

UNIVERSAL STORYTELLER

PRESENTATIONS & PITCHES – A STORYTELLING TOOLKIT

- **Presentations and pitches are about attitude.** You have to totally understand and be convinced about what you pitch. You cannot fake enthusiasm.
- Presentations rise or fall on the **quality of the idea, the narrative, and the passion of the speaker.** It's about substance, not speaking style or multimedia pyrotechnics.
- **Pitch the story, not the product.** Storytelling is the most compelling way of engaging an audience and differentiating your product.
- **Always distinguish between the "Story" and the "Telling".** Devote more time and energy on the story. You can make a bad presentation with a good story. But never a good presentation with a bad story.

AND NEVER FORGET:

You can safely hide behind slides full of information or boldly tell your story. It's your choice. What have you really got to lose?

*"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget
how you made them feel."*

Maya Angelou



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THE STORY

PREP

- **Know your audience** . Make a list of gain and pain points of your audience and sort them by importance. Make sure to address the 3–4 biggest gains and pains with your pitch.

SET-UP: ATTRACT ATTENTION

- **Hook / Open the knowledge gap**. No matter what you do, you have to hook the audience first. They have to urgently want to know what comes next.
- **Ways to open the knowledge gap:**
 - a) ask a question;
 - b) create a mystery;
 - c) demonstrate the dystopia or eutopia of your solution.
- **The Big Idea**. What is it? Whatever it is, you should be able to sum it up (strongly) in one sentence.

BUILD-UP: HOLD THE ATTENTION

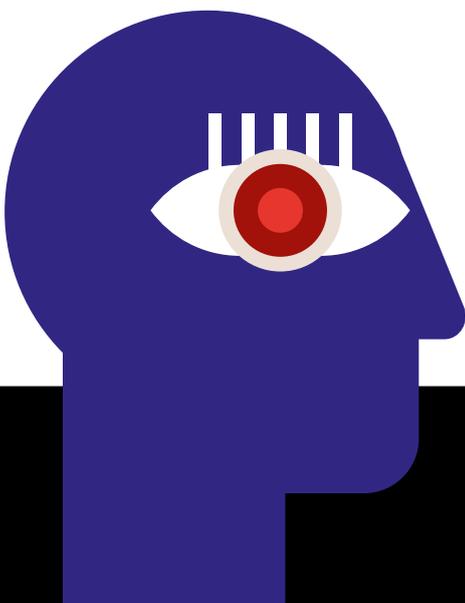
- **Work through all steps/facets of your solution**. Remember that all steps should be mutually exclusive but collectively exhaustive so that combined they cover your big idea as a whole
- **Identify antagonistic forces**. Clearly define the obstacles that may stand in the way of your solution and how you overcome them in each step.
- **Climax**. Act 2 culminates in your idea. What is your magic sauce?

PAY-OFF: CONVEY THE MESSAGE AND ITS IMPACT

- **Close the knowledge gap for good**. Answer the question that you posed at the beginning in a satisfying yet unexpected way. Aim for a 'WOW'.
- **Change**. Tell the audience what impact your solution will have and how it will create sustainable change – ideally on society as a whole.

EPILOGUE / Q&A

- **I-know-what-you-are-thinking-story**. Name your audience's potential objections before they do and you will be much closer to disarming them. This can neutralise concerns without direct confrontation.



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THE TELLING

Adapt your telling to the needs of the story and the audience. How can you most effectively entertain your target audience and bring the desired message across?

- **Do, show, tell something unexpected.** Our brains cannot ignore novelty. If you break a pattern, you will have your audience's attention.
 - **Keep it simple.** Identify the central message you need to convey and state it in the simplest way you can. Avoid complicated words and sentences.
 - **Be visual... as hell.** Always use images and other visual elements to emphasise your point. People respond better to visuals – they are processed quicker than words and can be remembered better.
 - **Use analogies or metaphors.** Analogies help us to understand material we know little about. By comparing the abstract with the familiar, analogies give us a framework to better explain complex topics.
 - **Use anaphoras.** People remember what they hear often. Don't shy away from repeating the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. 'I have a dream'.
 - **Use the power of three.** Three is the smallest possible number to create or break a pattern.
- People can remember three pieces of information really well. 'This is the truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth.'
- **Be courageous.** Courage stands out. Courage gets you noticed. Courage wins hearts and minds. You have ideas that are uncomfortable to tell but are meant to be seen, felt, and heard. Tell them!
 - **Use tangible objects.** People always remember tangible objects better than abstract concepts. Get them on stage or hand them to the audience.
 - **Change the angle.** Tell the story from somebody else's perspective to create empathy.
 - **Use numbers and stats wisely.** Visualise your stats or put them in context. For example, 'even the fastest computers still need 45 seconds to start. 45 seconds! That's enough time to make a sandwich.'
 - **Use the four rules of memory.** People will remember what they
 - a) hear often,
 - b) hear in the beginning,
 - c) hear in the end and
 - d) find emotional.
 - **10-minute-rule.** Every 10 minutes build in 'soft' breaks (video, image, story, new speaker etc.).

