

How to...

Present with impact

Use this guide to:

- Design and deliver a compelling presentation with impact.

This guide is for:

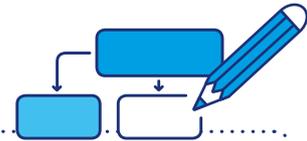
- Anyone giving a presentation at a conference or event.

Why present with impact?

Giving a talk at a conference or event can be a powerful way of sharing your ideas and inspiring others to take action to improve diabetes prevention and care. If something has worked for you, there's a good chance it will work for others too.

Use this guide to help you design and deliver a compelling presentation that will have a real and lasting impact on your audience.

Step 1 Design the structure

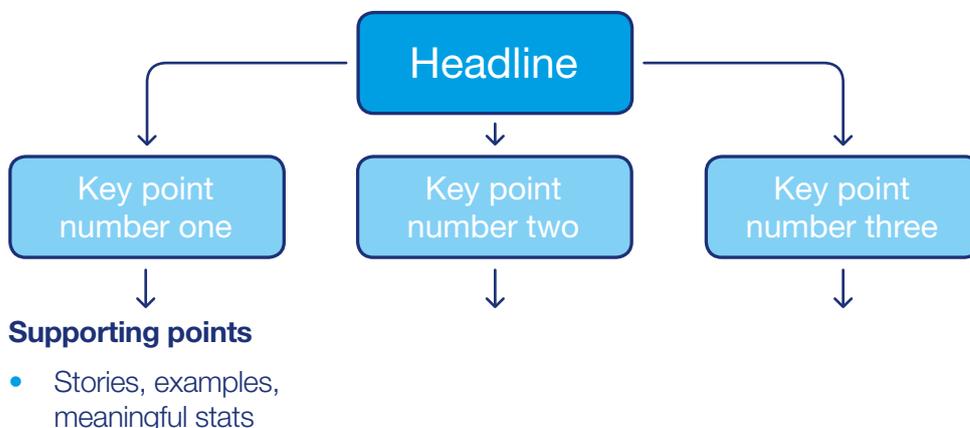


Know your audience. What's their level of experience and understanding of your topic? What are their beliefs and attitudes? This will help you design a presentation that really speaks to your audience.

What do you want your audience to know? Make sure it fits easily into a short, captivating headline, like 'A climate solution where all sides can win.'

Use the rule of three. People can remember three pieces of information really well. Add more and retention falls considerably.

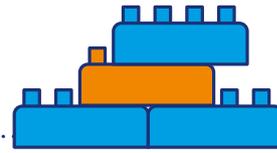
Build a message map to help you design the structure and content of your presentation.



Good presentations often have a narrative structure that loosely follows a detective story. The speaker starts out by presenting a problem and then describes the search for a solution. There's an 'aha' moment and the audience's perspective shifts in a meaningful way. Simon Sinek's presentation about [his simple model for how leaders inspire action](#) is a good example.

Stick to the 18 minute rule. Listening as an audience member is more draining than we give it credit for. So, make sure you don't overload people with information by keeping your presentation to 18 minutes. Too much information prevents the successful transmission of ideas. If your presentation is longer build in soft breaks like stories, videos or demonstrations every 10 minutes.

Step 2 Build the content



Tell stories to reach people's hearts and minds. Genuine, emotive stories help to connect with the audience. They increase the chances of your audience agreeing with you. Make personal stories rich with imagery and take the audience on a journey. You want to make them feel they were with you at the time.

Bring your presentation to life. Use sight, sound, touch, taste and smell to grab people's attention. Your audience won't be bored if they're exposed to mesmerising images, captivating videos, intriguing props, beautiful words and more than one voice.

Reveal information that's completely new to your audience, packaged differently, or offers a fresh and novel way to solve an old problem. The brain loves novelty, it jolts audiences out of preconceived notions and quickly gives them a new way of looking at the world.

Deliver a jaw-dropping moment. Jamie Oliver [dumped a wheelbarrow of sugar onto the stage](#). Bill Gates [released a jar of mosquitos into the audience](#). A shocking, impressive, or surprising moment will grab your listeners' attention and be remembered long after. Don't forget to tell the event organisers your plans so they're prepared.

Stats are key. Persuasion occurs when you reach a person's heart and head. Make numbers meaningful and memorable by putting them in a context the audience can relate to. Hans Rosling did this brilliantly when he [presented stats in a radically different way to debunk myths about the developing world](#).

Many of the most engaging speakers don't use slides and many presentations don't require them. If you're going to use slides, don't use a slide deck as a substitute for notes – those are best put on note cards.

Limit the use of bullet points. They're the least memorable way of transferring information. Avoid repeating out loud any words that are on the slides. Information is interesting only once – hearing and seeing the same words feel repetitive.

If using video, a clip needs to be short. If it's more than 60 seconds you risk losing your audience. Don't use videos – particularly corporate ones – that sound self-promotional or like advertisements. People are conditioned to tune these out.

Consider building silence into the talk, and let the words or images speak for themselves.

Step 3 Practice and refine



Get feedback as early as possible once you have a first draft.

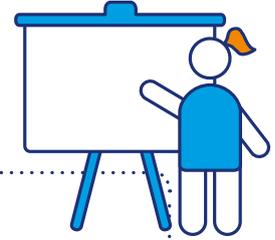
But be prepared for feedback from different people to vary or conflict. This can be confusing or even paralysing, which is why it's important to be choosy about the people you use as a test audience, and whom you invite to offer feedback. In general, the more experience a person has as a presenter, the better the criticism he or she can offer.

First drafts of presentations often cover too much ground. Resist the temptation to sweep too broadly – you can't summarise all your work in a single talk. Instead, choose a few examples from your work and give more detail about them. Don't tell the audience about your entire field of study – tell them about your unique contribution.

Many of the most engaging and memorable talks have been memorised word for word. If you're giving an important talk and you have time to do this, it's the best way to go. Obviously, not every presentation is worth that kind of investment. If you don't have time to learn a speech thoroughly, don't try. Go with bullet points on note cards. As long as you know what you want to say for each one, you'll be fine. Focus on remembering the transitions from one bullet to the next.

Practice as often as you can so you really know the content of your talk and can deliver it as comfortably as having a conversation with a close friend. If you don't practice, you'll be thinking about a million other things on the day.

Step 4 Deliver your presentation



Nerves are not a disaster. It's a natural body response that actually improves your performance. It gives you energy to perform and keeps your mind sharp. The best advice is simply to breathe deeply before you go on stage. It works.

Don't start talking as you walk out on stage as it can communicate a little bit of insecurity and fear. Instead, quietly walk out on stage. Then take a deep breath, find your place, wait a few seconds and begin.

Make eye contact. Find five or six friendly-looking people in different parts of the audience and look them in the eye as you speak. That eye contact is incredibly powerful, and will help make your talk land. Even if you don't have time to prepare fully and have to read from a script, looking up and making eye contact will make a huge difference.

Don't move your body too much. Swaying from side to side or shifting your weight from one leg to the other can be distracting for the audience. Simply keeping your lower body motionless can dramatically improve stage presence.

Pausing just before or after an important statement adds significant impact to your point. A well-placed pause not only gives you time to think, it gives your audience a moment to absorb and reflect on your message.

Pay attention to your tone. Some speakers may want to come across as authoritative or wise or powerful or passionate, but it's usually much better to just sound conversational. Don't force it. Don't orate. Just be yourself.

Gestures help. Research shows that using physical gestures actually gives audiences' confidence in the speaker.¹ Keep gestures fluid and easy – jerky or rapid movements suggest lack of confidence.

Don't take yourself or your topic too seriously. The brain loves humour – it lowers defences, making your audience more perceptive. Try to inject humour when trying to help people wrap their heads round a complex subject. It takes courage to be vulnerable, so poke some good-natured fun at yourself and your topic. Ken Robinson [used humour to make a profoundly moving case for creating a better education system.](#)

It's not all about the physical act of being onstage. Getting the words, story and substance right is a much bigger determinant of success or failure than how you stand or whether you're visibly nervous.

Most importantly, give your audience hope. This is your chance to help them see that positive change really is possible. End on a high note and leave your audience with your key messages – what do you really want them to remember? (Refer back to your message map in [step 1](#)).

¹ More information available at www.businessinsider.com/hand-gestures-reveal-complex-thoughts-2013-6?IR=T

Step 5 After your presentation



Don't walk straight off stage. Take questions and don't be afraid to put questions to the audience – get them talking to each other and using their imagination.

Stick around. Many of the audience will be keen to speak with you afterwards – this is your chance to keep the conversation going and get people to take action.

If your presentation was recorded upload it to the internet. Add it to YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud or your own website and promote it as widely as possible on social media and in e-newsletters.

References

Some of the information in this resource has been adapted from the following sources:

Anderson, Chris. 2013. [How to give a killer presentation](#). Harvard Business Review.

De Castro, Maurice. 2015. [The 20 habits of truly brilliant presenters](#). Citrix.

Gallo, Carmine. 2014. Talk like TED: The 9 public speaking secrets of the world's top minds. Macmillan.

Lachance Shandrow, Kim. 2014. [7 powerful public speaking tips from one of the most-watched TED talks speakers](#). Entrepreneur.



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