

Building better presentations

***"A presentation built on a carefully crafted story,
designed for the individual audience,
supported by an illustrative slideset and
delivered with passion and practice will be more, much more than
the presentation built around bulletpoints; its impact is the
product, not the sum of its parts."*** Ross Fisher 5/3/2013

Overview

What makes a good presentation good?

What makes a bad presentation bad?

Good presentations are a product of

- Good story telling
- Great supportive media
- Great delivery

STORY

WIIFT – What's in it for them?

- Audience wants to know what is the return on investment for their time
- Are they there because they have to be or choose to be
- What is the demographic of your audience – age, race, sex, nationality, English first language
- Are they experts?
- Are they medical students who want to know the bare minimum to pass?
- Research your audience – ask for info from those who invited you, conference organisers, find out who is going and ask them what they want to know about the topic

Make the topic relevant for them

- This is important to you because....
- So you may be wondering why.....
- What will I get out of this?
- This talk will address the key reasons why....
- When you leave here you will.....
- This program will show you....

Determine your core message

- Once you have determined the core message – the rest of the story will be easy to build

Starting point

- Identify where your audience is at, what do they know now and what do they want to know

Finishing point

- Identify where you want your audience to finish, what is the take home message and what should they do with the information you present

Planning the journey

- Identify the three key points they will help to guide the journey that you want to take your audience on
- How will you sequence the information logically so that it makes sense
- For each key idea – what are some supporting ideas that help to outline the story you are trying to tell

How to brainstorm

- Go analog – start with pen and paper
- Use a mindmap
- Use post-it notes and a thick liner pen– one key idea per post-it note. This allows for you to move the ideas around to sequence logically
- Use a whiteboard

How to bring the content alive

- For each of your key point think about how to bring the content alive
 - Tell a story
 - Use an example
 - Use a quote
 - Case study
 - Statistics
 - Use humour carefully – usually direct at yourself is safest so as to not get your audience offside
 - Interesting facts

Analog to Digital

- Now it is time for the computer
 - Sketch the outline of your talk with a slide per idea
 - Add the beginnings and finishing slides

MEDIA

Cognitive overload

- too many words and reading slides = ineffective communication
- a presentation is not the reading of a handout
- slides should not act as a teleprompt
- if you are talking while your audience is reading then they experience cognitive overload, they can only tune into one channel of information at a time – listening, seeing or doing
- another risk for too much information on the slide is copyright
- your slides are nothing without you as the presenter

Guidelines for slide design

- simple is better
- 3 second rule – your slide should be able to be understood in three seconds – like a billboard
- Don't overdo the bullet points. If you have to use bullet points then they should act as headlines not be lengthy in text
- Less is more – aim to have six words or less on a slide
- Animate wisely – if you need to have text then use animation so that your audience does not jump ahead of where you want them to be
- Animation for animation sake is distracting – do not be tempted to get fancy with the animation function
- Leave enough white space for the information on your slide to breathe
- Choose fonts carefully – not too fancy, fonts should match the topic – no comical fonts for serious topics, overly cursive script is difficult to read
- Font size >36pt – limits how much text you can put on a slide and also makes the size legible for the audience
- Aim for one idea per slide
- Use high quality images >2Megabytes

Data display

- A picture is worth 1000 words
- Data should be simple, memorable and clear
- Data tables do not function well on a presentation – they are designed to be read, analysed and thought about at length
- Highlighting the relevant data in a table and then apologising doesn't help the audience understand the data
- The audience is interested in how you came to your conclusions and what the take home message is
- Simplify the message – one message per slide
- Horizontal bar graphs are more easily understood

- Pie charts can be useful although we can have trouble determining small differences in a pie chart
- Differentiate data using colour
- Aim for simplicity and to state the most relevant point
- Purpose of presentation is effective communication – so keep data slide very simple

DELIVERY

Beginnings

- Give an overview of your presentation to orientate the audience as to what is coming
- An elevator pitch is a one-minute summary to convince your audience to tune in and listen
- Your overview should read like the headlines of the news bulleting

Establish credibility

- Legitimise their reason for listening to you
- Establish your credibility on this topic
- Know how you will introduce yourself if the chair has not introduced you – feel comfortable doing it
- Prepare a three-sentence bio for the chairperson – they are often given an essay and will edit what they feel is important rather than what is relevant for the topic

Grabber

- How will you grab your audience's attention away from their cell phone?
- 8 different ways
 - Interesting fact
 - Use emotion – imagery or storytelling
 - Statistics
 - Case study
- A relevant quote
- A thought-provoking question
- A prop
- A news headline or story that is topical

Return on investment

- Be clear to outline the return on investment for the listener – what will they learn or why is it relevant for them

Conflict of interest

- Often there are specific rules around declaring conflicts of interest. Find out how you should do this and follow the guidelines

Finishing

- Finish speaking before the audience is ready to finish listening
- Summarise your presentation.
 - Be short
 - Use your own words
 - Stick to the main topics
- Signpost that you are coming to an end. For those in the audience who have tuned out, they may tune in again to hear your summary.
- Bookend your presentation – relate the end of your presentation to how you began
- Make a powerful closing statement – a call to action
- Summarise after question time so that you control the ending and the final message
- Include a slide with your contact details
- Include a slide (may be visible or not) with your relevant references – for quick reference in case you are asked
- Close like a rockstar!!!

References:

Pcubed

www.ffolliet.com

Slide:ology

Nancy Duarte

www.duarte.com