HOW TO BUILD A

KILLER PRESENTATION

(EVEN USING POWERPOINT)

An eBook by

sales-i
SELL SMART

DESIGN, CONTENT AND DELIVERY

CONTENTS

DESIGN

CONTENT

DELIVERY

There are more than 500 million PowerPoint users worldwide[1] creating over 30 million presentations every day[2]. However, 99.9% of them suck!

It's not PowerPoint, Prezi, Keynote or any other software that is at fault, though - it's you. The fact that you downloaded this eBook suggests that you want to build a killer presentation.

PowerPoint is actually a powerful bit of kit, if used properly. Implement the tips from this guide and your presentation will stand out from the crowd for the right reasons.

" *Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple.*

STEVE JOBS ——

DESIGN

Steve Jobs once said "Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple". This statement is true of your presentation too. It's easier to pick a random color, Google image or default font and then mash them together onto a slide that looks like it has just been massacred by Freddie Krueger. The difficult part is understanding which elements complement each other and which don't need to be there at all.

COLOR

A PRESENTATION THAT REFLECTS YOUR COMPANY'S BRAND IDENTITY LOOKS MORE PROFESSIONAL AND IS EASILY IDENTIFIABLE.

Our eyes are attracted to color, so use ones that are visually pleasing. If you're going to base your presentation on a theme, then you should use appropriate colors. For example, if it's vintage, use pastel colors like duck egg blue or salmon pink (yes, I learned those colors from my wife).

The difference that color alone makes to your slide is huge, so if you're unsure which colors work well together, try an online color tool such as paletton.com or coolors.co to build a palette.

Colors can be a great way to emphasize a key point such as a statistic or a certain keyword. Below I've used green to draw the audience to the stand out figure.
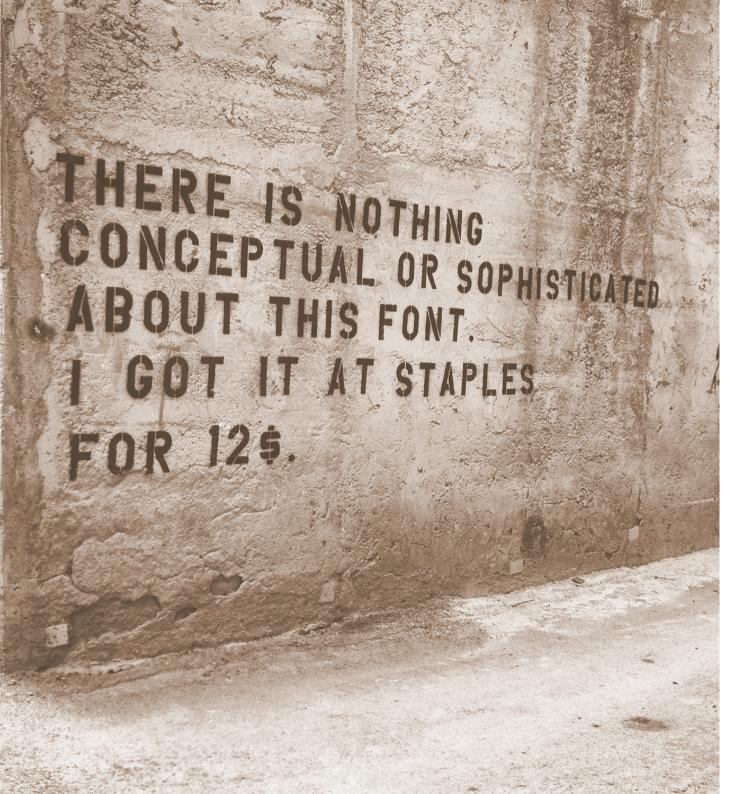
STATISTICS

Very Important

STAT 1
DESCRIPTION OF STAT 1
67 %

STAT 2
DESCRIPTION OF STAT 2
25 %

STAT 3
DESCRIPTION OF STAT 3
74 %

STAT 4
DESCRIPTION OF STAT 4
13 %

When creating a presentation for your company you will need to ensure that your color scheme is on brand. If you are unsure about the correct colors, contact your marketing department who I'm sure will be happy to help.

Your title
YOUR SUB TITLE
Your paragraph text

This slide is easy to read and fits with the 'vintage' theme.

Your title
YOUR SUB TITLE

Although the same design, this one looks like it could give you an epileptic fit.

THERE IS NOTHING CONCEPTUAL OR SOPHISTICATED ABOUT THIS FONT. I GOT IT AT STAPLES FOR 12$.
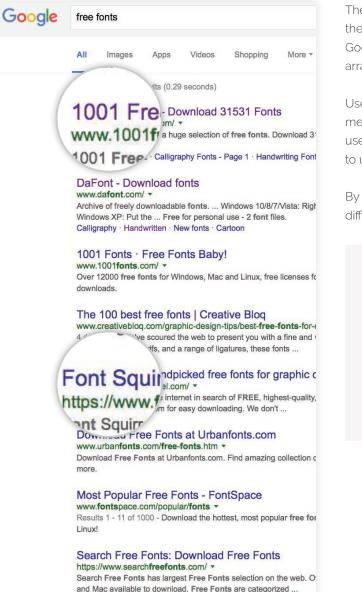
Fonts.

A LIST OF FONTS TO AVOID:

Tahoma
Calibri
Arial
Verdana
Courier New
Times New Roman
Trebuchet MS
Lucida Console
Comic Sans MS

Like colors you need to choose a font that is relevant to your theme. Serif fonts (decorative flick on characters) are generally considered traditional, whereas Sans Serif (no decorative flicks) are more modern.

But - and it's a big but - never use the standard fonts like Comic Sans or Times New Roman. The moment you do, you render your presentation useless (in my opinion). It suggests a lack of effort and competency and makes the information much harder to take in.

There are thousands of free fonts available to download so there is no excuse for you to use any of the above. Simply Google 'free fonts' and you will be presented with a vast array of websites.

Used correctly, fonts can become part of the design meaning you don't need to go and find an image or can be used to complement your image. Usually it's best practice to use one font for a heading and another for body text.

By using a strong title font and a much lighter body text it differentiates between the two.

COMPELLING TITLE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Donec quam felis, ultricies nec, pellentesque eu, pretium quis, sem.

AVOID BOLDING OR CAPITALIZING BODY TEXT AS IT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO READ.

 WARNING

If you send someone a PowerPoint presentation and they don't have your font installed then it may substitute it for a standard font such as Arial. If you're using a PC then you can embed your fonts by following this article. If you're a Mac user (like me) then unfortunately this is not possible and you'll have to either save your file as a PDF or ensure the recipient has the correct fonts installed on their computer.

LOGOS

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away I stumbled across a presentation that a colleague had created that had five logos on the same slide. In my opinion, one is too many.

Your audience knows what company you work for so you don't need to remind them on every slide. All you're doing is taking up valuable presentation space, giving your slide a 'cluttered' appearance.

But *the* worst crime you can make with your logo is using a low resolution image that has lost its aspect ratio.

CompanyName

How the logo should look.

CompanyName

A logo massacre!

WHITE SPACE

WHITE SPACE...

...IS GOOD!

THE CLEANER THE BETTER.

IT'S EASIER TO READ AND NICER TO SEE.

The design of your presentation contributes as much as the content itself. To create a beautiful presentation, you have to keep simplicity at the forefront of your mind. The easiest way to make any presentation look awesome is to make sure you have lots of space between content and you align everything to keep it nice and tidy – this is known as 'white space'.

You don't need to vomit every piece of information onto a single slide. A good trick is to add one main point per slide. This helps you with timing and prevents your audience from skipping ahead. Your audience will thank you for it too as it's easier to digest one point at a time.

Top tips to reduce text on a page:

- ⊘ One point per slide
- ⊘ Shorten sentences to a single word
- ⊘ Use a picture instead of words
- ⊘ Be merciless and cut out everything that's not needed

Just remember that you're giving a presentation, not a document. You want your audience to listen to what you have to say, not read what you're saying from a slide. If they're reading then they're not paying attention to you so it begs the question, what's the point of you being there?

If they're reading everything you're saying then what's the point of you being there?

"Less information means more time for interaction."

"The average PowerPoint presentation has 40 words on each slide³."

WONDERFUL WHITE SPACE

Don't be afraid to leave pockets of negative space. It will ultimately bring balance to your composition and defines the areas of positive space.

NOT SO WONDERFUL
Same font and design but this slide lacks white space which doesn't bring balance to your composition and doesn't define the areas of positive space.

BULLET POINT 1
Blah, blah

BULLET POINT 2
Blah, blah

BULLET POINT 3
Blah, blah

BULLET POINT 3
Blah, blah

BULLETS

Bullet points are sooo 1990. Today's design barely uses them at all. Bullets are great at organizing content but in their basic form they're a bit boring.

Better approaches:

- ⊘ Use an icon
- ⊘ Highlight a certain word in a paragraph
- ⊘ Split each point into an individual slide
- ⊘ Overemphasize with lines, shapes and spacing

I am fully aware that I've used bullet points to list 'better approaches', which was no accident. To the right are examples of how you can portray the same information in different ways.

BETTER APPROACHES

ICONS
Use an icon

HIGHLIGHT
Highlight certain words

SPLIT
One point, one slide

OVEREMPHASIZE
Use lines and shapes

BETTER APPROACHES

01 ICON
Use an icon.

02 HIGHLIGHT
Highlight certain words.

03 SPLIT
One point, one slide.

04 OVEREMPHASIZE
Use lines and shapes.

BETTER APPROACHES

To avoid death by bullet points you can either use **icons** instead, **highlight** certain words in a sentence, **split** each point into an individual slide or **overemphasize** with lines, shapes and spacing.

Top tip: You can download icons from Font Awesome or the Noun Project, just make sure that you only use icons of the same style. Keep them the same size for balance, too.

IMAGES

As the old saying goes, 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. You need to use this to your advantage when building your presentation. Your audience will be far more receptive to an image that just text.

Google Images is not the only place that you can find your pictures. There are multiple sites online that offer free vectors and photographs that you can download and use. A couple of good examples are Freepik and All Free Download.

Using cheesy stock photos just makes it feel like you and your business has no personality and is faceless. Seriously, is a call center really full of super happy models? I'm pretty sure that they're not, so avoid at all costs!

THE DO'S

- ⊘ Do enlarge images from the corner
- ⊘ Do use high resolution images
- ⊘ Do use relevant images

THE DON'TS

- ⊘ Don't use stock images
- ⊘ Don't use clip art
- ⊘ Don't use images that aren't in keeping with your theme

LAYOUT

The layout is key to a good presentation. Each slide needs to look balanced with the right amount of information for what you're saying. It's good practice to build a series of templates and then reuse them for every presentation that you create. For instance, you can have a statistics slide, text and image, benefits, section divider, graphs timeline and so on. It's far easier to reuse a template than building a new one every time.

Top tip: If you see a presentation that you like then try and reverse engineer the layout. Where is the image and its size? What font does it use? What color scheme is used? You can find nicely designed presentations on SlideShare.

As you can see from the following examples, once a slide is broken down into a simple wireframe it's easy to see how its constructed.
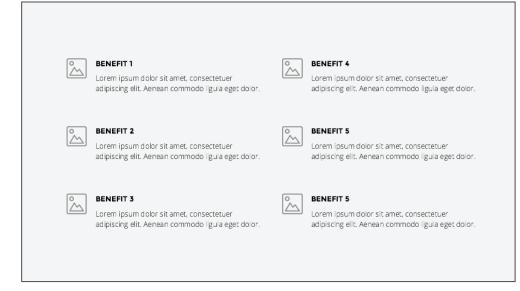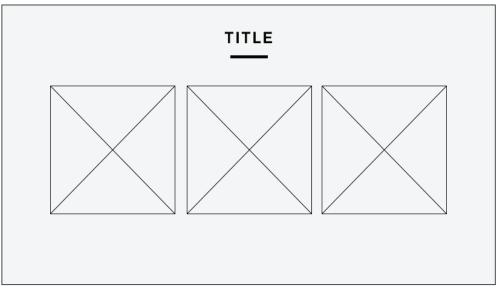
TITLE
SUBTITLE

TITLE SLIDE

TITLE

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor. Aenean massa. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.
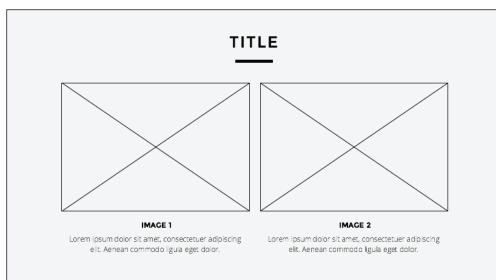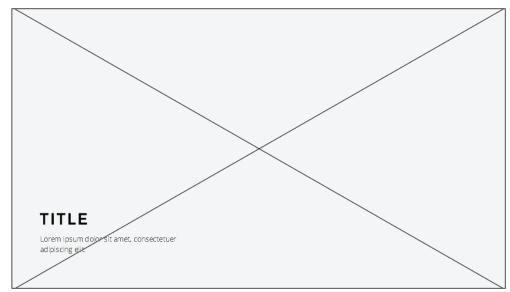
TEXT LEFT

BENEFITS

BENEFIT 1
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor.

BENEFIT 2
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor.

BENEFIT 3
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BENEFIT 4
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BENEFIT 5
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BENEFIT 5
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor.

THREE IMAGES

TITLE

TWO IMAGES AND TEXT

TITLE

IMAGE 1
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor.

IMAGE 2
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Aenean commodo ligula eget dolor.

BIG IMAGE AND TEXT

TITLE
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit.

TRANSITIONS

Using transitions within your presentation can make it feel slick and professional! However, if you're not a seasoned pro you should avoid using them. Used incorrectly, transitions will make your presentation look like it was developed for an 80s children's TV show.

Your transitions have to work together and complement each slide and you should never over-use them.

> *The buyer journey is nothing more than a series of questions that must be answered.*

IDC ———

———

CONTENT

Remember that you're presenting to a captive audience, so you need to relate to them on their level. Whether that's through understanding their challenges or a common interest. By focusing on your audience, you will pique their interest and gain a more engaged audience – which is the reason why you are presenting to them in the first place.

SELL THE BENEFITS

People don't want to buy a drill; they want to buy a hole.

There is an art to selling benefits and to present like a superstar you'll need to know how. Just like a product, everything your audience listens to should have a benefit attached to it.

For example, if you're talking about CO2 emissions you'll also want to discuss the impact it has on our environment such as global warming. You can also go one step further and discuss the effect rising temperatures will have on their families, such as how rising sea levels could put children just like theirs at risk because of flooding.

FEATURE	ADVANTAGE	BENEFIT
Xenon headlights for your car	You can see 30% further at night	You and your passengers are safer
Sleeping bag with 1 inch layer of insulation	Retain body heat on cold nights	You'll have a great sleep and be well rested for tomorrow
Smartphone with 64GB memory	You can store thousands of photos	You'll be able to capture more memories

STORYTELLING

Storytelling has been around since we were Neanderthals drawing pictures of a woolly mammoth on a cave wall, and there's a reason for that. Humans (your audience!) are hardwired for stories. They love the rollercoaster of emotions that a hero, journey, surprise and plot can provide. Your presentation is a modern method for storytelling so should follow the beginning, middle and end format.

It doesn't matter if you're trying to sell a product or pitch an idea, there's a story behind it. How did the product come about? What was its reason for success? Why will it help your audience now? It's your job to create your product's story.

There are a few story structures to capture the hearts of your audience, *Monomyth*, *The Mountain* and *Sparkliness*.

There are loads of other storytelling methods but using any of these three will brighten up your talk and really engage with your audience – no matter how dry your subject may be.

MONOMYTH

Or the hero's journey, is a story structure that centers around a single character who sets out on a difficult journey into the unknown – only to seek success. Place yourself as the hero of your presentation and you can share the wisdom that you have learned and how you overcame challenges with your audience..

THE MOUNTAIN

This story structure is all about mapping the tension and drama in a story. You, the presenter will dictate when certain events occur, building a series of small challenges and rising action before a climactic conclusion. Presenting this way captivates your audience and is a great way to show how you can overcome a series of challenges.

SPARKLINESS

The very best speeches succeed because they contrast our current reality with an ideal, improved world (basically selling the benefits of your product). It compares the 'what is' with 'what could be'. This method is excellent for creating hope and excitement with you being the provider of this dream world.

CREDIBILITY

If you are going to use any statistics or quotes in your presentation you should reference them. Referencing adds credibility to what you're saying, whether it's primary or secondary research. A hard hitting stat can change the emotions of your audience or can back up your claim. For example, if you're trying to sell a customer retention tool it may be worth stating early on in your presentation that 'an average company loses between 10% and 30% of its customers each year[4].' If your audience works within a customer support role, a statistic like this will pique their interest and you'll get more engagement from them.

Another way to ensure that you're seen as a credible source of information is to not be too 'salesy' when presenting. Nobody likes to be sold to and in today's environment 94% of B2B buyers do research first before committing to a purchase decision[5].

Therefore, you can be that source of information to enable them to make their decision easier – they'll probably pick your product too, as long as you don't try and force it on them. Just talk about their problem in detail so they know you understand them and then say how your product solves the issue.

"I don't care about motivation, I care about credibility."

ELIOT SPITZER

THE RULE OF THREE

A tried and tested method for getting your point across in a presentation is to say something three times. You should introduce your point, talk about it in the main body and then summarize at the end.

This rule of three is a tried and tested method that delivers results. It makes concepts or ideas inherently more interesting, more enjoyable and more importantly, more memorable.

It's no surprise that the rule of three is used in a multitude of well-known stories such as the three little pigs, the three musketeers or the three wise men.

It's no surprise that many quotes that you're familiar with have three parts such as 'we came, we saw, we conquered' or 'sex, drugs and rock n' roll'.

It's no surprise that many company tag lines are three words such as 'I'm loving it', 'Just Do It' and 'Vorsprung durch Technik.'

Marketers have been hot on the case for years and generally promote benefits in threes because the first time you say something it's an incident, the second time, it's co-incidence, but the third time, it becomes a pattern.

Purposefully repeating words three times makes them more memorable. You may have noticed that the phrase 'it's no surprise' was repeated three times earlier on in this section, this probably came as no surprise to you. This repetition helped to emphasize the point and break up a larger list of examples.
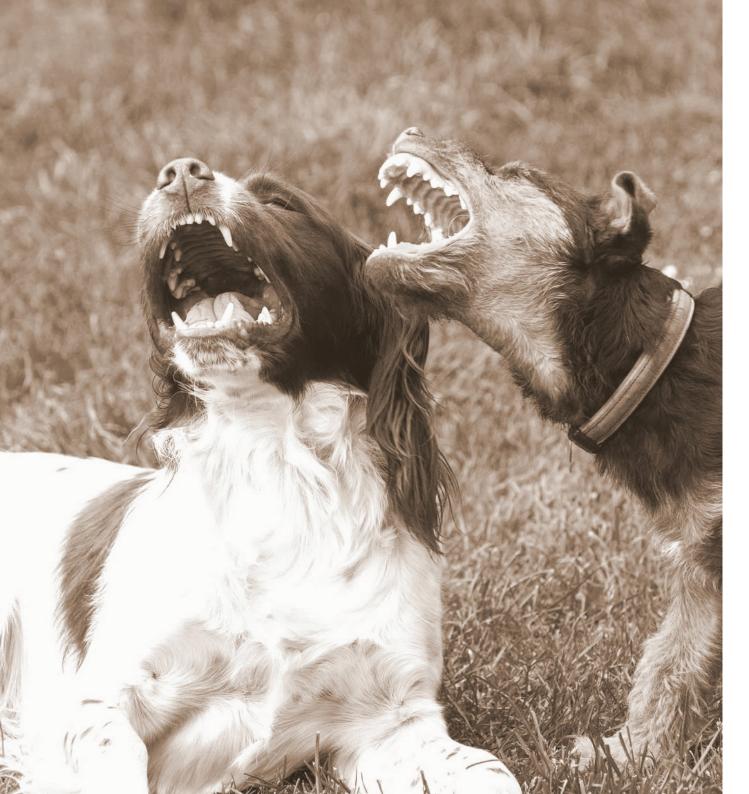
SAY IT, SAY IT AGAIN AND THEN ONCE MORE.

> *"There are always three speeches, for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave, and the one you wish you gave."*

DALE CARNEGIE

DELIVERY

Awesome looking slide deck: check. Great content to present: check. Now you just need to deliver it in a passionate and knowledgeable way.

Your delivery is just as important as all that prep work that you've already done. All the top presenters have improved various aspects of their voice and body language to positively talk to their audience.

HUMOR

Just because you're doing a corporate presentation doesn't mean you can't crack the odd joke. There's a thin line between 'work' and 'personal' life, and when you're trying to create relationships, a little personality is necessary to get through to your audience, so your presentation doesn't have to be rigid.

A joke or simply something said in jest about the weather, room you're in or tie you're wearing to 'break the ice' at the beginning of your presentation will gain your audience's trust and relax them.

It shows that you're willing to entertain them rather than send them into a boredom induced coma.

Top tip: Don't become a full-time comedian, use your jokes wisely at times when it's suitable.

TONE OF **VOICE!**

Your voice is part of your personal signature and speaks volumes about your confidence, conviction and ability to persuade. It's a bigger and more important part of your presentation than you may think.

With your voice, you can mutter, whisper, or shout. You can roar, suggest, demand. You can state, announce, assert, declare, affirm.

Varying the elements of sound in your presentation will emphasize and strengthen every message that you deliver. Lower your volume and raise gradually to build towards a point or slow your pace to let your audience absorb a certain phrase for a few seconds.

You can also raise your tone to incite excitement or humor and even use the emotional quality of your voice to signify meaning.

Most importantly though is your control, remember that you dictate the pace, tone and rhythm – there's no need to rush your presentation.

What to practice:

- ⊘ Fluctuate your voice rather than speaking in monotone
- ⊘ Use an emotional tone to signify meaning
- ⊘ Control the pace - don't talk too fast
- ⊘ Speak clearly and loudly so that everyone can hear you
- ⊘ Pause often when talking around a key point
- ⊘ Be passionate about your subject - it's infectious

YOUR AUDIENCE WILL JUDGE YOUR SINCERITY AND CREDIBILITY IN PART BY YOUR VOICE.

BODY LANGUAGE

COMMUNICATION IS ONLY 7% VERBAL[6], THE REST IS YOUR BODY LANGUAGE.

01 BOOST CONFIDENCE
Open your chest and arms and keep your back straight.

02 SMILE
It will make you more likable and make your audience comfortable.

03 EYE CONTACT
People naturally pay more attention if you look them in the eye.

04 GESTURES
Arm and hand movements will help reinforce your voice.

05 VARY GESTURES
Use open, closed, small and large gestures to keep your audience's attention.

06 WALK AROUND
Bring movement to your presentation by walking around.

07 POINT
Draw attention to an element of your presentation by pointing at it.

08 GET CLOSER
Moving closer to the audience will increase your audience's participation.

09 PAUSE AND BREATHE SLOWLY
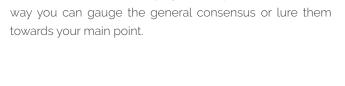It will give you time to think (and answer any hard questions).

10 BE POSITIVE
Use positive gestures like nodding, mirroring and thumbs up!

INVOLVE YOUR AUDIENCE

Being able to involve your audience in your presentation can generate a number of benefits such as them being more engaged, contributing to your content and actually listening to what you have to say. However, creativity is the main driver, so to involve the audience you have to think outside the box and be confident in your approach.

You could give your audience a card that's either 'yes' or 'no' to show whether or not they agree with your statement. This way you can gauge the general consensus or lure them towards your main point.

Another method could be to use examples of work from the audience. For instance, if you're presenting about how to convert more visitors to sales on your website, why not show some good and bad website examples from customers in the audience.

GOOD

BAD

If your presentation involves a live demonstration of your product, a great way to engage your audience is to let them participate with it. A hands on approach will give them the opportunity to test out your product for themselves rather than just take your word for it.

There are plenty more options that you could try such as quizzes, FAQ sections or even breakout sessions. Ultimately the decision on which tactic to use comes down to your confidence and the topic of your presentation.

SUMMING IT UP

This eBook has covered a lot: how to design a presentation, add valuable content and deliver an engaging pitch.

Creating a killer presentation is not easy and it should take the same amount of time to build as it does to write. Remember that you're giving a presentation and NOT handing over a document.

Think about good presentations you've seen and reverse engineer their design. Think about what makes a presentation boring for you – and do the opposite.

Even if you're not the most confident speaker your visuals will be your sidekick and can still give you that cutting edge that you need.

Finally, if in doubt, use your marketing department (if you have one) to help you build your presentation or to give you pointers.

Happy presenting!

ABOUT

We are the leader in sales performance for distributors and wholesalers.

sales-i is sales performance software designed to make every sales call more personal and profitable.

sales-i enables sales professionals to clearly identify and target high quality sales opportunities within their current customer base. Equipped with customer buying behavior alerts, salespeople can make insightful, personalized, quick business decisions, realizing repeat sales, reduced customer attrition and maximized profit margins as a result.

sales-i will change the way you sell. Get in touch for a free, online demonstration and judge our software for yourself.

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📍 www.sales-i.com

THE AUTHOR

Hi, I'm Chris, the Marketing Manager here at sales-i, the sales performance tool designed for manufacturers, wholesalers and distributors.

Working in Marketing, I've been working closely with sales teams for years to create sales presentations, so know a thing or two about what makes a good one.

I hope you enjoyed reading and found some ideas you can use to make your presentations more engaging for both you and your audience.

If you did, why not share this eBook? It only takes a moment but helps us to get this advice to your friends and colleagues, too.

in Connect on LinkedIn

References

01   500 million PowerPoint users worldwide - Source

02   30m presentations are created every day - Source

03   Average PowerPoint slide has 40 words - Source

04   Companies lose between 10-30% of their customer base each year - Source

05   94% research before buying - Source

06   Communication is only 7% verbal - Source

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