

The Power of the Presentation – 5 Success Tips

By *Simon Davis*

Presentations are great, that is, if you know how to properly give one. They can engage an audience on a topic they're unfamiliar with – or intrigue an audience further on a subject they're already familiar with. At their core – past all the eyeballs, bright lights and throat clears – [presentations](#) are simple. They're meant to effectively convey ideas, and the best presentations do so by captivating an audience.

But how do we do this? How do we as presenters infuse life back into our reels? The answer isn't clear cut; it isn't about writing, or your graphics, or (despite how you may feel) even your statistics and points. It's all about the little things. The right timing, the right tone, the right demeanor. These are all things that are hard to teach, but being mindful of them as you practice can make a huge impact in the effectiveness of your presentation.

So bring those PowerPoint presentations to the cutting board. Let's take a look at five ways to *jazz up* your presentation.

Don't Hide Behind Your Presentation



When you're giving a presentation, it's important to keep in mind that you're also entertaining. Nobody in the room knows the subject matter as intimately as you do, so you need to be interesting in order for them to absorb what you're saying. Reading from a screen or pointing out the obvious isn't going to get the job done. Presentations are there to present an idea, but they're certainly not there to explain it. Don't use your slides as a crutch. They're there to keep you focused and on track, but nothing more. If you can't deviate from your slides, you probably don't know your subject matter that well.

Utilize Text Sparingly

People don't like to read more than a few lines of text on a slide. They're even less inclined to read when they're supposed to be listening to you as well. So, keep the words to yourself. Use them verbally in your presentation, just don't use them in your slides. The better strategy is to incorporate some kind of visual aid for listeners to latch onto. Having a few bullet points in bold letters can help people taking notes, but pictures and animated slides do a better job of aiding the explanatory process.

After all, according to an [infographic by Wyzowl](#), people

remember ten percent of what they hear, 20 percent of what they read and 80 percent of what they see and do. To that point, making a presentation doesn't have to be a work of art, it just shouldn't be boring. Example: imagine a slideshow about learning German – you could create a slide representing the accidental similarity between unrelated words within a language by having a bottle of vinegar point to a visual representation of the word “less”, to reference the similarity between “vinegar”, and the German, “weniger”, when making a point that not all linguistic similarities can be explained as etymologically similar as well, and that often, learning a language is about loosening the grip previous patterns have on you, and instead applying the basics to create new patterns.

Communicate a Story

Stories and folklore have been used for thousands of years to teach children lessons – but adults are no different. Everyone loves a good story, and if that story ends up having a point to it, then it actually helps people in remembering certain concepts.

As Forbes guest, [Geoffrey Berwind explains](#): “Stories powerfully connect us to our listeners. When we share our own real-life stories or the stories of others (Example or Proof stories), our audiences feel that they get to know us as authentic people – people who have lives outside the corporate setting, people who have struggled with problems and who have figured out how to overcome them.”

It doesn't necessarily matter whether a story is true or not – what matters is that the story conveys your message in such a way that it resonates with your audience.

Don't Be a Stiff

Nothing is worse than an onstage bore. Humor is one of the most powerful tools in a good presentation, no matter the level of formality or corporate setting you could be in. Just

because we're serious and passionate within our line of work, doesn't mean humor has to die. It's childish, irrelevant humor that misses the point and derails a presentation – but clever and novel humor with the right timing can ease up the atmosphere in a room and get people to pay more attention to what you have to say.

Utilize Current Technology

Video is hugely underutilized in presentations today. Most people bypass anything technical because they don't want to make their presentation reliant on technology in the event something goes wrong, or simply because they don't want to make things more complicated than they already are. A great example though of just how wrong this thinking is lies in LiveSlides simple software that allows you to [embed YouTube video in PowerPoint](#). You can't lose with video (unless you've embedded a boring video). Otherwise the visual medium will give your presentation an extra pull to it, while also providing you a couple minute breather.

But above these five points, the most helpful thing you can do is ease up. It's a presentation, and while your audience could be frighteningly large, you have to remember that these are human beings too. Human beings with ambitions and failures, strong suits and flaws. You are their equal, albeit momentarily elevated in a position capable of delivering information they prospectively find relevant and helpful. So look at it as an honor, because it is, and do your best.

About the Author: Simon Davis has been a full-time business writer since the last 4 years and has had the privilege of attending some of the most renowned business conclaves held across the world. When not on business he loves spending time with his girlfriend and a bit of adventure sports.

