



Storytelling – Presentation Thoughts!

It is storytelling, not storyshowing.

It's tough to show a series of charts / pictures that tell a story.

You must TELL the story, and, LEAD your audience to the desired outcome!

The best material, and the best story, get you part of the way there. To, truly, be successful in your presentation, you need some good presentation techniques. Whether your stage is in a large auditorium with 15,000 people in the audience, in front of a TV camera with millions of people watching, or, it is in an office with a single manager staring at you, most of the presentation thoughts, that follow, apply.

1. Practice! KNOW your presentation. That does NOT mean you memorize it. You should memorize the Grab! – those first few seconds where you need to get the attention of you audience. The rest, you should know, so well, that the presentation just flows.
Warning: The more you try to memorize, the less natural you'll appear. And, any interruption will kill you!
2. Be passionate! If you must 'sell' an idea you are not passionate about, FAKE it! If you don't think you can fake it, take an acting class!
Warning: If YOU don't believe in what you are presenting, your audience won't believe in it.
3. Really understand the three parts of any story (Grab! Guts! Gotcha!). Structure accordingly.
Warning: Look at those 3 parts in reverse order – THAT is the priority. A great Gotcha! can get results!
4. Understand your audience. Are they Analytical? Agreeable? Assertive? Antagonistic? You need to have all information ready for any audience, just in case you get questions, but, know that, typically, the higher up someone is, in the management chain, the less time they will devote to listening to you.
Warning: You need to 'read' your audience. Be able to adjust for different audience types, on the fly!
5. Perform a pre-mortem on your presentation. Iterate the process of having a test audience find issues, then fix the issues and try, again!
Warning: Do not sell this process short – it is a powerful way for you to improve your chances of success!
6. Understand how your audience will perceive your data, and your story. The easiest way to fail is to make your audience have to decode what you are presenting. Be precise! Be specific!
Warning: Different audiences may perceive the same data, differently. Know how yours will be perceived!
7. More Practice! More Practice! More Practice!
Warning: The lack of practice kills more presentations than any other error!
8. If using Powerpoint or Keynote or any other presentation software, KEEP IT SIMPLE. Understand that putting 12 bullet points on a chart, in 12 point font, will NOT go over well to old eyes in the back of the room, that fancy slide transition irritate many audiences, that some viewers may be color blind. I like Guy Kawasaki's 10/20/30 rule for presentation slides. No more than 10 slides. No longer than a 20 minute presentation. No font smaller than 30 point.
Warning: The BEST presentations do NOT use slides! If possible, make the audience look at YOU, only!
9. Professional speaker/coach Darren LaCroix uses the phrase "Stage time! Stage time! Stage time!" It is not just you practicing a specific presentation. The MORE of them you do, the better you will get. Take every opportunity to present to 1,2,1000 people. When an important one comes along, you'll do better.
Warning: Don't think every speech must be for business! Join Toastmasters to get help and stage time!
10. RELAX! Rarely does your life depend on a presentation. Maybe your job does, but, proper preparation will solve that issue!
Warning: Do not take the old advice about getting over nerves by imagining a naked audience. It doesn't work!

If you're really trying to be a better presenter, read my storytelling papers, then, find a local Toastmasters club!

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See Chuck's book on Amazon: [59 Minutes to Great Storytelling](#)

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