



Simple Steps to a Remarkable Talk

Don't.

Repeat.

Don't go to PowerPoint first.

Do this instead.

If you're putting together a remarkable talk or a presentation, don't, repeat, don't go straight to PowerPoint.

There's a much better way.

If someone's asked you to put together a talk, a presentation or a speech for a conference or event, then this eBook is for you. I've put together some tips specifically for presentations where the organisers want you to:

- Present a big idea
- Get people to buy into that idea
- Maybe change their viewpoint
- Take action

It's something more of my clients are asking about.

Can you help us to put together a remarkable presentation? Can you help us put together an engaging presentation? One that gets over ideas in a simple, easy to understand way, but most importantly in a way that gets people to take action.

And my advice always starts the same. Don't go straight to PowerPoint.

The old way

When you start to put together a presentation, is PowerPoint your first thought?

I must admit, early on in my career, it's the first thing I'd do too. Open PowerPoint and click on "New Slide" and then type heading, bullet point, bullet point, bullet point.

Then another one. New slide, heading, bullet point, bullet point, bullet point.

The problem is if we want to inspire and motivate people at a conference, we want to tell stories to get over an idea, get buy in and then action. Not give them a load of slides to read. Or worse make them listen to us reading the slides for them.

Diving straight into PowerPoint means that PowerPoint drives the structure of our presentation.

It's the slides that determine the flow. They almost become our script. They become the foundation of the presentation and possibly they also become our crutch or comfort blanket.

When the penny dropped

I was presenting at an industry event. One of those round robin sessions where people alternate between rooms during the day and the speaker gives the same talk four or five times.

The technology failed just before the first session and the event organisers didn't have a spare.

So, I delivered my talk 5 times completely without slides.

That was a revelation.

Since then, I've done things differently. PowerPoint is now the last thing I go to when I put together a speech or a presentation.

I usually write the whole script out first, or at least the structure of the speech before I even click on the PowerPoint icon.

Here's the structure I use when I'm putting together my presentations and as always, I like to keep things simple.

The first thing, let's have a look at the structure and the first question we need to ask ourselves is who is the customer?

Who is the audience?

Now, sometimes this will be bleedingly obvious.

If you've been asked to speak at a marketing conference, then it's likely that the people that are going to be marketers or they're going to work in companies that are wanting to learn about marketing.

If it's a technological conference, you're going to be talking to techies. If it's a health and wellbeing conference etc.

You're going to get a feel for who the audience saw straight away from the title and the type of conference that you're going to.

But it's always worth having an in-depth conversation with the conference organiser.

If they just contact you and say, "We'd like you to talk at XYZ Conference" and then expect you to come up with an idea for a speech, this can lead to missing the mark on the day and a disappointed audience and organiser.

It's always better to get an in depth understanding from the conference organiser exactly what they're looking for.

Find out what they want you to achieve. What audience behaviours they want you to try to change. What action they want you to try and get the audience to take after they've heard your speech.

If you can sit down with or at least video call with the conference organiser and get to the answers to some of these questions, then it's going to be much better and much easier for you to put together a remarkable talk.

What's your big idea?

Now let's come up with a big idea for the talk. This will guide you as you put together the messages, and calls to action.

I like to think about TED or TEDx talks because they are all about "Ideas Worth Sharing." And for many people TED / TEDx talks are the benchmark of a good conference presentation.

Once you've got the big idea, try to come up with a "one liner" you can use and repeat throughout the whole of the presentation so that it's almost like a strapline or a jingle that gets embedded in the mind of the audience.

Here's an example from one of the keynote speeches I offer to conference organisers.

The big idea is:

“Fixing a broken marketing. These days marketing from some companies doesn’t meet customer needs, is annoying and complex. The talk gives us 3 ways to make marketing more engaging and therefore more successful.”

People know the talk as the “John the Wineman” speech specifically because of the story I tell as part of the talk.

The one liner that goes with the “Fixing broken marketing” speech is:

“Engage. Don't Enrage.”

And I repeat that statement, “Engage. Don't Enrage,” throughout the presentation so it will stick in the minds of the audience and that's what they'll remember later as they're thinking back over what I had to say.

So now we know who the audience is, who the customer is, and we've got that big idea. We can set some goals for the presentation and I like to split these goals into three types.

Knowledge Goals

What do you want the audience to know? What information do you want them to take in? Is it information about a product? Is it information about a process?

What knowledge do you want them to come out of your talk with that perhaps they didn't know before? Or if they already knew some of it, how could you increase the knowledge they have about that subject?

Emotional or Feeling goals?

I'm a great believer in creating an emotional response from the audience. You can do that through telling stories. So, what do you want the audience to feel like when you're talking about your subject?

Do you want them to feel anger? Do you want them to feel challenged? Do you want them to feel motivated? Do you want them to feel love? Do you want them to feel sad? Do you want them to have a tear in their eye as you talk to them?

As you tell them our story, building emotions and feelings into our talks will help the audience remember the messages and help them recall what you had to say later.

Action goals.

What action do you want the audience to take because of your presentation? Now, it could be you want them to buy our product or change their behaviour in some way or adopt a new attitude to a subject. But it's especially important to build those action goals into the structure of our presentation.

Now you've got the foundation for a remarkable talk. Next step is to draft the script based upon the information, big idea and goals you've already created.

A few years ago, I was privileged to go on a speaker training course called World Class Communication, a workshop led by a famous American speaker called Marcus Sheridan. The one thing that stuck in my mind was a concept that he called segments.

It's gloriously simple. You have one segment for each of the messages you want to put across to your audience. Over time you can build a library of segments allowing us to plug and play.

Each segment has four parts to it.

1- The Hook

Ask a question of the audience, or tell the audience a startling fact, a intriguing piece of data, a revealing piece of research, something which will grab their attention for the next five to 10 minutes, which is usually how long each segment lasts for.

2- Tell a story

The story is relevant to the message. A story can meet your emotional goals

Example:

One of my most popular stories now is the “John the Wineman” story which highlights how people can avoid annoying and complicated marketing. It’s a funny and emotional story that people remember.

I’ve even had people specifically ask for the “John the Wineman” talk.

It’s all about how I met a wine salesman and was initially worried he’d use annoying hard sales tactics on me. But he turned out to be an engaging communicator and I became a loyal customer.

set out earlier. Human beings love stories and stories are the best way to get people to remember messages.

3- The lesson.

This is the main take away from the story. It could highlight the change of behaviour you want the audience to take or show them how to overcome the challenge they are facing.

4- Call to action

And the fourth part of the segment will always be the call to action. What do you want the audience to do having heard the story and the lesson?

Example:

Going back to the John the Wineman, I ask the audience, “Do you want to be a “Simon the Spammy Webinar Man” constantly sending out hundreds and hundreds of emails until people hit the unsubscribe button in frustration?

Or do you want to be an approachable human person who's engaging, who knows his customer and is an absolute delight to deal with?

These segments give us so much flexibility when putting together talks. If somebody asks you to do a 30 minute talk about marketing, you can go to your library and take Segment A and Segment C and combine those together, top and tail it with an introduction and you've got the basis for a great speech.

Blistering opening and memorable close

Now we've got the structure in place, let's top and tail it with your introduction and with your conclusion.

We want to open with a bold statement, a statistic or a story. Something that grabs the audience's attention and makes them sit up

and want to listen. Something that really tugs at their heartstrings or fires their motivation.

We've all done the opposite though, haven't we? And stood up and said something like:

"Hello, I'm Roger Edwards and I'm delighted to have been asked to come and speak to you. I'm so grateful for the opportunity. And today I'm going to talk to you about marketing."

Now that's a bit dull and it's a bit boring. Compare that rather boring introduction to this, which is the introduction to my fighting complexity speech.

"Complexity, bureaucracy, bloat, management, speak mumbo jumbo, and just plain Muppetry. These are the enemies of good customer focused marketing. Whether you're a small business or a large business, they can creep up on you. They can infiltrate you. Today we're going to fight back against complexity in marketing. Are you up for a fight?"

And hopefully the audience shout back, "YES!" See the difference?

I call that, "The Bold Statement."

Other blistering openings include:

- The startling statistic
- An intriguing question
- Tell a powerful story

Once you've done that startling entrance, yes, show your credentials, give them a little bit of information about yourself, your background, and how you got there, but don't overdo it. They're not there to hear the history of you.

They are there to hear your ideas and be inspired by the stories you'll tell.

Similarly, at the end of the presentation, summarise the big idea and again, maybe finished with something memorable. The end of my fixing broken marketing talk refers to the "John the Wineman" story.

"We don't want to be Simon the Spammy Webinar Man, do we? Let's be John the Wineman. Let's not enrage. Let's engage."

Memorise the opening and the closing. For the rest, just be comfortable with your material. No need to learn it word for word (you don't want to sound like you're reading it out). But know the material intimately enough to be able to deliver a seamless talk.

And finally – the slides

Now we've got a remarkable talk and guess what?

We still haven't hovered the mouse pointer over the PowerPoint icon.

Now we can finally get around to doing the slides. As you've done all the steps above putting together the structure of your presentation, you'll find that you don't need to create hundreds of slides.

You'll not need the slides to be a crutch. You'll not need them to be your script because you've already written it and as you rehearse it, as you go through it, it will embed itself in your mind.

Now you can put together slides that support the messages in the presentation and amplify them.

That means we can just use photographs, pictures, and very, very few words.

Remarkable Talk Work Sheet

Who is the audience?

What's your big idea?

What's the One Liner?

Knowledge Goals

Emotional or Feeling Goals

Action Goals

Blistering opening

Segment 1

Hook

Story

Lesson

Call to action

Segment 2

Hook

Story

Lesson

Call to action

Memorable close

PowerPoint Slides

About Roger



Roger helps companies nail their offer, set their goals and plan their marketing activity in a world where business BS and complexity threaten to stifle success.

An experienced marketing professional helping businesses with their marketing strategy, content, and social media, Roger clocked up many years in the 'big corporate' world as marketing director of several UK financial services brands before getting out of all that and starting his own consultancy.

He now uses his expertise to guide his clients in designing engaging marketing and is known as a prolific content creator and podcaster, and as a speaker. He's the host of the popular and award-winning Marketing and Finance Podcast.

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