WHAT IS A BUSINESS PRESENTATION?

PERPETUA MAINGI

A presentation is simply an introduction, demonstration, or speech given by an individual or group of individuals to an audience in order to inform, inspire, convince, or motivate them.

So a **business presentation** can be defined as a formal introduction or information about new business products, ideas, or practices. It is usually carried out using audio-visual materials, such as projectors, documents, presentation software, whiteboards, charts, and more.

Business presentations are often done with the aim to educate or train the audience, sell a product or an idea to them or simply convey or share your vision with them.

**Importance of Creating a Business Presentation**

A business presentation is the first document or introduction about your organization or your organization’s products and services that your clients get to see.

So when somebody sits through such a presentation, they expect to get gain some information from it without dozing off halfway through it. That’s why it is important that you have a well-crafted, visually appealing, and engaging business presentation.

A good business presentation offers many benefits, such as:

1. Helps Create Connections

A business presentation focuses on communication, interaction, and bonding between you and your audience. It allows you to build a good impression and brand image. This not only helps you convey messages and convince your audience but also establishes relationships and creates better connections.

2. Provides Information

A good presentation is highly informative and eye-opening. It’s a great opportunity to give out nuggets of details, facts, trivia, and statistics-backed data. It provides the listener with information in the most engaging way, which means that they walk out a better-informed and educated person.

3. Offers Inspiration

The impact a good business presentation can have on an individual is far more than you can imagine. Since most business presentations involve the use of audio-visual materials, stories or anecdotes, handouts/pamphlets, or demonstrations, it tends to stick in the minds of the listeners. It keeps them engaged, offers inspiration, and helps influence their decisions.

**How to Create a Business Presentation**.

Step 1. Create a Plan

The first step in creating an excellent business presentation is to make a plan about what you want to do and how exactly you want to do it. For this, it is always good to set a goal that you seek to achieve through your presentation and then create a roadmap of how you want to achieve it.

In a business presentation plan, you create an outline of your presentation and decide what message you want to convey and the main points and arguments you want to include.

Divide your presentation into an introduction, the main section, and a conclusion, and further incorporate sub-points within each section. This will allow you to easily split your content into a consumable format.

With a plan ready in hand, your presentation will sail through smoothly!

Step 2. Spend Some Time on Your Presentation Slides

Is your presentation even a presentation without visual slides projected in the background? It is a must-have in every business presentation and that’s why you need to invest a little time in how they look.

Choose a professional-looking slide deck that matches the tone of your presentation. Go for colours that suit your brand’s or product’s colours, and avoid too many flashy colours. Also, try to pick a font and font size that aligns with your brand or organization.

Make sure that you select your presentation slide decks based on the content that you are dealing with, such as using professional or neutral slide decks for financial data or research topics and colourful slide decks for informal topics.

Step 3. Establish Your Credibility with a Story

Whenever you start a presentation, it is extremely crucial that you establish your credibility right up front, because people are more likely to listen to you if they are convinced about your authenticity.

No, this doesn’t mean that your drone on about your career highlights, instead you lead your business presentation with a compelling story. This could be anything about the background of your topic, an experience, a relatable story, an anecdote, or any other references that support your subject and make it more interesting.

Here is where you can also add a little humour to get a laugh out of them and put them at ease by setting a positive tone.

Doing so will help you engage with the audience, build a personal connection, and serve as a memorable foundation for your presentation.

Step 4. Support Your Claims

You may have established your credibility with a story or an anecdote, but if you really want to create an authentic image, then you need to back up all your claims during your presentation.

So do not hesitate to use supporting materials liberally. This means that you provide statistics and numbers, reference research, or offer proof supporting your claims. This will cement your credibility and authenticity.

Step 5. Use Visual Elements Liberally

Business presentations can get boring if your slides just have texts, numbers, and tables. Not just that it makes it difficult for your audience to simultaneously read and listen to your presentation. That’s why you need to use visual elements like images, charts, graphics, GIFs, and more.

Adding powerful quotes, full-screen images, and videos will stick in the mind of your audience and will help maintain their attention throughout. Not to mention, it simply makes your presentation visually appealing!

Step 6. Add Animations to Your Presentation Slides

Obviously your format and content matter more, and if they are the cake, then adding a little animation or cinematic style to your slides is like the cherry on top. It simply makes your presentation a little more appealing!

Include fun animation, add smooth transitions, move around your slides horizontally or vertically, and let your content appear on the screen creatively. This will allow you to tell your story effortlessly.

Just try not to go overboard with the animation and make sure to strike a balance while maintaining consistency throughout.

Step 7. Be Prepared for Questions

No presentation is ever complete with a round of question-and-answer sessions towards the end, so it’s always best to be prepared for any difficult question that might be asked.

Your job is to anticipate all the possible questions or concerns that your audience might have and consider all the possible objections and arguments that might arise during a discussion, and prepare answers for them.

You can even get a colleague to listen to your presentation and have a practice session for this.

Step 8. Prepare Questions

It’s crucial to remember that sometimes your audience might not have any questions for you. This can obviously create an awkward moment for you when you open the floor to questions.

For that reason, it is important that you prepare your own set of questions in advance. Here, you can incorporate audience interaction by asking questions to your audience, quizzing them, asking them to vote, making them participate in simple activities, and more.

Doing this will help you avoid awkward pauses and silences while also creating an open environment of active participation and discussion.

Step 9. Wrap Up with a Closing Statement

Once all the questions have been asked and when all the discussions come to an end, you need to include a short closing statement for your presentation. Be sure to prepare a summarized statement that includes your main message, key points, and final call to action.

**General Types of Business Presentations**

A business presentation can be given for a number of reasons. Respectively, they differ a lot in terms of content and purpose.

1. Informative
2. Persuasive
3. Supporting

Informative Business Presentation

As the name suggests, the purpose of an informative presentation is to discern the knowledge you have — explain what you know. It’s the most common type of business presentation out there. So you have probably prepared such at least several times. Examples of informative presentations:

1. Team briefings presentation
2. Annual stakeholder report
3. Quarterly business reviews
4. Business portfolio presentation
5. Business plan presentation
6. Project presentation

Persuasive Business Presentation

The goal of this type of presentation is to persuade your audience of your point of view convince them of what you believe is right. Developing business presentations of this calibre requires a bit more copywriting mastery, as well as expertise in public speaking. Unlike an informative business presentation, your goal here is to sway the audience’s opinions and prompt them towards the desired action. Examples of persuasive presentations:

1. Q deck/investor presentations
2. Sales presentation
3. Business case presentation
4. Free business proposal presentation

Supporting Business Presentation

This category of business PowerPoint presentations is meant to facilitate decision-making explain how we can get something done. The underlying purpose here is to communicate the general “action plan”. Then break down the necessary next steps for bringing it to life. Examples of supporting presentations

1. Roadmap presentation
2. Project vision presentation
3. After Action Review presentation

**What Should Be Included in a Business Presentation?**

Overall, the content of your business presentation will differ depending on its purpose and type. However, at the very minimum, all business presentations should include:

1. Introductory slide
2. Agenda/purpose slide
3. Main information or Content slides
4. Key Takeaways slides

**Tips on How to Make a Business Presentation.**

A business presentation consists of two parts — a slide deck and a verbal speech. In this section, we provide tips and strategies for nailing your deck design.

**1. Get Your Presentation Opening Right**

The first slides of your presentation make or break your success. Why? By failing to frame the narrative and set the scene for the audience from the very beginning, you will struggle to keep their interest throughout the presentation. You have several ways of how to start a business presentation:

* Use a general informative opening — a summative slide, sharing the agenda and main points of the discussion.
* Go for a story opening — a more creative, personal opening, aimed at pulling the audience into your story.
* Try a dramatic opening — a less apparent and attention-grabbing opening technique, meant to pique the audience’s interest.

1. Standard Informative Opening

Most business presentation examples you see start with a general, informative slide such as an Agenda, Problem Statement, or Company Introduction. That’s the “classic” approach.

To manage the audience’s expectations and prepare them for what’s coming next, you can open your presentation with one or two slides stating:

The topic of your presentation - a one-sentence overview is enough.

Persuasive hook, suggesting what’s in it for the audience and why they should pay attention.

Your authority -the best technique to establish your credibility in a business presentation is to share your qualifications and experience upfront to highlight why you are worth listening to.

Opening best suited for: Formal business presentations such as annual reports and supporting presentations to your team/business stakeholders.

1. Story Opening

Did you ever notice that most TED talks start with a quick personal story? The benefit of this presenting technique is that it enables speakers to establish quick rapport and hold the listener’s attention.

You know, here’s the status quo, here’s what’s going on. And then you need to compare that to what could be. You need to make that gap as big as possible, because there is this commonplace of the status quo, and you need to contrast that with the loftiness of your idea.

Storytelling, like no other tool, helps transpose the audience into the right mind set and get concentrated on the subject you are about to discuss. A story also elicits emotions, which can be a powerful ally when giving persuasive presentations.

Opening best suited for: Personal and business pitches, sales presentations, other types of persuasive presentations.

1. Dramatic Opening

Another common technique is opening your presentation with a major statement, sometimes of controversial nature. This can be a shocking statistic, complex rhetoric question, or even a provocative, contrarian statement, challenging the audience’s beliefs. Using a dramatic opening helps secure the people’s attention and capture their interest. You can then use storytelling to further drill down your main ideas.

If you are an experienced public speaker, you can also strengthen your speech with some unexpected actions. That’s what Bill Gates does when giving presentations. In a now-iconic 2009 TED talk about malaria, mid-presentation Gates suddenly reveals that he actually brought a bunch of mosquitoes with him. He cracks open a jar with non-malaria-infected critters to the audience’s surprise. His dramatic actions, paired with a passionate speech made a mighty impression.

Opening best suited for: Marketing presentations, customer demos, training presentations, public speeches.

**2. Get Your PowerPoint Design Right**

Surely, using professional business PowerPoint templates already helps immensely with presentation deck design since you don’t need to fuss over slide layout, font selection, or iconography. Even so, you’ll still need to customize your template(s) to make them on brand and better suited to the presentation you’re about to deliver. Below are our best presentation design tips to give your deck an extra oomph.

* Use Images, Instead of Bullet Points

If you have ever watched Steve Jobs’ presentations, you may have noticed that he never used bullet-point lists. Weird right? Because using bullet points is the most universal advice in presentation design. But there’s a valid scientific reason why Jobs favoured images over bullet-point texts. Researchers found that information delivered in visuals is better retained than words alone. This is called the “pictorial superiority effect”. As John Medina, a molecular biologist, further explains: “Hear a piece of information, and three days later you’ll remember 10% of it. Add a picture and you’ll remember 65%.”

So if your goal is to improve the memorability of your presentation, always replace texts with images and visualizations when it makes sense.

* Fewer Slides is Better

No matter the value, a long PowerPoint presentation becomes tiring at some point. People lose focus and stop retaining the information. Thus, always take some extra time to trim the fluff and consolidate some repetitive ideas within your presentation.

For instance, at McKinsey new management consultants are trained to cut down the number of slides in client presentations. In fact, one senior partner insists on replacing every 20 slides with only two slides. Doing so prompts you to focus on the gist — the main business presentation ideas you need to communicate and drop filler statements.

Here are several quick tips to shorten your slides:

1. Use a three-arc structure featuring a clear beginning (setup), main narrative (confrontation), ending (resolution). Drop the ideas that don’t fit into either of these.
2. Write as you tweet. Create short, on-point text blurbs of under 156 symbols, similar to what you’d share on Twitter.
3. Contextualize your numbers. Present any relevant statistics in a context, relevant to the listeners. Turn longer stats into data visualizations for easier cognition.

* Consistency is Key

In a solid business presentation, each slide feels like part of the connecting story. To achieve such consistency apply the same visual style and retain the same underlying message throughout your entire presentation.

Use the same typography, colour scheme, and visual styles across the deck. But when you need to accentuate a transition to a new topic (e.g. move from a setup to articulating the main ideas), add some new visual element to signify the slight change in the narrative.

**3. Make Your Closure Memorable**

We best remember the information shared last. So make those business presentation takeaways stick in the audience’s memory. We have three strategies for that.

* Use the Rule of Three

The Rule of Three is a literary concept, suggesting that we best remember and like ideas and concepts when they are presented in threes. Many famous authors and speakers use this technique:

“Duty, Honour, Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, and what you will be”. Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

“Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” are the unalienable rights of all humans that governments are meant to protect.” Thomas Jefferson. The Rule of Three works because three is the maximum number of items most people can remember on their first attempt. Likewise, such pairings create a short, familiar structure that is easy to remember for our brains.

* Try the Title Close Technique

Another popular presentation closing technique is “Title Close” — going back to the beginning of your narrative and reiterating your main idea (title) in a form of a takeaway. Doing so helps the audience better retain your core message since it’s repeated at least two times. Plus, it brings a sense of closure a feel-good state our brains love. Also, a brief one-line closure is more memorable than a lengthy summary and thus better retained.

* Ask a Question

If you want to keep the conversation going once you are done presenting, you can conclude your presentation with a general question you’d like the audience to answer. Alternatively, you can also encourage the members to pose questions to you. The latter is better suited for informational presentations where you’d like to further discuss some of the matters and secure immediate feedback.

Try adding an interactive element like a QR code closing your presentation with a QR code and having a clear CTA helps you leverage the power of sharing anything you would like to share with your clients. QR codes can be customized to look alike your brand. With the help of the best QR code generator, you can create a QR code that’s secure and trackable.

**Conclusion**

Presentations are all about communication. So it doesn’t matter if it is your first presentation or your hundredth one, if you’re not able to communicate information in an engaging way, then you end up wasting your time and your listeners’ time. Focus on creating a rough draft first using a template. Then work on nailing your opening slide sequence and shortening the texts in the main part of your presentation when needed. Make sure that each slide serves a clear purpose and communicates important details. To make your business presentation deck more concise, remove anything that does not pertain to the topic.

Finally, once you are done, share your business presentation with other team members to get their feedback and reiterate the final design. Whether you are trying to sell something to an audience or simply sharing your vision with them, create a business presentation that will not only educate your listeners but also squeeze a laugh out of them.

REFERENCES:

2009 TED talk about malaria, mid-presentation Gates suddenly reveals that he actually brought a bunch of mosquitoes with him.

“Duty, Honour, Country. Those three hallowed words reverently dictate what you ought to be, what you can be, and what you will be”. Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

“, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness” are the unalienable rights of all humans that governments are meant to protect.” Thomas Jefferson .

McKinsey new management consultants reports

Steve Jobs' presentation