

Amazing presentations

According to Carmine Gallo, *Talk Like TED* (2014) the most impressive, impactful and inspirational presentations share three common elements....they are:

EMOTIONAL

They reach your head and touch your heart

NOVEL

They teach you something new and they stand out

MEMORABLE

The key message 'sticks' and the call to action is clear

The importance of **emotional** connection to the impact of a presentation

Passion for a subject

In *The Longevity Project*, Howard Friedman identified that individuals who displayed positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, optimism and passion for a subject, were able to positively influence others to experience those emotions too.



Storytelling

Bryan Stevenson received the longest standing ovation in TED-history. He spent 65 per cent of his talk telling stories. Brain scans reveal that stories stimulate and engage the brain (activating language, visual, sensory and motor areas), helping the speaker connect with the audience and increase the chance that they will agree with the speaker's view.

'Stories are just data with a soul'. Brené Brown, 2010.

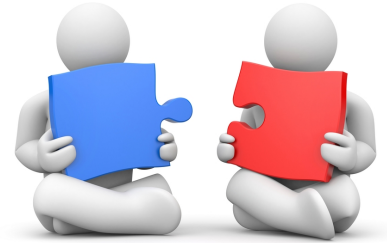
Have a conversation

True persuasion only occurs after you have built an emotional rapport with your listeners and have gained their trust. If your voice, gestures and body language are incongruent with your words, your listeners will distrust your message.

Practice is critical to achieving a conversational style. Attention needs to be paid to what we hear (our delivery) and what we see (body language).

How to say it so people listen

The four elements of verbal delivery are:



Rate: speed at which you speak

Volume: loudness or softness

Pitch: High or low inflections

Pauses: Short pauses to punch key words

Using these four components effectively enables you to use your voice as a verbal equivalent of a highlighter pen – it just needs to sound natural, conversational and very authentic to the individual speaker.



Body-language

It's imperative for anyone presenting to believe in what they're saying, because otherwise our body language gives us away, sometimes obviously and sometimes via nearly imperceptible visual clues that tell an audience not to trust what they're hearing.

Gestures really can help to emphasise points, especially when used sparingly, at key moments and within the 'power sphere' (imagine a circle that runs between your eyes to the tips of your outstretched hands and down to your belly button). Hands that hang below the naval are perceived to show a presenter lacking energy or confidence.

Social psychologist, Amy Cuddy advocates adopting a favourite 'power pose' somewhere private (think hands-on-hips 'Wonder Woman' or stretching hands up above your head) for a few minutes before undertaking a task like presenting. Her studies have shown that this can increase testosterone levels, making us more assertive and powerful, and reduce the stress-hormone, cortisol, making us less anxious.

The importance of **novelty** to the impact of a presentation

Teach me something new

The human brain loves novelty – the ‘new’ causes the brain to produce the feel good chemical, dopamine. An unfamiliar, unusual, or unexpected element in a presentation intrigues the audience, jolts them out of their preconceived notions and gives them a new way of looking at the world. However, even the best ideas will fail to inspire an audience if they’re not packaged effectively.



Deliver jaw-dropping moments

Moments that are impressive, surprising or even shocking grab the listeners’ attention. Neuroscientists call this the creation of an ‘emotionally-charged’ event; a heightened state of emotion that makes it more likely your audience will remember your message and act on it.



Lighten-up

The brain loves humour; it lowers defences and makes your audience more receptive to your message. It also makes you more likeable, and people are more willing to do business with or support someone that they like. However, it needs to be used creatively and naturally – nothing undermines credibility or likeability like forced, badly told, or worse still, crass or offensive jokes.

Anecdotes, observations, personal stories and well-placed visuals are often the best methods for incorporating an element of humour into a presentation.

The importance of making a presentation **memorable**

Stick to the 20-minute rule

This is the ideal length for a presentation; any longer and you need to build in soft breaks like video, activity or a change of focus.

Researchers have discovered that ‘cognitive backlog’, too much information, prevents the successful transmission of ideas. Being succinct also has a clarifying effect – it forces you to be disciplined about what’s really important and what to include



3

'Chunking' and 3's

Scientists have found that we're best able to remember things when they're presented in groups of three...any more than this and we struggle to recall.

So, presenters may wish to structure their presentations using three stories/anecdotes to illustrate three-main points, building into an over-arching message (see Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford Commencement speech).

Paint a mental picture with multisensory experiences

Deliver presentations that touch more than one of the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. The brain does not pay attention to boring things and it's difficult to be bored if you're exposed to mesmerising images, captivating videos, intriguing props, beautiful words and more than one voice bringing the story to life.

Study after study has shown that multi-sensory delivery results in higher impact and recall. Dr Richard Meyer's *A Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning*, explored the impact on recall of students exposed to multisensory learning inputs. His study identified that the impact on individuals with no prior knowledge of the subject was even more marked. This is highly relevant in sales-environments where pitching a new product, service or way of working.



Stay in your own lane

Be authentic, open and transparent. Most people can spot if you're not being yourself. If you try to be something that you are not, you'll fail to gain the trust of your audience.

Great examples from TED

Conversational-style and story telling - Bryan Stevenson, 2012

Corresponding gestures for impact, Jennifer Granholm, 2013

Novel presentation and surprise, Hans Rosling, 2006

Jaw-dropping moment, Bill Gates, 2009 (releasing mosquitos into the audience)

Use of humour – Ken Robinson, 2006

Memorable and the 'rule of 3' – Steve Jobs, 2005

Multimedia – Al Gore, 2006

The TED logo, consisting of the letters 'TED' in a bold, red, sans-serif font.