



## Presentation checklist

Use this checklist to help create compelling presentations that will be remembered! Compelling presentations are so rare that [SlideRocket](#) found that 32% of people fall asleep during PowerPoint presentations, and 20% would rather go to the dentist than sit through another one. Do not let this happen to you!

### Your audience will pay closer attention and will find the presentation most compelling when it is:



#### Significant

Are you interpreting the information for the audience so they find meaning? What is the subject and why does it matter to you and your audience?



#### Structured

Present your key points in a way that makes sense for your audience. Your presentation will be more memorable and convincing.



#### Simple

Keep your presentation simple or risk your audience tuning out.



#### Practiced and Prepared

Rehearse your presentation. The smoother it goes, the easier it will be for your audience to listen and follow.

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## Use this checklist as you develop your presentation.



### Significance

- **What is your purpose?** Clearly define the primary reason for the presentation. There should only be *one key message* that defines the purpose and why it is important to the audience.
- **Who is your audience?** Do your homework and learn any information you can about your audience ahead of time. Tailor your content to the audience.



### Structure

- **What is your key message?** What is the *ONE thing* you want your audience to know?
- **Show. Don't just tell.** Don't just tell the audience what you want them to know; show them with 3–4 images and examples that support your point. The audience will not be able to remember more than 3–4 at one time.
- **Start with paper.** Start by outlining your presentation.
- **Edit, edit, edit.** Be brutal and CUT unnecessary content. You do not need to demonstrate all your knowledge and background. Include only 1-3 key points or takeaways and an example to illustrate each point.



### Simplicity

- **Keep it simple.** Tell your audience what you will tell them, tell them, tell them conclusions, then tell them again by providing a summary and next steps. Your presentation should help the audience answer:
  - Why should I care?
  - How is this relevant to me/my life?
  - What should I do now based on the information I heard?
- **What is the request of the audience?** What do you want the audience to do with the information? How should they take action? Be able to answer the question: so what?
- **Cut out text.** Researchers have demonstrated time and time again that text is the least effective way to deliver important information. Yet despite clear evidence that wordy, bullet-point-heavy slides don't work, the average PowerPoint slide has 40 words.





## Practice and Preparation

- **Practice transitions between topics.** Especially for multi-person presentations, identify and practice transitions. If each person creates his/her own presentation, talk about content beforehand so content is not repetitive.
- **Record your voice.** Be aware of and listen to your voice and intonation. Using a monotone voice or an upward intonation at the end of sentences (making it sound like a question) can put the audience to sleep, be distracting or reduce your credibility. Practice out loud and concentrate on keeping your tone consistent and placing emphasis appropriately.
- **Practice out loud.** Practicing out loud helps to smooth sentences and commit content to memory. It will help you time the presentation and identify areas that have too few or too many examples.
- **Equipment check.** Double check you have everything you need—wi-fi, computer, microphone, podium, screen, projector, etc.
- **Check out the room in advance.** Make sure the space and room set up is adequate for your presentation, particularly if there are breakout tables.
- **Have a plan B.** Have your presentation on a memory stick, email it to yourself and print a copy of the final presentation.



## Presentation<sup>1</sup> design tips:

PowerPoint can help to visualize ideas and deliver key points. Do not use it as a place to store your presentation notes or to data dump. You should be prepared to speak without PowerPoint slides. With that in mind, take these tips into consideration:

- **Slides are free—break up content.** 1 key point per slide.
- **Keep bullets to 1–2 line only.**
- **Use data to illustrate your point.**
  - **Make sure the point is clear in the data.** Use circles and arrows to direct the audience to the data point.
  - Keep charts and graphs simple. Highlight ONE point per chart.
- **Do not read the slide.** People read faster than you speak. So if you read bullets and text, it makes your role irrelevant.
- **Make sure content is large and clear.** Can your audience see the content on the slide? Can someone easily follow the key points?
- **Use photographs/visuals on slides.** Use photos, not clip art. Clip art can make the presentation look slapdash. Other visuals, such as charts or graphics can help you get your point across without using a picture. Ensure visuals are relevant to the issue at hand.
- **Use a limited number of fonts and colors.** More than a couple can be distracting.

<sup>1</sup>While PowerPoint is the most popular presentation platform, alternatives include Keynote, Prezi, PowTown, or SlideRocket. All these tips still apply.



## Resources:

- <http://blog.prezi.com/latest/2014/2/7/10-most-common-rookie-mistakes-in-public-speaking.html/>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/thecroaker/death-by-powerpoint>
- <http://www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/ted-speakers-on-presenting-public-speaking.html>
- <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/34274/7-Lessons-From-the-World-s-Most-Captivating-Presenters-SlideShare.aspx>
- <http://www.slideshare.net/HubSpot/what-would-steve-do-10-lessons-from-the-worlds-most-captivating-presenters>
- <http://cubicleninjas.com/top-20-best-powerpoint-presentation-design/>
- <http://www.sliderocket.com/blog/2012/12/death-by-powerpoint-no-sex-instead-of-powerpoint/>

