

LITTLE

QUICK FIX:

**PRESENT
YOUR
RESEARCH**

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Los Angeles | London | New Delhi
Singapore | Washington DC | Melbourne





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Section 1 It may be hard to believe, but yes, anyone can significantly improve their presentation skills. Once you set the right focus and develop self-trust, you will have the ability to **become much more impactful**.

Section 2 We generally consider what we want to say, but **rarely do we consider the impact we want to have**. But knowing exactly what you want your audience to think, do or feel differently about, based on your presentation, is crucial.

Section 3 To influence your audience, you need to know your audience. You want to **bring them along on your journey** and to do this you need to have a sense of who they are.



Section 4 To take your audience from where they are to where you want them to be, you need to **ensure they respond to you**. One of the most effective ways to do this is to involve them with a compelling storyline.

Section 5 Story can be seen as ‘fluffy’, while data can be dry and boring. The key to effective data presentation is to **have data bring credibility to story and have story bring life to data**.

Section 6 Being an effective presenter is all about **tapping into your best-self qualities**. Why lead with nerves, when you can just as easily lead with your innate charm, passion or wit?



Section

Become more
impactful



**Can I really
improve my
presentation
skills?**

A



YES.

And quite dramatically. Being an effective presenter is about having an impact and being influential. These are skills you've been developing in your personal life since day one.



Have an impact

It's certainly tempting to prepare your presentation by plopping the main points of your research report straight into a PowerPoint and then reading through these points one by one. But please, just say NO. Jam-packing as much of your study as you can into a seemingly unending series of slides will cause your audience a great deal of unnecessary pain. They tune out, nothing is heard and you lose the opportunity to make an impact. Trust me, you can do better than this.

Dry, tedious, uninspired presentations need not be the norm. After all, we all know outstanding presentations when we hear them. We need to emulate these presenters. Research presentations are about sharing information for a purpose. So, there is a need to drive your presentation and motivate your audience to action.

WHAT WE'VE BEEN TAUGHT

(and need to forget!)

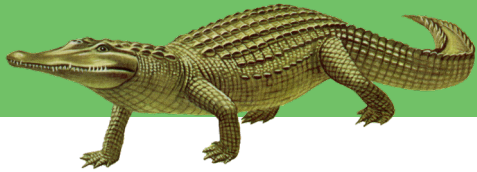
There's a standard process for developing a presentation, and it goes something like this:

- Step 1** Figure out what your main point is, e.g. the message that you want to get across.
- Step 2** Decide on supporting points that will assist you in delivering that main message.
- Step 3** Gather research that will help you develop those supporting points.

- Step 4** Write a talk based on the above and transpose key points to PowerPoint *or* go straight to PowerPoint, capturing all the key bits of information/data.
- Step 5** Support your presentation with graphs, charts and graphics.
- Step 6** Revise until you think you have something logical.
- Step 7** Get out your stopwatch and practise until you sound professional within your allotted time.

WARNING – STAY AWAY!

Whether explicit or implicit, this is the process we tend to turn to – it's what we've been taught. It's what we did for our first book report; it's the process we used through school. No wonder it's our go-to at university. It's the norm. The question is whether this norm is the most effective process for developing your presentation.



Now, if the goal of your presentation is to simply impart information, then this is a pretty strong process. But I would argue that when you are giving your research presentation, you are doing, or should be doing, much more than delivering information. **You should be working in the arena of influence.**

BEING INFLUENTIAL

You can tell your audience what you did and what you found. But if you expect them to be inherently interested in you and your work, you're likely to be disappointed. You need to do the work to motivate an audience, to involve them, to influence them. This is the true value of presenting – to influence others. Telling is level one, getting them to know something is level two and level three is getting them to do something. **What do you want your audience to do because of your presentation?**

Do you want them to give you a high mark; to give you admission into a programme; to challenge their own perceptions; to take up your recommendations? Sharing information is never as powerful as influencing the thoughts, feelings and actions of others.

Now if you accept this premise, the standard process for developing a presentation falls short. When you are attempting to motivate an audience to action, you need to rethink what you know about presentations.



POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS:

The New Steps!

- Step 1** **Decide on your audience-related objective.** What you want your audience to do, feel or think differently about based on your presentation.
- Step 2** **Find out what you can about the audience.** If you're trying to convince your audience of something, you need to know who they are and where they are in relation to your agenda.
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Step 4 Consider all the strategies and mediums that will help along this journey (data, images, graphics, videos, stories, etc.).

Step 5 Develop your presentation. In a research context this is likely to be PowerPoint.

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Step 7 Practise. But rather than practise speaking, practise talking, conversing and convincing, all while being your most relatable self.



SELF-REFLECTION

You can't improve your presentation skills unless you know your starting point. Fill this in and find out where you stand.

What was the last presentation you gave?

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How would you rate it out of 10?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What were the strong points?

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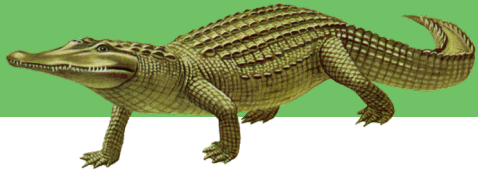
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.....

.....

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CHECKPOINT



What were the weak points?

.....

.....

.....

How did you feel when presenting, e.g. nervous, confident, indifferent?

.....

What is the one thing you wish you had done differently?

.....



Rarely do we consider the
impact we want to have





Section



**How
important is
it to have a
presentation
objective?**

A



It is critical! And not just an objective related to what you want to say. We are talking about a strong audience-related objective.



It's the audience reaction that counts

When it comes to presenting your research, you will undoubtedly have a study-related objective, e.g. 'To outline your study and communicate findings.' But seriously, think about it, isn't that the format destined to put your audience to sleep?

What is it that you want from your audience based on your presentation? This should be more than for your audience to know the ins and outs of your research. Do you want your audience to be shocked, be motivated, give you a great grade, be willing to change behaviours, be willing to get on board, be a change agent? These are the things that matter. If you can articulate this type of audience-related goal, it will absolutely change how you structure and deliver your presentation. You will be more powerful. You have no choice but to go from reporting to motivating.

A SHIFT IN FOCUS

In order to move yourself from ‘What do I want to share with my audience?’ to ‘What do I want my audience to think, feel or do differently based on my presentation?’, **there needs to be a shift in focus**. You need to move from ‘What do I want to say?’ to ‘What do I want them to do?’, i.e., rather than telling your audience about your research, you need to motivate them to do something because of your research.

INTUITIVELY MOVE TOWARDS BEST PRACTICE

It is this seemingly small, yet critical, shift that will lead your presentation down a completely different path. **You will automatically (and quite intuitively) move towards best practice.** For example, most of us know that best practice involves things like not having too many words on a slide, not having too many slides, making good eye contact, having good vocal performance and being passionate. But when you are giving out information – this is not intuitive. We tend to dispassionately read and/or memorize; it actually makes sense for the task. Now think about being influential. Best practice makes sense! Even better, best practice already exists in how we attempt to influence others in our daily lives. You've got this!

BUT I WON'T SOUND KNOWLEDGEABLE

Why do we think that when we cram as much into a 10-minute presentation as humanly possible and rush through it all without showing any personality, we sound knowledgeable? That's not how it works. **A powerful presentation is not about showing people how much you know; it's all about your audience and what they walk away with.**

Now without a doubt, you need to know your stuff. You shouldn't be presenting if you don't know what you are talking about. Knowledge gives you credibility and confidence. But... here is the kicker... you do not need to tell them everything you know! Let your knowledge be obvious. Let it be obvious by showing that you can extract essential, compelling elements. Let it show through your confidence. Let it show by your ability to strategically engage and motivate.





FIND THE AUDIENCE-RELATED OBJECTIVE

For each of the following, write an audience-related objective. There could be several possibilities here so feel free to go beyond the given answers. Note that for the six statements below, it would be pretty easy to present relevant information in a dry way. But have a look at the answers (both yours and the ones given). These will demand best practice and the engagement of your audience.

1 Overviewing the movie you just watched

.....
.....

2 Telling people about your dog

.....
.....

3 Informing employees about an unpopular change in the workplace

.....
.....



4 Outlining your research proposal

.....
.....

5 Giving an overview of your research processes

.....
.....

6 Presenting the recommendations of your research

.....
.....

Answers

- 1 Convince them to go and see the movie (you will need to show your passion)
- 2 Motivate them to consider buying that particular breed of dog (to be most convincing, you will need to know your audience)
- 3 Get them on board with the change OR get them to be less hostile OR stir up problems as part of your personal agenda for change (think about how each of these agendas will demand strategic development of your presentation)
- 4 Get them interested in your topic OR get permission to continue candidate OR receive a good grade (your agenda will determine your strategy)
- 5 Get them interested in your topic OR receive a good grade OR get them to see how much work you put in OR show how passionate you are (again you will need to be strategic depending on your agenda/s)
- 6 Get someone to take up recommendations OR be funded to continue your work OR be hired on as a consultant (and any other overt or hidden agendas you may have)

My audience-related objective is:

.....

