



Your Presentation **Jumpstart Guide**

Welcome

To Your Presentation Jumpstart Guide

It's a resource dedicated to helping you establish your message and overall story.

If you've downloaded this kit, you're likely stuck between a rock and a hard place. Or more accurately, between blank presentation slides and a beautifully-crafted narrative.

After more than 10 years dealing in the business of presentation design and training, we recommend starting any deck by addressing 3 core components. Throughout this kit, you'll encounter these stages of content creation:



**Defining Your
Presentation
Audience**



**Developing
Your Story**



**Placing Text
On Your Slides**

Ready to get started?

Use the tools included to produce a compelling presentation with the ability to sway your audiences.

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BONUS: 60 Presentation Tips



How to

Brainstorm For A Presentation



We Know It's Not

You get up first thing in the morning to check your email. You instant message with your old college roommate once a week. You've begun to go by your online moniker in real life haven't you, Supercyber 79? We've heard you even met your spouse over the Internet.

If you've been breathing since the middle '90's, chances are there's little that you don't do without a computer. We can't remember the last time I used a stamp to pay a bill. Heck, We can't remember the last time we used a pen to write a letter. It's fast, convenient and simple to interact in any number of ways while staring into the soft, warm glow of your computer screen as you work, play and dream.

But – believe it or not – there are some times when you should just say “No!” to the siren song of digital technology. When it comes to brainstorming, all you need is your brain...and maybe a pencil...and a piece of paper. That's why they don't call it “computer-storming.”

Everyone knows that productive brainstorming sessions are imperative to creating stellar presentations.

Everyone also knows that the practice of brainstorming has become a little weary. Our brains are over-stimulated and tired. Even after cups and cups of coffee, sometimes we just can't WAKE UP! Jumping into a brainstorming session these days seems a lot like jumping into an ice cold swimming pool in early Spring. With that in mind, below are five warm-up exercises that will help ease your team into the brainstorming pool.



If you start down that path, you may just find you have the beginnings of a masterpiece of your own. But, let's be honest here, even a great team brainstorming session generally involves a large component of problem solving which opens it's own array of issues.

Let's talk about how to maximize these moments.



Opposite Day

To help jump-start your team's brains, try an exercise in words. Choose five random words and ask your team to come up with their opposites. Bright; Dark. Once they have completed that task, ask them to go one step further and come up with three more words that could be considered opposites of the originals. Bright: Night, Dull, Lackluster. Hopefully, your team will come up with less lackluster words. Regardless, you'll have them thinking about something other than the memos they need to get out by 5:00.our entire presentation on your big day. Refresh your memory by hitting the high points. You're going to do great!



Improvisational Tools

Set up a brief improv performance to encourage your team to put their tin foil thinking caps on. Bring a bunch of ordinary objects to the office and ask people to demonstrate alternative uses for them. You could find out that a grocery bag could double as a papoose or that your sunglasses are really some super x-ray vision goggles meant for use on Neptune. Once your team starts thinking about how to present their ideas, they'll already be thinking in an inventive way.



Ridiculous Run-Through

If you are looking to your team to help you creatively solve a problem, try an outlandish brainstorming run-through first to get them in the mood. Pose a silly problem – how did the legless chicken cross the road? – and ask your team to think of different ways to overcome it. On its wing tips? This exercise should make people relax and get into a creative frame of mind. When you present your real challenge, your team will already be practiced in the art of imaginative problem-solving.



Object D'Office

For this exercise, break down your brainstorming team into smaller groups. Then, present an everyday object like a ballpoint pen and ask each group to come up with as many uses for it as possible. Encourage everyone to be creative and outrageous. Whether or not the proposed uses are completely feasible shouldn't matter. If a group can explain how a ballpoint pen can help a person take over the world, more power to them!



Get Outside of the Box

Sometimes it really is impossible to be creative in the office environment. Ugh! It's so beige and boring. Literally get outside of the office box and take your brainstorming team to a different location. Go outdoors, to a coffee shop, to an amusement park – just go anywhere that will get your team to be and think outside of the box. Most of the time, a change in environment works wonders for inspiring creativity.

Problem Solving Basics



Brainstorming – especially with a group – can push you and your colleagues outside of your comfort zones so that you might find new answers to common questions and open up the possibilities for your slides, your speech, your storytelling and more.

However, brainstorming with a group isn't as simple as just sitting down and rattling off any number of sparkling pearls of inspiration. If it were that easy we'd all have brilliant, groundbreaking PowerPoint presentations every time. The fact is, brainstorming is a very complicated form of group communication that involves both free-flowing ideas and expressions as well as a disciplined focus within the particular parameters that define the matter at hand.

There are a number of skill sub-sets that any group brainstorming session relies on. One of the most important has to do with problem solving. If all the members of your group are experienced and adept at basic problem solving skills, your brainstorming sessions will be much more productive.

Learn these lessons and teach them to your team. You'll soon be making quick work of the obstacles that stand between you and total creativity.

Here are some very simple guidelines for approaching a problem, making it manageable and taking care of it before it becomes a major headache.



Leave Assumptions At the Door

When it comes to problem solving, you don't know what you're talking about. That's the whole reason why you are now in problem solving mode. Get rid of all of your assumptions when you are trying to problem solve. What if the Wright Brothers had insisted on rational, practical ideas when they were trying to figure out how to configure their flying machine? Big ideas require wide open minds!



The Way of Kaizen

Kaizen is a management philosophy that became very popular during Japan's rise as an economic superpower. Simply put, kaizen involves identifying the little problems that make up a bigger one. By identifying the components that create your bigger challenges you can avoid getting overwhelmed. You may also find that solving one little problem can create a domino effect, resulting in an avalanche of inspired solutions.



Perception Problems

One of the biggest obstacles in problem solving can be your definitions of your problems themselves. The way that you define your problems can obscure obvious solutions. As you begin to chip away at an issue, take the time to redefine it. Constantly reevaluating a situation can help you see it from multiple perspectives, insuring that you don't miss what's right in front of you.

Take these tools into problem-solving at work or even in your own personal life. Problem solving is mostly just a matter of distance, perspective and insight. As you master it, you'll find that your brainstorming will really take off.

Effective Leadership and Brainstorming



One of the first tasks in a brainstorming session is selecting a leader. The leader of the session will ultimately function less as a dictator—or even a benevolent King—and more as a facilitator, a coach, a cheerleader and a navigator. What if you get picked to be the leader? You don't know facilitation from procrastination, and you've certainly never seen yourself as some kind of Anthony Robbins meets Richard Simmons. Relax. Leading an effective brainstorming session doesn't have to be a Sisyphean task of futile exertion. Remember, a brainstorming session is supposed to work like a meeting of anarchists. You're not organizing a brain surgery, you are attempting to get a bunch of folks to get a little crazy in their thinking while at the same time staying focused on a specific question or problem.

Pay attention. You can do this.

As the leader of a brainstorming session, you have a few specific tasks to accomplish. Lucky for you they are easy to define and understand, and each task follows after the next. Any good brainstorming session tends to clarify itself as it unfolds and if you begin on the right foot, your role will should come naturally.



Space Out

The first step in organizing a great brainstorming session is finding the right environment. Should you really go to the same old meeting room again? Why not find a new space? Why not go outside? If you are stuck in the same spot, can you decorate or change the room in some way? What about cranking up some music to get things off with a bang. Anything you can do to shake up your team and bump them out of their autopilot mode is a good idea! One team we read about even put on Halloween masks and sang songs before beginning their sessions. Get creative!



Gear Up

You are going to need lots of equipment, accessories and technology to brainstorm effectively...NOT! Here's what you need: a pen and some paper. You may want to have enough for everyone, but just one pen and some paper for a designated "secretary" may be plenty. Don't fill your space with fancy gear. Fill it with ideas.



Coach

Clearly state the focus of your session and make sure everyone understands the purpose of meeting. Also make sure to define a clear amount of time for the session. Encourage the loosest, silliest, wackiest notions your team can conjure. Remember, we only find new solutions when we let go of old assumptions, so lead by example. However, never tolerate any negativity. This rule is absolute. Even one errant, critical comment can shut down team members, making them unwilling to go out on a limb with any more creative suggestions.



Follow Up

As you draw near to the end of your session, make clear designations for follow up actions that need to be taken your team members. Make sure each member knows what they need to do and has what they need to do it. After the session, follow up with each member thanking them for their enthusiasm and participation.

As with any leadership role, you can only get your team members to follow you to places where you are willing to go yourself. You need to set an example. Most people will be able to loosen up and step outside the box, but they're more likely to if you go first.

Make It Memorable



If you want to deliver a memorable presentation, you'll need to excel at every step in the process of brainstorming. Even when you begin to write down the first few rough ideas about what kind of presentation you think you'd like to create, you have to keep in mind the elements that will make your presentation unforgettable. Here are a handful of ideas that you can periodically review. Keep them in mind the when you sit down to brainstorm your next presentation.



Who Is Your Audience?

If you don't know who you are talking to, how will you know how to make your best possible impression? Will it be a room full of ultra-conservative introverts? You better button down and streamline that PowerPoint till you can slice bread with it. What if it's a hall full of Alpha Male rowdies who won't pay attention to anyone who can't hold the stage? You better get your presentation down to the point where you can ad lib like Miles Davis. Even at the beginning of your brainstorming keep your audience in mind.



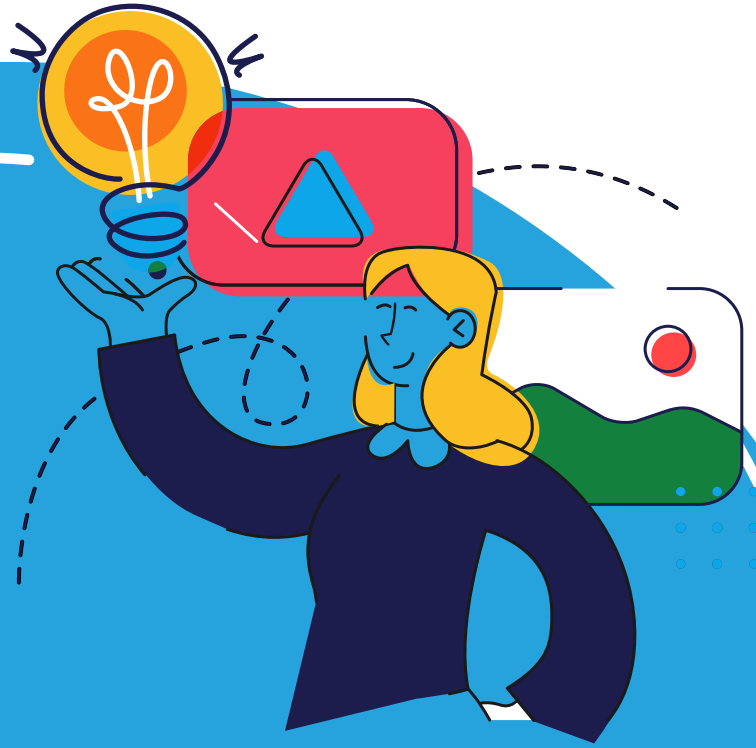
Leave the Visuals Out

Don't start thinking about the visual aids you'll be using until well into the process of creating your presentation. Like it or not, you have to do the presentation. Keeping it memorable isn't about trying to think of ways to hide. Bring the visuals in later when they can support your unforgettable stage time.



Do the Snow White

While you are brainstorming, refining and finalizing the elements of your presentation, imagine the Magic Mirror in Snow White. Is your presentation the fairest of them all? The smartest? The most engaging? Be merciless in your self criticism and make sure that everyone in your group can voice their misgivings. Get your ego out of the way. It will make your PowerPoint shine and make your presentation something that will end happily ever after.



A Checklist to

Define Your Presentation Audience

Answer the following questions to define your presentation audience and to better develop your primary messaging...

1

How much does your audience know about your topic or subject matter?

- C** A lot
- A** Very little
- B** Knowledgeable, but not experts

2

How would your audience prefer to feel after your presentation?

- A** Entertained
- C** Informed
- B** Inspired

3

In what way do your audience members like to consume data?

- C** Needs to see data in Excel-like charts and graphs
- B** Wants only the most important aspects of data displayed
- A** Doesn't need or want to know about the specific data

4

What motivates your audience?

- C** Future Plans
- B** Gain or Loss
- A** Ideas and Information

5

How much does your audience know about your topic or subject matter?

- C** A lot
- A** Very little
- B** Knowledgeable, but not experts





You can expect to present to a Lay Audience


Let's say you are a senior VP of a unit within a candy company that handles the manufacturing of parts for machines responsible for producing sweets. You are presenting at a trade show where you can confidently assume that the audience knows very little about your business. Here are the 3 main points the audience will want and you will need them to remember:

- 
- 1** A notice of immense need sparked our company's birth
 - 2** We are committed to creating high-quality products and we lead the industry in our field
 - 3** The candy you devour is only possible with our products



You can expect to present to a Managerial Audience


You are going to need lots of equipment, accessories and technology to brainstorm effectively...NOT! Here's what you need: a pen and some paper. You may want to have enough for everyone, but just one pen and some paper for a designated "secretary" may be plenty. Don't fill your space with fancy gear. Fill it with ideas.

- 
- 1** You'll enjoy having a trustworthy partner with similar values/goals
 - 2** You'll make money
 - 3** You'll help provide a benefit to others



You can expect to present to an Expert Audience

An "expert" audience in this scenario would be found at an internal company- wide quarterly staff meeting. As experts, your audience members don't need to know your company's history or value proposition statement. Instead, they are there to see your data and numbers. They want to know how well (or badly) the business performed during the previous quarter. Here are the 3 main points for this audience:

- 
- 1** This is where the company ended up on sales this quarter
 - 2** This is X percent more or less than the previous quarter (and here's why)
 - 3** These are the next steps we will take to improve and grow the business



Step-by-Step
Template for Presentation



Story

Development

Characters

A main character is essential to any presentation story. It drives the narrative and assists in the creation of conflict to keep momentum from beginning to end. Although a main character can be anyone or anything, from a fictional character or a customer persona to an idea or object, it should always be relatable to your audience.

Who or what is the main character or hero of your presentation?

What is your character's main purpose?

Photography/Imagery Ideas:

Descriptive Text Ideas:



Opposition

Opposing forces are the crucial components needed to produce conflict.

A presentation story needs to include a character or force that is the antithesis of your main character, who can be a single warrior or an army – the amount of opposing forces is flexible.

Who or what is the opposing force in your presentation?

What is your opposition's main purpose?

Photography/Imagery Ideas:

Descriptive Text Ideas:



Exposition

A synonym for exposition is beginning or opening.

So, this part of the story sets the tone and mood for the rest of the presentation, while also establishing characters and setting. A well-crafted exposition provides context for the main character and the conflict.

What does your presentation concept, theme, or topic take place? Describe the setting.

How does the setting compare to the state you believe your audience is in currently?

Photography/Imagery Ideas:

Descriptive Text Ideas:



Journey

The journey is comprised of the struggles and challenges the main character faces in pursuit of purpose.

During this section of a presentation story, the audience should feel a heightened sense of suspense – just enough to keep their attention until the conclusion.



What types of ups and downs will the main character experience?

How do these struggles support the theme or message of your presentation?

Photography/Imagery Ideas:

Descriptive Text Ideas:

Conclusion

Though somewhat self-explanatory, the conclusion of the presentation story signifies the end of the journey.

Problems are solved – or not – and most, if not all, questions are answered. A strong conclusion to a presentation will connect the story to the call to action.



What is the most effective and powerful ending for your presentation story? Does the main character achieve success, or does the opposition prevail?

How will you involve the audience in the conclusion? What will be your call to action?

Photography/Imagery Ideas:

Descriptive Text Ideas:

The graphic features a large blue circle with a white outline. Inside this circle is a yellow circle, which is also outlined in white. A horizontal white line bisects the yellow circle. The word "Storyboard" is written in a bold, dark blue font across the middle of the yellow circle. To the right of the yellow circle, the word "Template" is written in a white font. A red rectangle is positioned at the bottom right of the yellow circle, tilted at an angle. The background of the entire page is a solid dark blue.

Storyboard

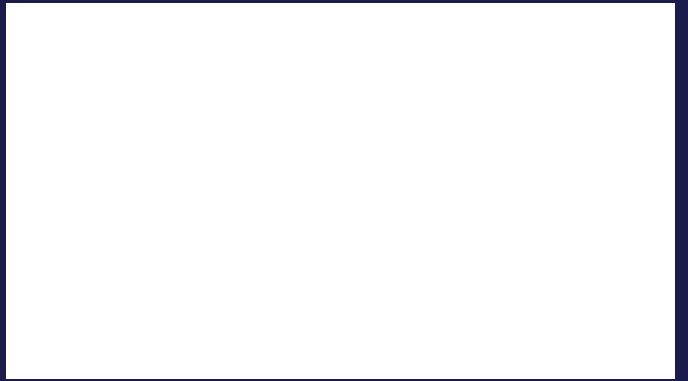
Template

OUR EXAMPLE



CONTENT	VISUAL SUGGESTIONS





On-Stage & Online

BONUS

60 Presentation

Tips



Double tie your shoelaces literally and figuratively.

Don't trip over your feet or your unprepared-for presentation.

Squeeze a lemon.

A little lemon juice in your water will help to clear your throat more effectively than just plain H₂O.

Empty your pockets before you take the stage.

This will help you resist the urge to put your hands in them and will insure that you're free to gesture like a pro.



The big stuff.

Don't try to rehearse your entire presentation on your big day. Refresh your memory by hitting the high points. You're going to do great!

Never turn your back to the audience.

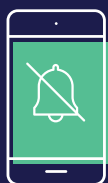
It's amateurish at best and down right rude at worst. Remember, a great presentation is a conversation. Stay connected.

Time waits for no one.

Always complete your presentation within your allotted time-slot. It's polite to your audience and the other presenters, and there is plenty of time for more questions after you leave the stage.

Resist the urge to add impromptu statements at the end of your presentation.

You've worked hard on your close. Have confidence in it and stick your landing!



Turn Off
Your Cell Phone



Lost behind the lecturn.

It's tempting to hide behind the lecturn. Don't! Think of it like the safe spot in a game of tag: a great place to visit, but not really part of the fun.

Practice. Practice. Practice.

Also, don't forget to practice.

Invest in a presentation remote.

Don't trip over your feet or your unprepared-for presentation.

- ▶ **Make sure your opening clearly previews your presentation.**
- ▶ **Make sure your closing precisely reviews it.**

Good redundant.

Don't be redundant when it comes to your content, but make sure you have multiple copies of your PowerPoint presentation saved on a variety of media including hard drives, flash drives, and discs.

Be an Environmentalist.

Knowing the details of the room you are going to speak in can be invaluable. Arrive early and get the lay of the land.



Did you spellcheck your slides?



- ▶ **Never speak down to your audience, but make sure you're using language that everyone in the room will be able to follow.**

Relax

**When you're
unsure,
overdress**

Pause

Speak with conviction!

Your presentation depends on your credibility, and your credibility will go a long way toward demonstrating your expertise.

Everything is your fault.

Don't dwell on this simple truth, but be prepared to take responsibility when everything goes haywire!

- ▶ **Know your topic inside and out when you're presenting.**



Preparation is the antidote for the unexpected.

The last minute is too late. Prepare early and prepare well.

Listen to the other speakers you are sharing the stage with.

It's only polite and you might just pick up a skill or idea that you can steal!

Vary your tone.

Drones are for beehives!

Eliminate the weak language from your presentation.

When you take the time to go through your presentation word-by-word, again and again, you gradually create a presentation that is so strong you almost can't make a mistake. Hone your language. Make it sharp! Make it shine!

Birds of a feather.

Group similar topics together in your presentation. This will help your clarity and make it easier for your audience to follow your flow.

Take time to smile.

Circle back.

Reinforce your central theme by revisiting your main points during your presentation. This creates momentum for you and memorability for your audience.



► Protect Your Voice

Even when you are using a microphone, make sure you speak up when you present. A commanding voice is a big part of a commanding presence.



Be your own audience.

Put yourself in your audience's shoes. Would you love your presentation? Why? Why not?

Enthusiastic Epidemic.

Passion, excitement and commitment are infectious! Spread them!

► **When you're wrong, apologize.**

Stand out.

Differentiate yourself from other speakers. What makes you – and your presentation – unique?

Knockout Punch.

Don't burn out in the middle of your presentation. It's important to start strong, but save the best for last.

► **Resist the urge to use a variety of fonts.**

Stand to the left side of the screen from your audience's point of view.

As you point and gesture to your visuals, you will create a natural, readable flow from left to right. If you are right handed, learn to point with your left hand to avoid twisting across your body, away from your audience.

Do your numbers add up?

Data and stats are powerful when they underpin your message in a clear, meaningful way. If they're not necessary, they can be dangerously confusing. Be careful!

► **Visit the restroom before you present!**



Make a list of keywords for each of your slides.

This will help you to reinforce each point clearly and precisely. It also gives you a backup in case you need to deliver your presentation without your visuals.

Freshen your breath.

Remember to bring gum or mints to enjoy after your presentation while you're answering questions. Your audience will thank you!

Keep backgrounds in the background.

An attractive background on a stage can create drama and focus. Just make sure it doesn't take the focus off of you and your presentation!

Sliding scale.

If you are going to include numbers on a given slide, make sure you don't compare two different scales of data. For instance, don't relate thousands to millions.

Are you coming in clear?

Does your presentation make your points clearly? Try it out on your colleagues and make sure!

Finish early.

When you're creating your presentation, the sooner you finish the more time you'll have to break and master it. When you're giving a presentation, ending early can give you and your audience time to explore in-depth, together!



▶ **Never talk at your audience, talk to them.**
Better yet, talk with them.

▶ **A true master knows
that they know nothing**

Everybody needs practice!



Innovate. Don't imitate.

Although we all borrow ideas and skills from those we admire, it's important to always strive to be an original. Add elements to your repertoire wherever you find them, but always include your own unique twist.

Take the time to record your presentation on video.

This will give you a great chance to see if your message is really getting across.

Use an iron.

Wrinkled clothing implies a lack of preparation, and that implies a lack of credibility. Don't forget to iron!

Know your audience.

Find out everything you can about the people you will be speaking to. Tailoring a presentation to fit a specific audience is always time well spent.

Never add slides at the last minute.

You are asking for trouble. Have confidence in your presentation and go for it!

An image is better than a bullet point.

Why deliver your message with a few words when a picture is worth a thousand?

There is no correct way to speak.

For you, there is only your way. Be true to yourself and the rest will come naturally.



Turn in early the night before your presentation.

Get a good rest and be at your best!

Avoid the dreaded PowerPoint template.

Make your slides uniquely your own!

Don't plan specific gestures, or you'll start performing like a puppet.

Practice standing and moving in a relaxed manner while you are delivering your presentation. The gestures will express themselves naturally.

Breathe in, not out.

Oxygen – and the expansion of your ribcage – will help you relax and create natural poise and posture.

Be A
Team Player

Be the comrade everyone can count on, whether you are on the stage or behind the scenes. Work hard and stay positive!