itself. Your body pumps adrenaline to your muscles and your breathing and heart rates increase pumping more blood through your body.

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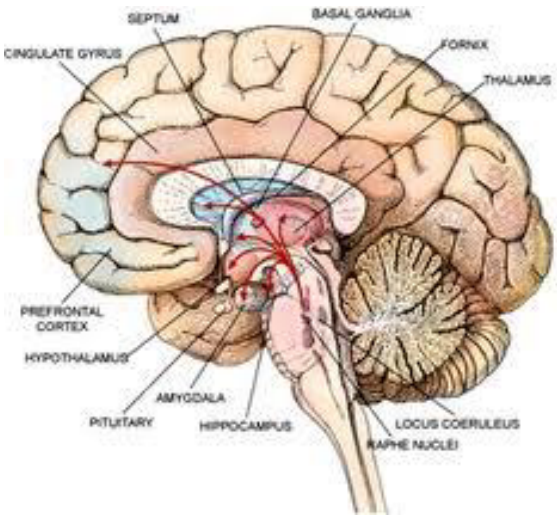

The brain's hypothalamus initiates this fight-or-flight response by activating the sympathetic nervous system (triggering nerves) and the adrenal-cortical system (dumping hormones into the bloodstream). The action of the sympathetic nervous system causes the body to become tense and very alert. Meanwhile, the hypothalamus alerts the pituitary gland to activate the adrenal-cortical system, which releases about 30 different hormones to prepare the body to handle the threat.

This hormone release causes the following physical reactions:

- Increase in heart rate and blood pressure
- Dilated pupils
- Constriction of veins in the skin – chilly sensation often associated with fear
- Increased blood glucose
- Tensing of muscles and goose bumps
- Relaxation of smooth muscles
- Shutting down of nonessential systems such as digestion and the immune system
- Difficulty concentrating on small tasks

Once the threat diminishes, the body releases the hormone cortisol to calm itself back down to normal.

The entire fight-or-flight cycle is part of a defence mechanism that has developed over thousands of years. Without it, your direct ancestors may not have been able to defend themselves or escape from predators or enemies.

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So, when you stand up to present your brain screams *"I am in a threatening situation and I might die!"* Whilst this is not actually the case, if we can control and limit this fear we can use any residual fight-or-flight response to give a passionate and enthusiastic delivery.

2.3 Flight, Flight, Freeze

Flight – you avoid public speaking at all costs and if absolutely forced will fly through your delivery at brake neck speed

Flight – I have never actually seen anyone run off the stage or out of a lecture but an overwhelming desire not to be put in this situation is very common.

Freeze – your mind goes blank, you lose your flow and momentum and "err", "hmm", and "erm" litter your delivery. Presenters who fear this happening often choose to read their entire delivery thinking that this will prevent this from happening. Actually the best way of preventing this is by the use of key words and phrases, more of which we will discuss later.

Exercise

How does presenting make you feel?

2.4 Mid Brain Nervousness

Your Mid Brain will make you nervous when you're reminded of a previous nerve-wracking experience. So if you have had a non to pleasant presenting experience, those strong emotional memories may come back. It is the patterns of thinking associated with this that form the basic of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

So, we need to change these patterns and demands which include thinking:

- I mustn't show that I am nervous
- I can't leave anything out
- I want to get the approval and respect of everybody in the room
- I mustn't waffle

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In order to control the power these thoughts have over you, you should look at each one in turn rationally and constructively. By doing so you are more able to put things into perspective.

Exercise

Complete the demand – perspective table below adding any demands or inner voice of your own

Demand	Perspective
I mustn't show that I am nervous	Controlled nerves keep you alert. You are then more responsive to audience cues and can use the associated adrenaline to be enthusiastic, passionate and energetic
I can't leave anything out	Presenting **is not** about telling the audience everything you know. The skill is in selecting the information that is essential to you message or aim being met
I want to get the approval and respect of everybody in the room	If you know your audience, their knowledge base and expectations and deliver a well planned, timed and delivered presentation you will have succeeded
I mustn't waffle	Planning, key words, clear visual and audio aids and bite sized chunks of information with well structured linkages limit extraneous words. Waffling often happens with a nervous presenter and this book will show you how to design a delivery such that many remaining nerves will be put to positive use

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3 Presenter types

"There are three things to aim at in public speaking;1st to get into your subject then to get your subject into yourself and lastly, to get your subject into the heart of your audience".

Alexander Gregg

Everyone has their own style of presenting, but in my experience there are three main types of presenter:

The powerful presenter
The nails-down-the-blackboard
The 'look at me'

3.1 The Powerful Presenter

- These presenters exhibit the following characteristics;
- Confidence
- 'Stage presence'
- Open gestures and body language
- Ability to adapt quickly to audience cues

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- Range of voice tone and speed
- Ability to use different aids
- Eye contact
- They look like its effortless, unplanned and organic (it isn't!)

A perfect example of this presenter and one which is often analysed is that of Apple's Steve Jobs. A great link can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ntLGOyHw4.

3.2 The nails-Down-the-Blackboard

These presenters exhibit the following characteristics:

- Griping onto the lectern as if their life depends on it (they think it does)
- The look of a condemned man / woman
- Wobbly, quiet hesitant speech
- Limited or no audience eye contact
- Unaware of how the audience is responding
- Reading word for word from notes (or over cluttered slides)
- Slides and other visual aids that make the audience work
- Over or under timing
- Hesitant Q and A session (or non at all)

3.3 The look-at-me presenter

These presenters exhibit the following characteristics:

- Unconcerned about the audience needs
- A desire to be the centre of attention
- A larger than life 'stage presence'

These presenters can be entertaining but the audience won't always understand their message.

Whilst the vast majority of us may never be as competent as Apples Steve Jobs, we can all learn the skills and techniques that allow us to deliver a confident, relevant, timely, professional enhancing delivery that is tailored to the needs of your audience (remember its not the 'you' show or the-tell-them-everything-I-know show). Moreover it will afford you the desire to do it again and not have you feeling like losing the contents of your stomach at the mere thought!

So, you probably know which presenter you would like to be? The good news is you are already an expert in presentations even if you haven't ever given one. Ask yourself "how many lectures / presentations / meetings have I sat through?", most people will have seen many more than they have given and so you will instinctively know what an audience wants and doesn't want – This is a perfect starting point.

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Exercise

How many presentations have I given?

How many have I been in the audience for?

What do I like / want to see in a presentation (what made it effective)?

What do I not like / not want to see in a presentation (what made it ineffective)?

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4 The 3 Main Elements

We can now look at the concept of effective and ineffective presentations further in term of:

- Audience
- Presenter
- Content

Exercise

Thinking about these three elements above complete the following table

Presentation 'elements'		
	Effective	Ineffective
Audience		
Content		
Presenter		

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4.1 Audience

Effective	Ineffective
Presentation tailored to audience; needs, knowledge and expectations Interaction between audience & presenter The audience; learnt something new, were inspired top take action etc The presenter gave the audience information that was relevant and in a format that was easy to understand	Presenter was more interested in themselves & looking good than they were in the audience The audience was offended by the presenters 'humour' The presentation wasn't; relevant, too highbrow or was pitched a too low a knowledge base Language and abbreviations were not relevant or explained No audience involvement

4.2 Content

Effective	Ineffective
Visual and auditory aids added to the presentation and its message and were clearly seen / heard The speaker used stories, anecdotes and metaphors to get their message across Humour was appropriate The content was structured, logical, signposted and easy to follow Succinct and to the point	The presenter relied solely on their voice – no visual / auditory aids Overused sound effects Moving slides and text Too many slides Slides read verbatim The audience was inundated with facts and figures so that the essential message was lost No structure, flow or signposting Anecdotes, stories and metaphors were irrelevant or offensive

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4.3 Presenter

Effective	Ineffective
Great body language: gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, smiling Varied tone of voice – not mono tone Lively delivery – not 'wooden' The presenter looks like they enjoy talking about their subject & were passionate & enthusiastic	Hesitant delivery – 'erm', 'er' Rigid posture No eye contact Ignored questions or was dismissive Reading slides and notes verbatim Didn't look like they knew their subject No enthusiasm or interest Monotone 'dull' voice – Spoke too quickly or quietly

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5 Presentation 'Ingredients'

The art of presenting can be summed up in 7 main 'ingredients'. If you consider all of these and tailor each delivery you will end up with a holistic presentation that is; well structured, gives the audience what they need and fulfils your main aims and objectives.

5.1 Effective preparation (The ACTIVE STOMP)

Audience
Contingency
TIming
VEnue

STOries
Metaphors
Presenter

5.2 Audience

> *"It's not just about how strongly you feel about your topic, its how strongly the audience feels about it after you speak".*
>
> Tom Salliday

For each and every presentation you must place your audience at its center.

Ask yourself:

- Who are my audience?
- What is their background?
- How many of them will there be – this impacts on how much interaction you can engaged in, what visual aids are appropriate and how your room / theatre could be arranged.
- What do they want / what are these people coming to my presentation?
- What are there expectations?
- How much knowledge do they have?

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Exercise

Think about a presentation you have given or intend to give and complete the following table.

Question	Answer
Who are my audience?	
What is their background?	
How many of them will there be?	
What do they want?	
What are their expectations?	
How much knowledge do they have?	

Answering these questions ensures your delivery is pitched at the right level and uses the best combination of audio and visual aids. Remember your presentation is not an opportunity to baffle the audience with everything you know or make you the focus. It is the information you give and how you give it that is central. How many times have you left a presentation and heard comments such as "I didn't have a clue what they were on about!" or "did they think we're daft, we already know all that!"

A prime example of a presenter who is reading from notes regardless of the audience cues is shown below. This is a valuable lesson which every presenter should watch and learn from.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tw6eh2-nxaA

5.3 Contingency

> *"It is a wise person that adapts themselves to all contingencies; it's the fool who struggles against the current".*
>
> Anon

Ask yourself – "how many presentations do you give with only one method of delivery" i.e. USB stick? For most people this will be one. Now ask yourself how many times you have watched a presentation which starts with frantic fumbling about of a laptop which appears incompatible or a disc / USB which "worked this morning" and now doesn't! This gives a poor impression of the presenter and makes the audience feel they were a second thought in the presentations planning.

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When planning for technical contingencies you need to:

- Always have a back up (if you are speaking at a large conference you will have to submit your presentation a few weeks beforehand)
- Beware of software version conflict. I find this happens more frequently with people who use power point
- If you are using Prezi ensure you will have a stable Internet connection
- Ensure laptop compatibility
- For apple users VGA cables should be supported

Other contingencies to consider include:

- Getting to your venue – if possible do a 'dry run' and ensure you have a back up plan for public transport or road delays
- Not all presentation venues have car parking or it needs prior booking
- How will you deal with your presentation being increased or decreased in length at short notice (we'll deal with this in the planning section)

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5.4 Timing

> *"Timing is everything; five minutes makes the difference between victory and defeat".*
>
> Horatio Nelson

This is one of the areas of your presentation which really highlights prior planning. When you ask students how they deal with timing a common answer is that "I just talk faster or slower" or "if I run out of time I leave out the Q&A (which I don't like anyway) and just miss out what I haven't got round to saying". Neither of these options falls under the category of giving a memorable presentation – unless you want to be remembered for all the wrong reasons that is.

The basic premise of timing is to prioritise information into 3 categories:

Must have – these are essential to meet your central presentation aim (the cake)
Would like to have – these are not essential but desirable (the icing)
Nice to have – these aren't required but if timing was no option you might include (the cherry)

This is discussed further in the planning section.

There also appears to be a urban myth when using slides that you must have a slide every set period time. With people on my courses this seems to be a slide every 20–30 seconds, and many of them stick to this religiously. I have yet to find the origin of this rule of thumb but, it is certainly not one I adhere to.

The other tip for timing is practice. This doesn't mean quietly in your head but rather out loud as timing will be different out loud.

Remember people often worry that practice will make them more rigid and less able to adapt – it wont as it actually makes you more able to respond to your audience without being 'thrown off course'.

5.5 Venue

> *"I have never experienced anything like walking out onto the stage of an oversold venue and, before the first note is struck, realising that there is never going to be enough oxygen for all of us".*
>
> Henry Rollins

Clearly we don't always have a choice when giving a presentation as far as venue goes. However, if you do ensure that the space works for you, your audience message and aim.

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Ask yourself:

- How do I get there, is there parking, how long will it take me in rush hour?
- What is the seating like (style, lay out, room to take notes)?
- What equipment is available and is it compatible with mine?
- If you are giving a small presentation, for example in a break out conference room can your audience move around and interact if required.
- Will be visual aids be accessible and visual to everyone? You should NEVER have to apologise to the members of the audience who can't see. How many times have you heard a presenter say "for those of you who can't see this it says/shows…!" You should know in advance that your venue, visual aids and audience are congruent.

This clip shows what happens when you have a 'bad' venue as well as giving examples of other 'crimes against presenting'. My student love this clip as they have all experienced elements in it!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX8sZ5CD2rQ

5.6 Stories and metaphors

> *"The metaphor is perhaps one of mans most fruitful potentialities. Its efficacy verges on magic".*
>
> Jose Ortega y Gasset

Since the beginning of time stories, oral and visual metaphors have been used to communicate messages and ideas and describe things in a way which is memorable and 'sticks in the imagination'.

When you present you can sometimes feel like you don't have enough time to get across everything you want to. It is also difficult for some people when they first start presenting to have the confidence to leave out that which is not essential. The use of metaphors and stories allows key messages to be delivered in an audience friendly but time saving manner.

The main rule-of-thumb is to ensure they are appropriate to your central aim and message (don't use them just because you like them), they don't offend, can be seen or heard clearly and don't break any copyright laws.

Examples

Visual metaphor

Using our metaphor from earlier – cake (essential info), icing (desirable), cherry (nice to have) we get.

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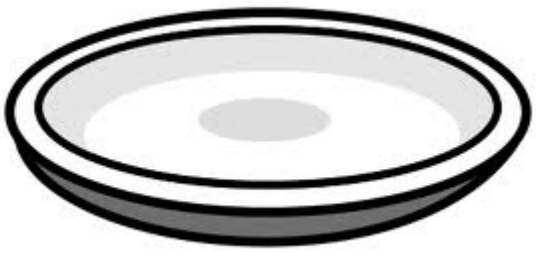
Planning your presentation is like making a cake = essential information, icing = desirable information and the cherry = nice to have information.

An effective presentation on the other hand could be represented by the visual metaphor of an empty plate after the audience has devoured the information you have effectively delivered.



5.6.1 Oral metaphor

> *"Learning is like a jigsaw puzzle. When you first lay the pieces out, it doesn't make much sense. When you start to connect the pieces, you then begin to see how it all fits together".*
>
> Anon

5.6.2 Stories

There are many fantastic stories availed with only a few click of a mouse but here are some of my favourites.

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5.6.3 Feedback

"A couple was sitting in a small coffee shop when a young man came up to the nearby pay phone. He dialled a number and when it was answered he said the following. *Hello Sir, I was wondering if the job you posted for an apprentice was still open?…Hmm, I see…Has he been on the job long?…Has he been doing a good job for you?…I see, well thank you very much*. and he hangs up. The couple next to him felt sorry for him and commented how difficult it was to find a job. The young man said it wasn't a problem, he had a good job. If it's a good job, why were you applying for another? I wasn't he said, I just wanted to find out if my new boss was happy with my work!

5.6.4 Self limiting thinking

This is particularly poignant if you have have bad experiences of presenting before and the importance of continually trying to achieve our objectives

The Elephant in the Circus

A little girl went to a circus and saw a huge elephant tied to a small pole with a rope, just standing there.

She asked the circus director why the elephant was so obedient and didn't break away from the stick with all of its enormous strength and mass.

The circus director told her that when the elephant was very young, it was tied to the pole the same way.

Naturally, it didn't like that and tried to escape all the time but the rope and the pole were too strong for it. So the elephant eventually gave up.

Later on, when it was older, the elephant still believed it could not escape from the rope, and remained standing in the same place, despite the fact it could then easily escape.

I particularly like painting a picture in the audiences mind with a story or oral metaphors as it gives you a unique opportunity to explore cultures, feelings, opinion, produce and assumptions in a non threatening and short amount of time. Optical illusions can also be utilised when presenting to large numbers of people where interactivity would often be difficult. These highlight how we can see the same things differently and how everyone's opinions are valid.

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5.6.5 Miscommunication

Memo from CEO to Manager:

Today at 11 o'clock there will be a total eclipse of the sun. This is when the sun disappears behind the moon for two minutes. As this is something that cannot be seen every day, time will be allowed for employees to view the eclipse in the parking lot. Staff should meet in the lot at ten to eleven, when I will deliver a short speech introducing the eclipse, and giving some background information. Safety goggles will be made available at a small cost.

Memo from Manager to Department Head:

Today at ten to eleven, all staff should meet in the car park. This will be followed by a total eclipse of the sun, which will appear for two minutes. For a moderate cost, this will be made safe with goggles. The CEO will deliver a short speech beforehand to give us all some information. This not something that can be seen everyday.

Memo from Dept. Head to Floor Manager:

The CEO will today deliver a short speech to make the sun disappear for two minutes in the form of an eclipse. This is something that cannot be seen every day, so staff will meet in the car park at ten or eleven. This will be safe, if you pay a moderate cost.

Memo from Floor Manager to Supervisor:

Ten or eleven staff are to go to the car park, where the CEO will eclipse the sun for two minutes. This doesn't happen every day. It will be safe, and as usual it will cost you.

Memo from Supervisor to Staff:

Some staff will go to the car park today to see the CEO disappear. It is a pity, this doesn't happen everyday.

5.7 Presenter

"Great presenters are not born – they are prepared".

Anon

Part of your preparation needs to be you as the presenter.

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Ask yourself:

- What can I bring to the event that others can't – what is your USP?
- What impression am I making how how will what I wear help or hinder this – remember to choose clothing that won't rustle in a microphone
- What can I do to get my message and key aim across in an audience friendly and interesting way?
- How can I give my presentation the X factor – you are not there to be a stand up comedian but a mix of visual, audio and interaction will ensure you are memorable
- What is my presentations main aim? – This is the central hub on which you will build your presentation around (see planning section)

Finally be you. Don't try and copy someone else's style – pick up tips and suggestions but make them your own and genuine. And don't take yourself too seriously. I find a little self depreciating humour does a long way in establishing a connection with the audience. This does not mean turning yourself into a stand-up comedian and offending half the audience with culturally, gander or general insensitivity. Students and delegates on my courses love to hear horror stories from my first attempts at presenting. It shows me too be human and they realize that actually, yes, they can learn to present as well.

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6 Planning

"Plans are nothing; planning is everything".

Dwight D Eisenhower

A well planned presentation will:

- Keep to time
- Achieve you and audiences' desired outcomes are met
- Be relevant and focused
- Flow logically with 'bite sized chunks' and signposting
- Keep the audience interested
- Reduce your apprehension and nerves.
- Allow you to have the most appropriate visual and audio mix
- Enable you to increase or decrease your time slot with minimal stress (adding nice-to-have and desirable themes and points to your core essential ones)

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We have already said that a key skill in timing, audience attention, flow and pitch is in deciding what you should include in your presentation and what you should leave out. When I work with research students this can prove particularly difficult as they have a desire to include all their work including every chart, piece of data, theory and methodology. The result is cluttered slides, images that are too small to read and an overloading of information which is at best challenging for the audience and at worst impossible.

If you ask people how they currently plan you will get a plethora of answers which include:

- Designing straight onto power point
- A white board
- Mind mapping either by pen-and-paper or ithoughts
- Writing longhand then putting onto PowerPoint
- Post it notes
- Blank printed boxes that represent slides which they fill in in hand
- Keynote (Apple)
- Nothing I 'wing it'!

Which ever method you use it has to be logical in its approach. Below is the method I teach. When doing this in a class I use large pieces of flip chart paper and post it notes which can be easily moved around as we develop and look at planning skills. You can use whichever method is most comfortable

6.1 Planning exercise

I have designed this exercise to not only show how to plan an effective presentation but to also highlight areas of planning 'weakness'. This exercise will give you an essential skeleton or frame on which to expand.

Exercise

A. Write the title or topic or your presentation and the time you have allocated (if you don't know how much time you will have 45 mins is a good place to start as far as conferences go).

B. Who is your audience, what is their experience / knowledge base.

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C. Write down all the points you would like to include using key words and phrases.

D. Group these individual points into themes (these will become the 'bite sized chunks").

E. What is your presentations main aim or objective? What are you wanting your presentation to achieve? What change do you want the audience to make?

F. Given you are now looking at designing your presentation around your aim rather than your topic or title go back and ensure your original themes and points still all do this. What do you need to remove or add?
Make any changes below (Rewrite themes and points space below).

G. Now look at each of your themes and points and identify which are essential, desirable and nice to have.

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You should now be left with only the essential themes and points that are required in order to achieve your central aim / message.

Now allocate approximate times to your themes and points.

Great! You now have a basic presentation structure and timing. So now check how much time you left for a great **introduction, conclusion and Q&A session**! When I run this exercise in a class the vast majority never build in these 3 elements. It doesn't matter if your presentation is 3 minutes or 3 hours long it must have a clear flow, pathway and 'signposts' and these elements alongside your bite sized chunks or themes are how you accomplish this.

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Introduction

This 'tells the audience what you are going to tell them' – it is essentially your themes.

Exercise

Identify your essential themes.

Your bite-size chunks, flow and signposting comes from introducing your theme, telling the audience your points within it and giving a mini theme conclusion. This 'tells the audience what you are going to tell them, tells them, then tells then what you have told them'.

For each theme write a mini introduction (key words are fine at this stage), then order your points and finish with a mini conclusion. The transitions between these themes are dealt with later.

Exercise

Identify your mini introduction to your theme, the associated points, and mini conclusion).

To finish your presentation proper you can then conclude using the mini conclusions you used for your themes. This part of your presentation should not contain anything new – it is a bigger version of the 'tell them what you told them'. In the case of smaller presentations or when you have the need to ensure the audience has learnt something (eg when teaching students) you may wish to add in another stage 'get them to tell you what you have told them'. There are various methods for doing this but I find the more interactive the better, especially if you can add an element of competition. Power point games and the use of apple or other android apps such as Socrative are fantastic for getting instant feedback which can then use to refine further presentations.

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The final stage of any presentation is Q&A and this alongside the initial introduction appears to be the most unnerving part of most people's delivery. This does mean that it should be skipped or you should allow your delivery to overrun so there there is no time remaining. I will deal with 'what's the worse that could happen later in.

You are now in a position to build a pathway of your entire presentation which should have the following elements and considerations: main aim / message, main themes and associated points, timing, introduction (main and themes), Conclusions (main and themes), possible visual, auditory and kinaesthetic aids, Q&A.

Exercise

Use the following template to create your own skeleton pathway and start to think about alternative visual and auditory aids that would enhance your presentation, add interest and allow you to provide get information across in a shorter time (you can always come back to this after you have read the 'Visual Aids' section, where I look at the options open to you, the pros and cons of each and examples.

Presentation Title:
Audience numbers:
Audience knowledge base
What's the audience expecting?
Main Aim / Message:
Main introduction:

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Theme 1 (include timing): (you will need to complete one of these for each theme) Mini introduction: Points: Mini conclusion Possible visual, auditory and kinaesthetic options:
Main conclusion:
Q&A considerations:

You now have a really solid foundation on which to start filling out your presentation, adding substance, flair, interest and your own stamp. Delivering a presentation is about using the tools and tips I can give you whilst making it your own. Without this individualisation you will feel uncomfortable and it looks false, staged and as if you are delivering someone else's material.

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7 Substance, Flair and Interest

What do I say and do at each stage of my presentation?

> *"A good presentation…can be a delightful experience, an elegant performance, a memorable show for its audience"*
>
> Osmo Pekonee, Author and mathematician

Stage 1 – starting your presentation

Stage 2 – the outline and transitions

Stage 3 – methodology (if appropriate to your presentation)

Stage 4 – results

Stage 5 – conclusions / close

Stage 6 – Q&A / managing the audience

Stage 7 – audience recap (if appropriate)

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7.1 Stage 1 – starting your presentation

This section builds on the 'Introduction' element in the skeleton outline we developed earlier.

I never advise trying to memorise your entire presentation however, this is one part of your presentation you need to be comfortable with. Get this right and it can work wonders in settling nerves and making a confident solid start. Your first words can often be to be difficult and this is particularly true if you are speaking in a language which is not your primary one.

If you are presenting at a large conference you may well have a chair introducing you but the same central premise remains – a great opening will:

- Reduce your anxiety
- Establish an audience connection – it is estimated than an audience will form an impression of you in the first 90 seconds
- Ensure you stand out for all the right reasons!
- Provides a 'hook' making the audience sit up, take notice and giving them a reason to listen to you (another reason for knowing your audience and their background). For example take these two introductions

Version 1

"Hi, my name is Sarah and today I'd like to talk about customer service". I can guarantee that I've just lost ¾ of of my audience because they have already decided they know what I'm on about and they don't think it's relevant to them.

Version 2

"Hi, my name is Sarah and today I'm going to show you how to increase your sales and commission by up to 20%". The audience now has a reason to listen to me because I know what they want to hear (what presses their buttons) and I have 'hooked' them in.

Most presenters will have an opening slide up with their name and title of Presentation as they make this introduction but I would suggest that unless you have to use this standard format you do something different and more memorable (see below – 5 openings).

Exercise

Thinking about the presentation you planned earlier write two versions of your presentation opening words. One without a hook (as in version 1 above) and secondly with a hook that is suitable for your message, aim and audience.

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Version 1 opener (without 'hook').

Version 2 opener (with hook).

As you can see your presentation content would be the same for both but the second is a much more effective opening sentence.

Once your opening sentence is out of the way you have various ways of starting your presentation and I will explain five. It is obviously your choice as to which one fits you as a presenter and the message, aim and audience you have.

7.1.1 Opening 1 – Imagine

Get the audience to image a scenario. The first word using this approach is *"imagine…"* or *"suppose"*. You then give the audience a scenario which they can relate to and is the main focus of your presentation. This method is most effective if you do not introduce yourself first but 'hit them' with this statement first.

One of the computer science research students I worked with took this on board to great effect. Instead of a dry opening which did no more than verbalise what was on his opening title slide he introduced himself with *"suppose you could reduce your equipment down time by 10%, what would be the impact on your profit and productivity? My name is…and this is what my research has been looking at"*. Given the audiences' background this was absolutely perfect and turned just another presentation into something that everyone wanted to listen to – there was something in it for them.

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Exercise

Write an 'image a scenario' opening.

7.1.2 Opening 2 – Topical

Go with something topical e.g. news story, industry or conference specific – basically open with something that will already be in the audiences mind. This gets their attention and shows you are 'up to date' and 'in tune' with current news and developments.

Exercise

Write an audience 'topical' opening.

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7.1.3 Opening 3 – What and Why

Tell them what you are going to do and why.

This for me is a more 'traditional' approach to opening a presentation but again can be delivered in a way that makes it relevant and interesting.

Version 1

"Hi my name is Sarah and the title of my presentation is customer service. I have been trying to look at how targeting your customer base saves time and resources".

This version duplicates information which most people have on their slide – name and title and is quite frankly found to be the same presentation opening as everybody else's.

Version 2

"Hello, I'm here today to talk about targeting your customers and the tremendous increase in sales associated with my approach. I'll show you why current methods don't work, what my alternative is and how even I was surprised by the increase in sales and reduction in staff costs I achieved".

This 2nd version:

- Does not duplicate your name and title
- Tells the audience what they are going to hear (providing signposting and presentation flow)
- Gets the audiences attention – there's something directly in it for them (profit and commission)

Exercise

Write a 'tell them what and why' opening.

Version 1 – 'traditional'.

Version 2 – 'non traditional'.

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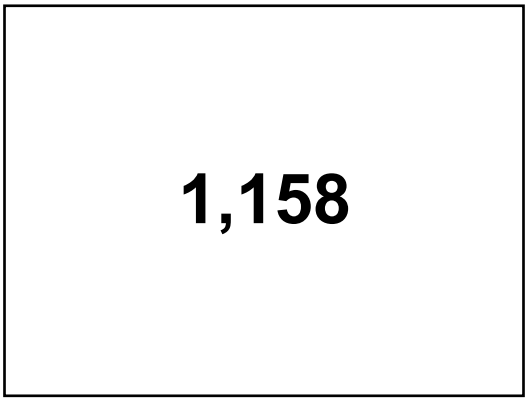
7.1.4 Opening 4 – Thought Provoking

This approach can be particularly powerful if you have one figure displayed as the audience is settling rather than an opening title and name slide. This ensures that the audience has already built up an interest in what you are going to say by trying to decide amongst themselves what the number / statistic relates to. It's a bit like a crime program leaving you until after the break or until another night to conclude the 'mystery'. The only rule of thumb is that your statistic must directly relate to your audience and your main presentation aim / message.

Examples of this method

Example 1 – tech presentation opening slide



This number relates to how many iPhones 5s were sold in the first 3 days after release. The actual number was 5million but by converting it into the number per minute (rounded up) this figure becomes:

- More manageable
- Audience can relate to it
- we get a sense of the sheer scale

(source: Bloomsberg business week Sept 24th 2012)

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Example 2 – poverty / child welfare presentation

27%

1 in 4

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In a document published in 2011 it was estimated that there were 3.6 million UK children living in poverty. This equates to 27% of the child population or just over 1 in 4. Using 3.6 million as your statistic is too large for most people to reference and put in context, but 27% or 1 in 4 is manageable. Especially if you then directly relate this to the audience by telling say an audience of 400 that this would mean poverty affecting 108 of them, or even better getting 108 of them to stand up as a visual representation (the easiest way of doing this is placing 108 coloured pieces of card or paper on chairs prior to your presentation).

http://www.cpag.org.uk/child-poverty-facts-and-figures

You can then tell the audience how your presentation relates to this statistic

Exercise

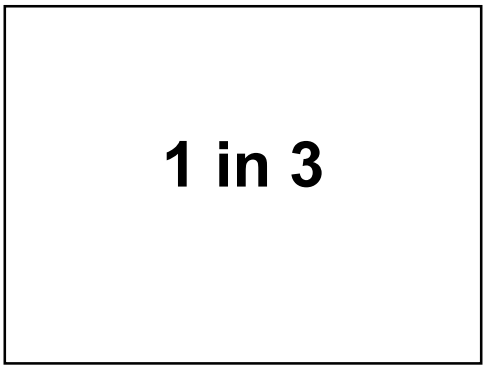
Write a 'statistic' opening.

7.1.5 Opening 5 – Involve the audience

We have already looked at audience involvement in opening 4, but other methods include getting a show of hands or asking a question.

Example

Insert a slide with the statistic 1in 3 written on it as shown below



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Ask the audience *"hands up all those of you got a great night sleep last night"*? After an quick ripple of chatter and laughter a certain percentage will raise their hands. You than then introduce your 1 in 3 statistic *"it is estimated that 1in 3 people in the UK suffer from insomnia and I / my team have been researching ways of reducing this number, which is great news for those of you who didn't put your hands up!"*

Exercise

Write an 'audience involvement' opening.

As you will now be able to see some openings are better than others depending in your particular style, topic and audience. However, the central premise remains the same, your opening must; capture the audiences' imagination, make you stand out from the rest, give the audience a reason to listen to you and support you main message / aim.

Further explanation, examples and 'real life' videos of presentation openings can be found at https://www.udemy.com/presentation-skills-8-awesome-openings/?couponCode=simpson5

7.2 Stage 2 – the outline and transitions

This section builds on the 'Themes' element in the skeleton outline we developed.

7.2.1 Outlines

These provide the presentations pathway and flow and form the mini introductions we spoke about earlier. They announce what you are going to tell the audience and make up your manageable bite sized chunks of information.

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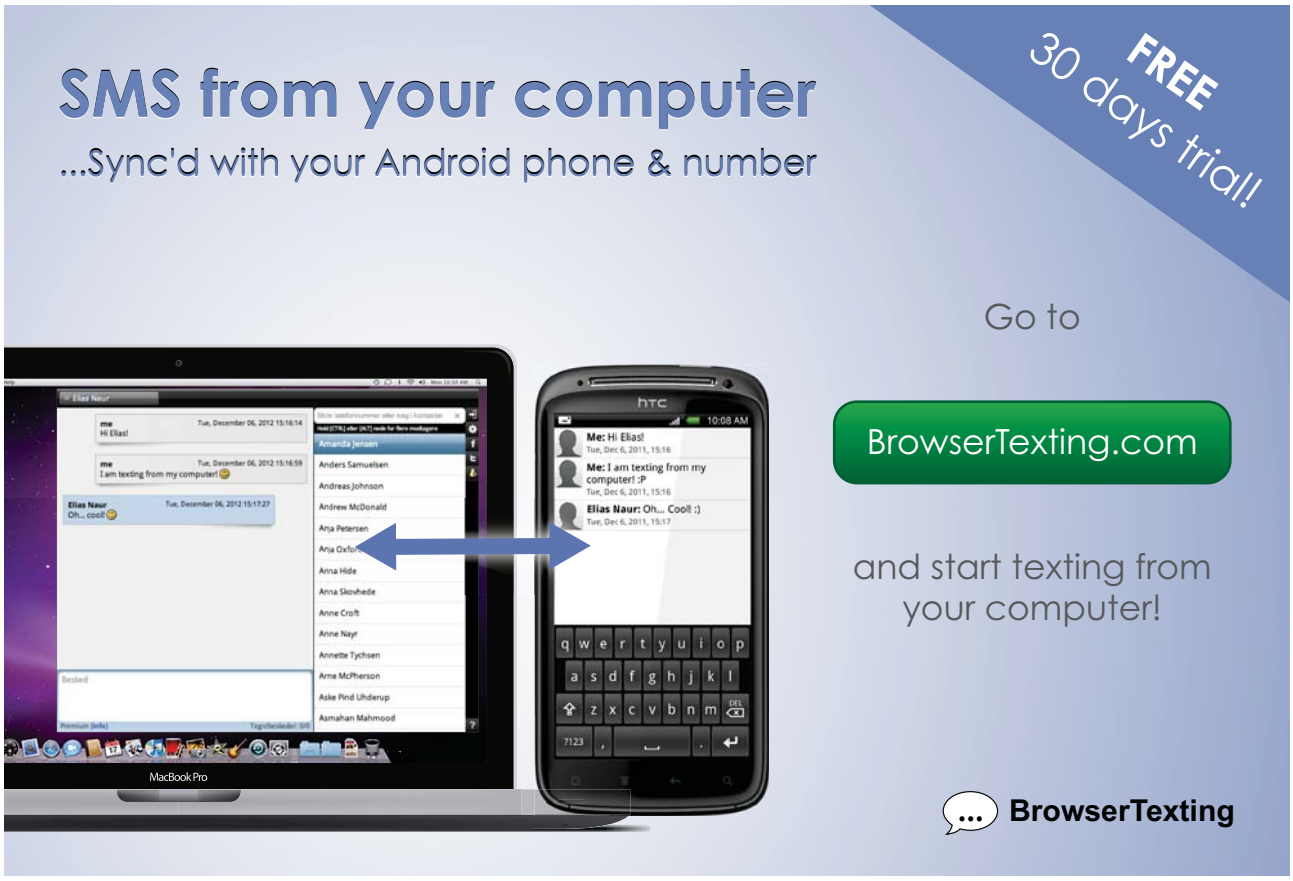
7.2.2 Transitions

These link you information 'chunks'. Many presenters transitions consist of moving their slide forward followed by a pause before reading what the side says or saying something like "*so, you can see*", "*ok, moving on*", "*next*" or "*this slide shows*" (yes, we know it does the audience can read!). These transitions are not very inspiring or exciting for the audience and you have all worked too hard to have an audience that has switched off.

7.2.3 Types of transition

A transition doesn't have to be another slide of words. Possible alternatives include:

- Nothing – turn off the screen and just talk.
- Using words like keep the audiences' attention for example "okay, we've dealt with a and b let's move on to look at what we found, which surprised us all and could impact on the way we all work". This ensures your audience keeps listening and maintains interest levels.
- A static image
- A video
- A statistic



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- An audio clip – I convinced a student once to show the effect of his engineering by playing two audio clips of a gear mechanism – one with and one without his changes. Because the audience was not distracted by a visual image or someone talking they could concentrate fully and he was able to convey a large amount of information and data in one audio clip.
- A model (If small this would only work in break out presentation rooms)
- A photograph
- A 3d rotating screen image
- A moving graph or data set – the best example of this approach is by Hans Rosling and there are many videos of him in action readily available on the Internet (one to get you started can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVimVzgtD6w.

Below are examples of three ways data can be represented. The first two are traditional in nature and the third more audience and time friendly.

Example 1

Country	Internet Pop	% of worldwide
China	389000000	21.39
US	245000000	13.47
Japan	99182000	5.45
Brazil	75982000	4.18
Germany	65125000	3.58
India	61338000	3.37
UK	51444000	2.83
France	45262000	2.49
Nigeria	43989000	2.42
Russia	40853000	2.25

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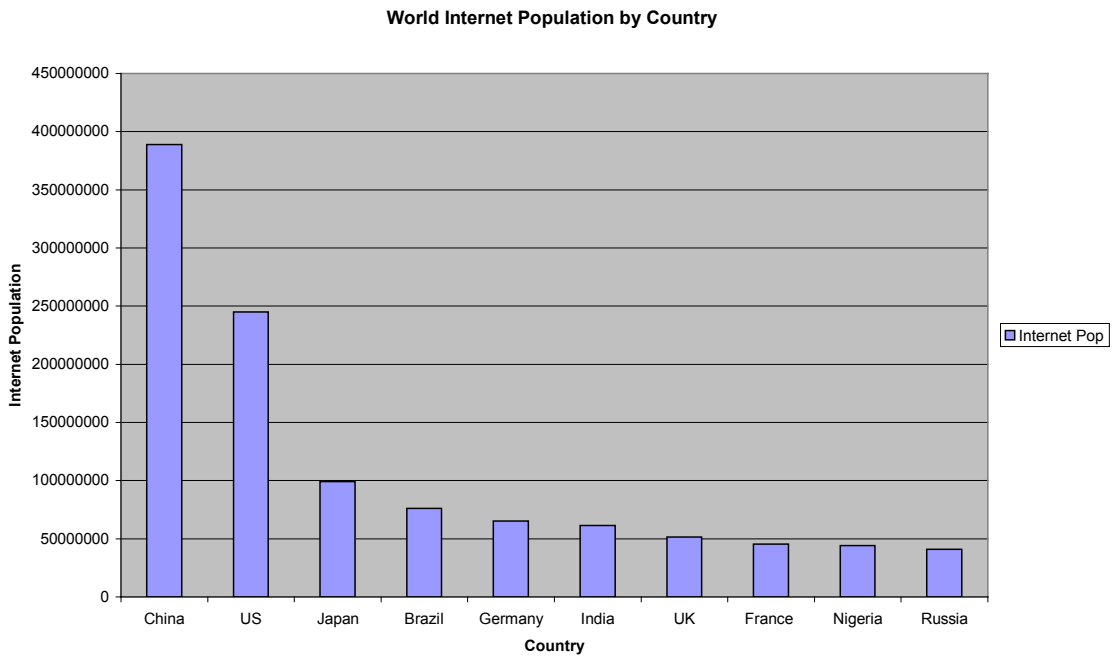
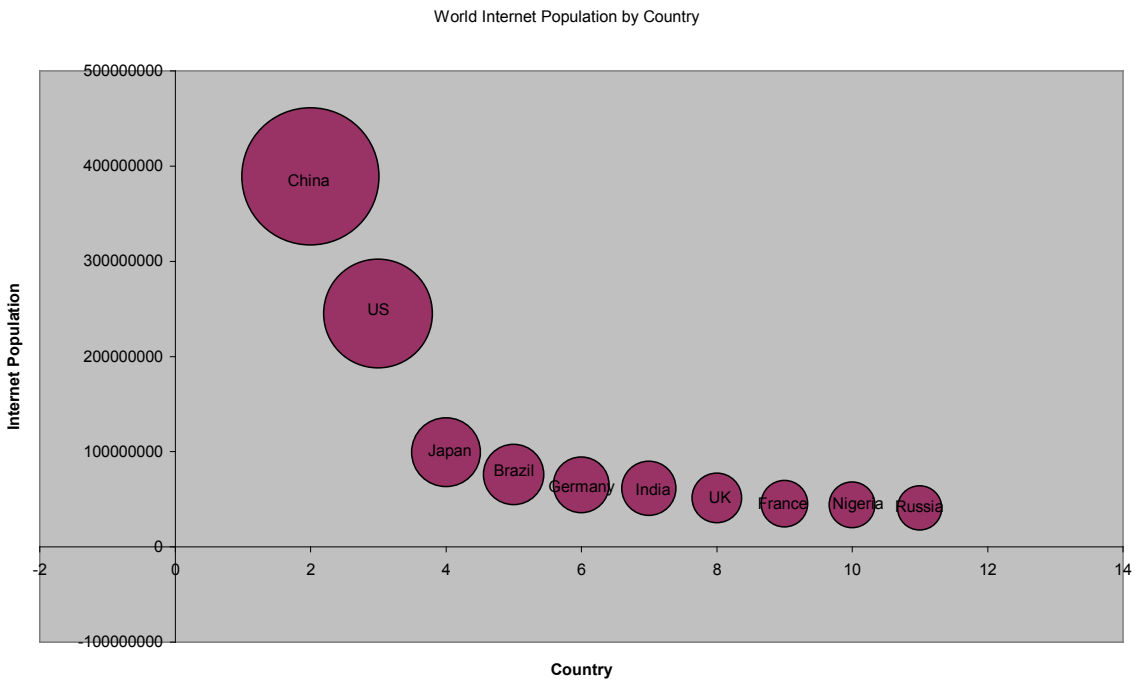
Example 2



Example 3



This method allows you to show the 'percentage of worldwide' by the size of the 'bubble' which makes audience data interpretation much easier and 'user friendly'.

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Exercise

Think about some transitions you could use.

7.3 Stage 3 – methodology (if appropriate)

If you are showing a methodology as part of your presentation it is very unlikely you will have the time to go through all your processes. Indeed the audience doesn't need to know **everything**, so you can:

- Show key stages and steps (explain why and direct them to the full source of information e.g. website, research paper)
- Consider showing an overview of the whole process and then 'zoom in ' on the main elements. Prezi is ideal for this purpose.
- Use visual aids such as laser pointers

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- Don't add any data, charts, graphs information which are not absolutely essential. This is not to say they are unimportant but could be available from a different source (website, research paper etc) should the audience requires them but, you will not have the time to include everything. Indeed this approach will dilute your maim message.
- Any data that you do use should follow the rule we have used throughout namely, make it meaningful and relevant.
- Reduce unnecessary words e.g. "here is an example of one of our engines" becomes "here is an engine", "so, in conclusion I think we can say" becomes "so".

7.4 Stage 4 – results

The approach for presenting results follows many of those for methodology and the simple rule I give here is 'tell the audience what they need to know – not everything that you know'. This can be a difficult process when you first start presenting as your first instinct is to tell the audience everything but as a guide you should look to:

- Tell the audience what you found
- Say whether it was expected or unexpected
- Explain all data simply and in a meaningful way
- Explain how what you have done or found out is 'valuable'
- Follow on from the notion of the audience 'hook' and why they should be interested in what you had to say by explaining
    - What your presentation means
    - Why it is beneficial to them
    - How you intend to proceed (if this is appropriate)

7.5 Stage 5 – Conclusions / Close

This is the home stretch and you need to leave the audience with a great last impression. It is the '*tell them what you told them*' part. You can achieve a memorable close by:

- Summarising all your theme or bite size mini conclusions
- Not putting anything new in here that you haven't already discussed
- Use a striking image that sums your delivery up
- Using a statistic
- Reiterating the benefit or implication of your presentation to them

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7.6 Stage 6 – Q&A / Managing the Audience

This is the part of the presentation along with the introduction that in my experience causes people the most angst. Firstly, we'll look at general rules for Q&A and then some situations that are common presenter concerns.

7.6.1 General Q&A

- When someone asks a question thank them – this buys you thinking time and makes the audience feel appreciated
- Repeat the question – again a time buyer, but I have found this to be particularly beneficial if someone asks a question before the microphone gets to them or if English is not their primary language (or whichever language is primary to you). Repeating also shows the audience that you take the question seriously and want to clarify what is being asked.
- Address your answer to the entire audience not just the questioner – this again ensures the whole audience feels important
- Be concise and polite – there is no such thing as a daft question (even if you think it is please don't say so!)
- Even if you think you know what question you are going to be asked let them finish asking it – it is impolite to interrupt, the rest of the audience want to hear it all and if you are nervous allowing them to finish uses more time.

7.6.2 Q&A specific concerns

"A single question can be more influential than a thousand statements".

Bo Bennett

Concern 1 – You ask for questions and there is complete silence.

This is actually quite normal and although it may not feel like it silence lasts longer for you as the presenter than it does in everyone else's reality. It is worthwhile remembering that the audience may themselves be apprehensive about speaking. How many times have you attended a conference in which when the presenter asks for questions the audience abruptly stares at the floor or reads their notes so as not to catch the eye of the person with the microphone! No one wants to be seen to ask a 'silly question' or show their own nervousness.

Some delegates on my courses have suggested they could 'plant' a friend in the audience who could ask a pre arranged question which they would have rehearsed. I would urge you to use this approach with caution and I myself would not use it. A presenters integrity and credibility is paramount and will be surely undermined if you are caught planting a friendly face within the audience.

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I would suggest that you break any audience silence by stating a question you are asked when you deliver this type of presentation – "*a question I am often asked is…*". Quite frankly it doesn't matter if you are often asked it but it allows you to relax into the Q&A session, maintains your integrity (unlike the plant) and gets the audience questions started in a non threatening way.

This silence could also be a sign that your presentation was so fantastically constructed and delivered that you have answered all the audiences questions and concerns in one delivery!

Concern 2 – Too many questions.

So, what if the opposite happens and you are inundated with questions. In this situation answer those you can in the allotted time and either tell the audience where you will be during the break or get audience membersto email their questions to you. You can then respond to the individual concerned or send a group email out with all questions and answers.

Concern 3 – You don't know the answer to a question.

This concern is split into two parts:

1) knowing the answer but being temporarily unable to vocalise it and
2) not knowing the answer

In the first situation you are looking to 'buy yourself some time':

- Don't fear this situation – panic is not a good state to be in when trying to retrieve information
- Remember a pause before you answer will be taken by the audience to be a sign you respect the question asked and want to give it the consideration it deserves.
- Phrases such as "that's a great question" and "I'm glad you asked that" buy thinking time
- Walking across the stage, taking a drink and removing an item of clothing (jackets are good) will all do the same

If the answer still eludes you and you find yourself really not knowing the answer there are plenty of options open to you:

- Again don't panic or rush into an appropriate or incorrect response

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- We have already mentioned presenter integrity and credibility and both of these will be increased if you admit to not knowing rather than 'making it up' and hoping no one will notice – trust me they will and then you will have to retract your answer later
- Tell them you will get back to them with an answer; email contact, where you will be during the day etc.
- A more advanced technique which negates the need to tell the audience you don't know would be to ask the audience, for example "*ms x has just asked a great question which I hope you all heard* (*repeat the question*) *has anyone got any thoughts on this / what does anyone think about this*"

7.7 Stage 7 – audience recap (if appropriate)

If you are presenting to an audience in which you would like to or you need to ascertain whether they have understood what you have said you will need to recap and feedback.

With a small audience this is relatively easy and methods could include:

- Feedback sheets
- Questionnaire
- Quizzes – my favourite are those played in teams using power point type templates which are highly visual and contain an element of competition (prizes always act as a great incentive)
- For larger or more tech savvy recap devises with apps can be used and questions pre-programmed e.g. Socrative

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8 Visual Aids

Your audience will absorb your presentation in varying degrees based in some part on their learning style. These can be categorised by VAK – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic

8.1 Visual Aids

Visual – seeing and reading
Auditory – listening and speaking
Kinaesthetic – touching and doing

There are some great free resources explaining these concepts, there origins and assessing your style at http://www.businessballs.com/vaklearningstylestest.htm.

As far as presenting goes in order to reach the biggest audience you can an ensure your message is delivered effectively your presentation should contain a mix of these elements:

Learning Method	Examples
Visual (V)	Seen and observed Pictures, diagrams, demonstrations, displays, slides, PowerPoint, Prezi, handouts, films, flip-chart, etc.
Auditory (A)	The transfer of information through listening Spoken sounds, noises Auditory elements 'paint' a picture can provides emotion and challenge assumption
Kinaesthetic (K)	Physical experience Touching, feeling, holding, doing, practical hands-on experiences.

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9 Slides

I have spoken throughout this book about never having to apologise for the quality of your slides. They should be:

- Clear
- Easy to read
- Share a consistent look
- Not a script – especially when read verbatim
- Add to your message not detract
- Consider left and right brain thinking
- Contain a mix of visual, auditory kinaesthetic (VAK) – if possible

Let's look at each of these points in turn.

9.1 Clear and easy to read

Here we need to look at fonts and style.

9.2 Fonts – size

Every presentation and venue will be different but as a general rule:

Your title font should be between 36 and 44 points.

The main body of text should be between 24 and 32 points.

Often when I review presentations font sizes will range from 16 to 22. When you ask why it is so small the answer is "*it's the only way all the words will fit*!" If this is the case there is a fundamental problem with the amount of information and needless 'clutter' – harsh but true!

The other 'crime against fonts' I often see is using a combination of different fonts on the same slide. One student I had used 5 styles on one slide. Their justification was that it needed 'jazzing up'!

9.3 Font – colour

A black or very dark blue works best when projected, especially on a white slide.

People often express concern that this looks boring – it isn't. If you absolutely must use fancy colours save them for handouts but DON'T project them. Even then use colour with caution as some audience members with word blindness may find then difficult and tiring to read.

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9.4 Fonts – style

There are three basic styles of font:

Serif
Sans serif
Script

Serif fonts are often a default style for many. The most commonly used being Times Roman. Other examples include:

Bookman
Garamond
Palatino

I describe these as 'the ones with feet and tails'. Serif fonts are fine for books and articles but are harder to read when projected.

Sans serif fonts do not have any extra feet or tails and are plain. Examples of this font include:

Ariel
Calibri
Verdana
Tahoma

These fonts are very 'clean' and easy to read – Think about road signs which need to be read quickly and easily. This ensures your audience doesn't have to work to read them and they can focus on you and your message. It is worthwhile noting here that just because sans serif fonts are easy to read it doesn't mean you should use them all – variety is not the spice of life when it comes to slide design. One student I had used 5 styles on one slide because "it looked boring all the same" – it's not boring it's consistent!

A script font is designed to look like handwriting and like handwriting can be difficult to read and should not feature on your sides This type of font includes:

Segoe script
Vijaya

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Presentation Skills

- Audience
- Content
- Presenter

Slide example 1 – Sans serif font

Presentation Skills

- Audience
- Content
- Presenter

Slide example 2 – Serif font

Presentation Skills

- Audience
- Content
- Presenter

Slide example 3 – Script font

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9.5 Font Effects

We now know that sans serif fonts and large size is the best way to project text but how do you highlight text and draw the audiences' attention to key areas? Below is a list of common font effects and there pros and cons when projected.

Bold – makes the lines of the font thicker. It is not always easy to distinguish bold from regular weight fonts when projected, so use with caution.

Underline – places a line under the word. Because today many people assume an underline means that the words are a hyperlink and may not place any extra importance on those words.

Italic – slants the tops of the letters of the font to the right. An italic font is harder to read.

Shadow – places a dark gray shadow of each letter. It is not the best choice to emphasize a word because it is hard to actually see the shadow.

ALL CAPS – In the past, this was an acceptable way to emphasize a word, but today capitals are considered to be shouting and will not be viewed favorably.

Word Art – allows you to distort the letters in a variety of ways. Many of these effects can end up looking amateur and should be used with caution.

Highlighting – this may be the most effective way to emphasize words and is done by placing a colored rectangle behind the text box which creates the same effect as a highlighter has on a printed page.

9.6 Bullet Points

Using bullet points on a slide is a great way to present the key ideas during a presentation. When selecting a bullet to use, consider these ideas.

Another common feature of slides is bullet points. There are plenty of options but solid bullets work best when projected. Styles include:

- filled circle,
  - filled square
    - open circle
      - arrow

The characters that are filled are easier to see by the audience.

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Just remember to:

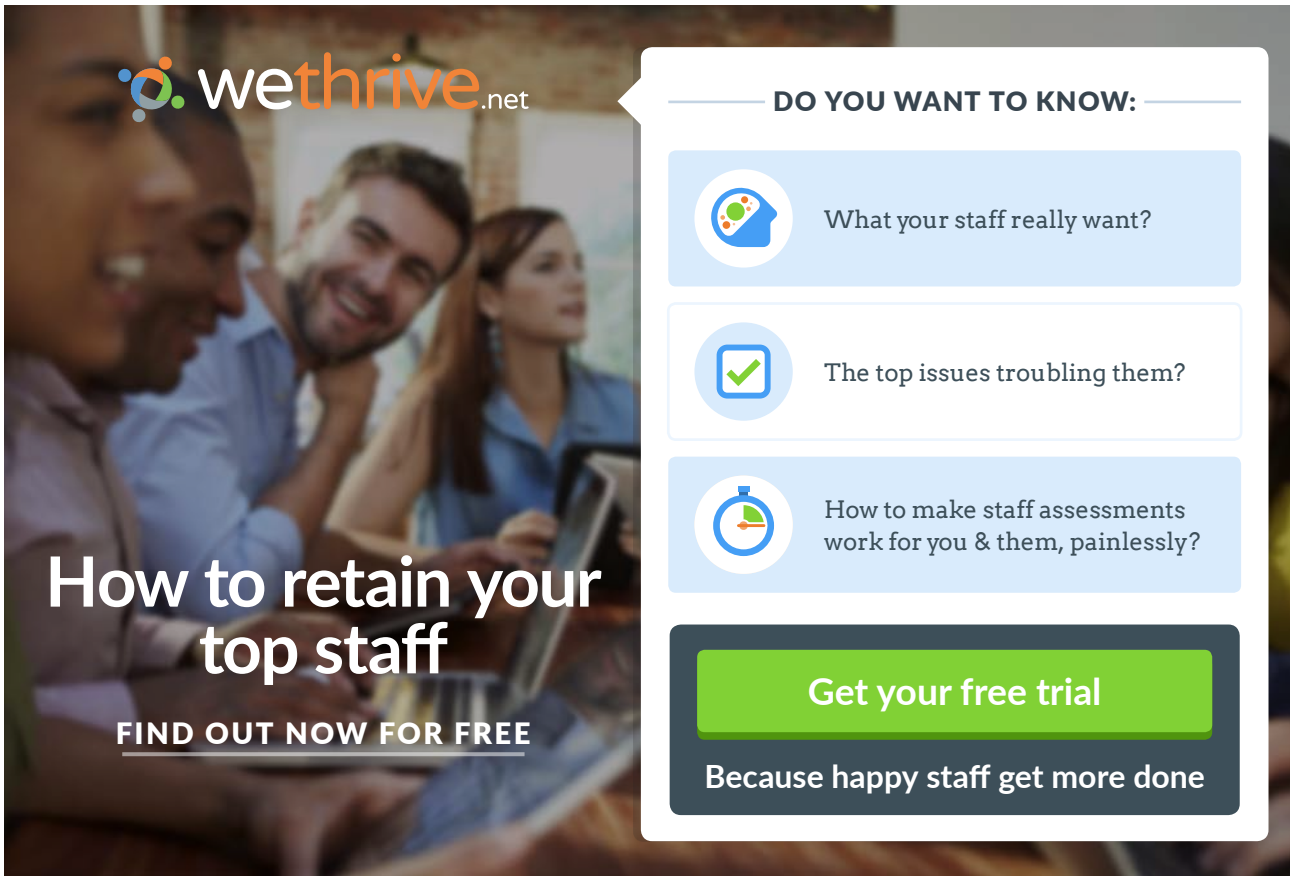
- Use them consistently
- Make them smaller than your text
- Leave a gap between the bullet and text

You can select a graphic as a bullet, but make sure that it does not detract from the slide by drawing too much attention away from the words on the slide.

Bullet Size – Try to select a bullet size slightly smaller than the font of the text so it does not overpower the text itself.

Bullet SpacIng – make sure that there is sufficient space between the bullet and the first letter of the text so that the first word is readable.

No discussion on font effects would be complete without mentioning the dreaded moving font. Please, please, please do not use font effects that; shimmer, bounce, fade in or out or explode. They do not add to your message and the audience will switch off.



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10 Share a Consistent Look

"It's not boring – it's consistent".

Sarah Simpson!

Your font style, size and colour as well as bullet points should be the same throughout your presentation.

Black or very dark blue font and white slides are perfect. Resist the urge to use fancy borders or coloured fonts. If you have to have a company logo on every slide then so be it but if you have the option I prefer slides to be plain (you could always show this on your first slide only).

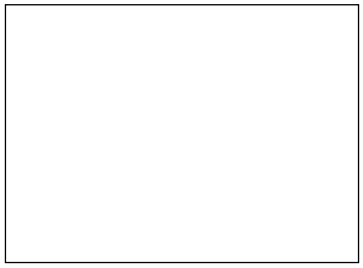
Another consistency issue surrounds full stops especially at the end of bullet points. Either use them or don't – a mixture looks scruffy and like you have cut and pasted from difference sources.

Another common 'slide crime' is to feel like you have to fill every inch of space. Below is something I get students and delegates on presenting courses to.

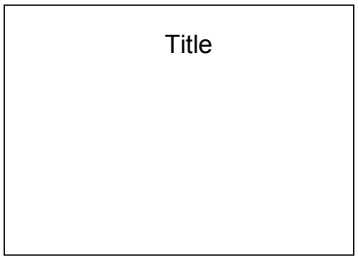
Without fail this is what happens.

Question

The box below represents a blank slide.



Q – What would you put at the top?



A – They always say title.

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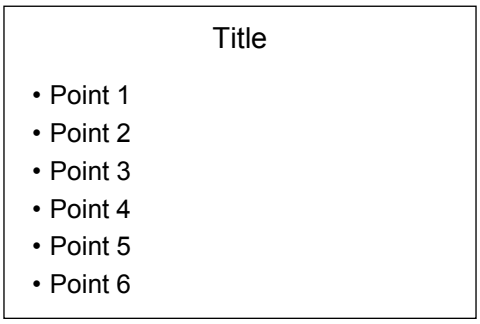
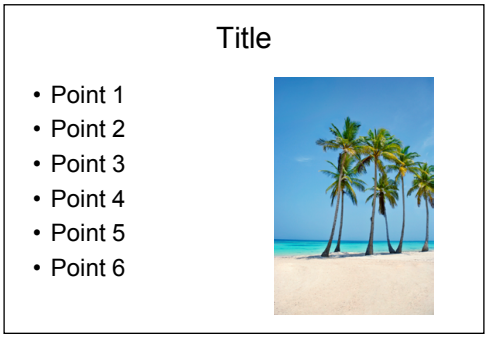
Q – What goes down the left hand slide?



A – They always say bullet points.

Q – What can you put in the blank area on the right hand side?



A – A picture of some sort goes in the space on the right.

It doesn't even matter if the picture has nothing to do with the message. How many times have you been to a presentation in which there are random cartoons or holiday snaps shown? Quite a few I would imagine and whilst they might raise a laugh they don't add anything constructive.

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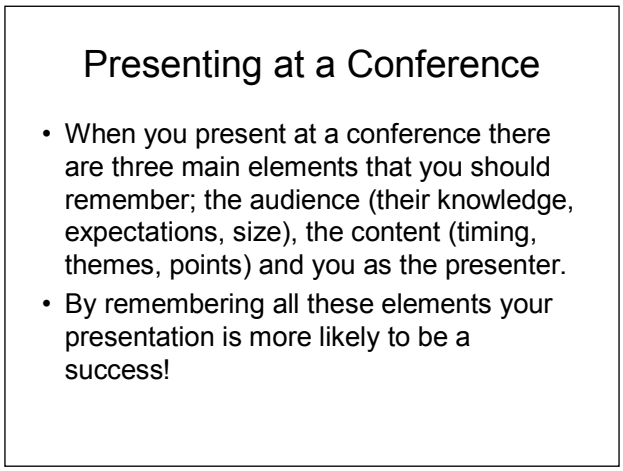
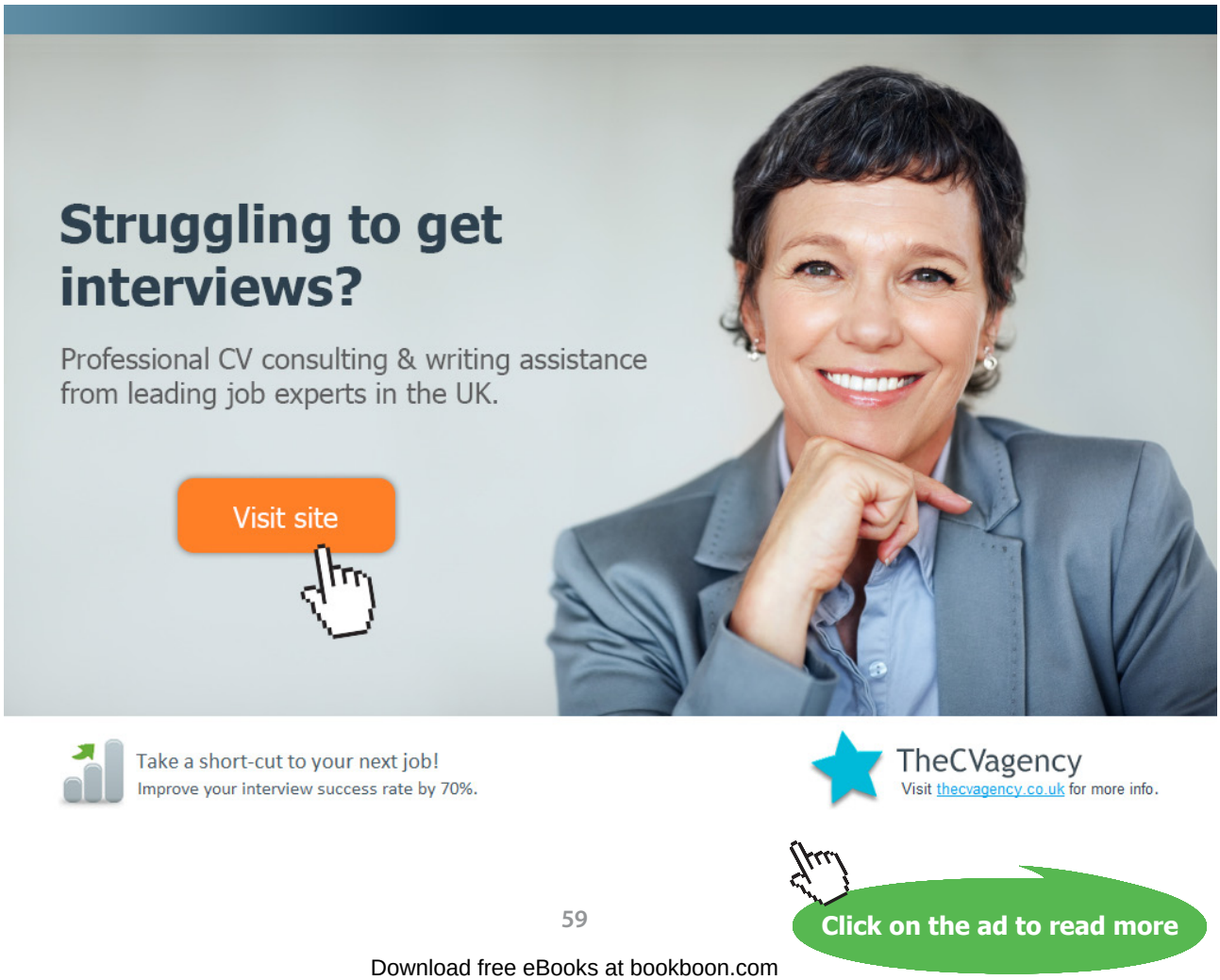
11 Not a script

This is particularly true if you then read what is on your slides verbatim. The presenter should add to the message, if not the audience is just as we'll being given the slides to read in their own time.



A 'script' slide



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Presenting

- Audience
  - Size
  - Knowledge
  - Expectations
- Content
  - Timing themes
  - Points
  - The presenter
- Practice
  - Knowledge
  - style

A 'key' slide

A script encourages you to turn your back to the audience and is difficult to read. Bullet points and key words allow you to talk around a point and respond to the audiences' cues (nodding of heads and smiling or fidgeting and looking at their watches).

If you ask people why they read from a script or slide they will tell you it's because they don't want to forget anything. The best way to remember all your key facts is to know your key words and phrases (this is particularly helpful for my students who have to present in a language which is not their primary one). If you want to have a key word prompt use index cards that are numbered and tied with a treasury tag – dropping your notes and scrambling about on your hands and knees is not a recipe for success in nerve calming! Don't use paper as this will rustle over a microphone and is more obvious when you are turning over.

Also, if you don't need a slide remove it rather than quickly skipping slides *"which aren't relevant to this talk"* this lack of care makes the audience feel undervalued.

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12 Consider left and right brain thinking

It is believed that the left side of your brain is concern with; logic, facts, order, words and language and the right with; symbols, images and 'the big picture'. If this holds true then slides which contain a mixture of left and right brain friendly information should be considered – text and images.

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13 Contain a mix of visual, auditory kinaesthetic (VAK)

Following on from brain thinking you should consider using three modes of communicating with your audience especially if we consider the breakdown of population learning styles.

Learning Style	% Population
Visual	40
Auditory	20–30
Kinaesthetic	30–40

A mix of VAK:

- Adds interest
- Keeps the audiences attention
- Stimulates debate and understanding
- Enables you to match your message with the best medium
- Gives the audience something they are not expecting

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14 Visual and auditory aids

I have spoken at great length about the benefits of using a mix of methods to enhance your message, keep the audiences attention and enable the most effective delivery possible.

I have provided below a visual and auditory aids exercise, which has blank spaces for you to add your own. As you complete this section you will become more aware of the benefits and limitations of each method and what would be an ideal fit for your delivery.

VAK aid / media	√	X
Power point	Familiar You can move around unrestricted with remote control Handouts can be easily produced from slides	Is expected and you can look the same as everyone else There is a temptation to add unnecessary sound, movement and font
Prezi	Unexpected – can keep interest Very visual Can embed video and audio	Need internet connection to use embedded you tube facility
Video	Great visual media Gives the audience something different to look at Can be used to stimulate debate Gives the audience a different voice to listen to and gives you a break from speaking	It needs using carefully not just because you like it or its funny Can have copyright issues You need to ensure you have the right equipment to play them
Handouts	Can give the audience additional info you don't have time for in main delivery Can provide a space to write notes	Environmental concerns You need to know numbers in advance Cost of production
Photos	Can get across a lot of information in one image Can help the audience remember Adds interest	Check for clarity when projected Can have copyright issues

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VAK aid / media	√	X
Demonstration	It is often easier to demonstrate rather than talk your audience through Adds interest Maybe unexpected Is good when time is short	Probably doesn't work for large audiences unless you can film demo and show on large screen Needs preparation and equipment
Audio	Can use music, voice, other clips i.e. noise Adds interest Easier to hear something rather than have it described Can paint a picture in the audiences mind Can be emotive	Need to ensure equipment will play Additional preparation needed

Exercise

Finally, go back to the first exercise we undertook in which I asked *"How does presenting make you feel"?* And ask yourself how you now feel.

Hopefully this book will have inspired you to try something different, begin the process of building your presentation reputation and helped you to find your style.

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15 Conclusions

There are very few people that are born natural presenters. The key for us mere mortals is to develop techniques that make it look like we are.

By remembering and practicing these skills you will become more proficient, comfortable and effective in ensuring your message is not only understood but is enjoyed by yourself as the presenter and your audience.

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16 Summary

- Know your audience
- Know your venue
- Give an introduction that connects with and hooks the audience
- Build your presentation around your main aim / message
- Organise your points into bite sized themes (essential, desirable and nice to have)
- Use transitions between themes that flow and add interest
- Consider mixed media
- Use 'clean and consistent' slides
- Practice – preferably in the actual venue
- Enjoy it – we all had to start somewhere and the only 'bad' presentation is one you don't learn from

Good luck!

Feel free to contact me at dragontoothtraining.org.uk

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Endnotes

1. NB for the purpose of this book the term 'slides' refers to; PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, transparencies and 35m slides (the later two may seem out-of-date but may be required if you present in a country or situation without the necessary technical support).

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