



# PUBLIC SPEAKING CHEAT SHEET:

**8** Steps to Create Presentations  
That Knock Their Socks Off!



Public speaking can be scary, but it is also a great opportunity to share your knowledge, experience and passion. Follow these steps to create compelling presentations that will captivate and empower your audiences.

# STEP ONE: CLARIFY THE OBJECTIVES, GOALS AND OUTCOMES FOR THE TALK



Before you start to craft your presentation, it's important to do some groundwork that will give you the necessary information you'll need.

Try using this **Presentation Discovery Worksheet**:

## **What type of presentation are you giving?**

Is this a simple briefing for your team or is it a keynote address? Is there a theme for the event?

**Who are the participants?** A talk designed for construction workers may be very different to a talk designed for the C-suite. Find out as much as you can about the participants.

**What are your audience's challenges, pains and goals around the subject matter?** This will help you understand them so you can design your content to take them from where they are to where they want to be. You have to help your audience see they are dissatisfied with where they are to open them to the possibility of where they need to go.

**What do you want the audience to feel, think or do as a result of the presentation?** What experience and information do you need to share so they can reach this goal?

**What do they want from the presentation?** By understanding their objectives, you'll understand what they'll consider to be a successful presentation. Remember to answer this question for the various stakeholders - the organizer's goals may be different from the audience's. Both are important.

**What size is the audience?** A presentation for 10 people will be very different than one for 150.

**How much time do you have to present?**  
**What type of room will you be presenting in?** What is the shape and where in the room will you be presenting? What is the lighting like? Will everyone be able to see you?

**What equipment will be needed or used?** Do you need a microphone? Will there be a spare mic, or batteries available? If you are using a computer for slides, can you use your own computer? If not, will you have a chance to test your slides before the presentation begins?

# STEP TWO: PLAN YOUR OUTLINE

Based on the goals of the presentation, you'll decide upon your Main Presentation Topic. Depending upon the results of your research, **pick 2 or 3 high level points for the presentation**. While it may seem that only 2 or 3 points is too few, most people can only handle so much information at a time. Plus, you want to spend plenty of presentation time on each. **People are likely to miss what you say, so you need to repeat the information a few ways.**

After you've chosen your Main Points, decide how you're going to make those points to your audience. These will be your Sub-Points and you will use them to communicate your main points in different ways. Depending on your content, you'll likely want to tell a story, cite data or a case study, show illustrations, or demonstrate your ideas. **You may find it helpful to use the following template to gather your thoughts:**

Presentation Topic:

## **Main Point 1:**

Sub-point 1:

Sub-point 2:

Sub-point 3: *(or as many as you need)*

## **Main Point 2:**

Sub point 1:

Sub point 2:

## **Main Point 3:**

Sub point 1:

Sub point 2:



**Now that you've gathered your thoughts, put each point and sub-point on a sticky note.** I like to use a different color for each level (e.g. yellow for the main points, blue for sub-points.) Write one idea, story, demonstration, activity, joke or exercise per note. Using a big open surface, you can then rearrange those notes until you have created a presentation that flows and communicates your ideas. There's something inherently energizing about physically moving those little slips of paper around. It taps into a different part of your mind and lets you see how the various parts fit together.



Once you've found a 'running order' of sticky notes that works for you, transfer that outline back onto your word processor. I like to use nested bullets so I can see my main and sub points clearly. **This will also serve as a guide to create your slide deck - more on that in step 7.**

## STEP 3: CREATE A COMPELLING INTRO



**Your audience will decide if they like you within 10 seconds.** Be sure to use those first few moments to create a positive impression. There's really no wrong answer to how you do this. Consider starting with a quotation, a startling piece of data or a joke. Whatever you do, be authentic. People are attracted to authenticity and can smell a 'canned' line a mile away.

Within the into, let the audience know what they're about to hear. Give them a high level view of the main points you'll deliver.

**This is step one of the classic presentation outline:**

*Tell them what you're going to tell them*

*Tell them*

*Tell them what you told them*

## STEP 4: WRITE A SCRIPT

Here's where you "tell them".

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Take the time to actually write a script for your entire presentation. **The act of writing will allow you to expand upon your main and sub-points, building a fully developed presentation.** The resulting script will allow you to walk in front of your audience knowing exactly what you want to say. You don't have to recite the script verbatim. You want to be 'in the moment' when you're delivering your presentation, so feel free to veer away from the script and react authentically to any reactions and input from the audience. The script acts as a safety net - you'll know that you have a solid structure to go back to.

## STEP 5: CRAFT A POWERFUL ENDING

Now that you've told them what you're going to tell them and actually told them, it's time to wrap things up and summarize your presentation before sending them on their way. **While it's ok to simply repeat the main points, you may want to restate them in different language.**

Now you want to send them out into the world. **For some help in crafting your 'closer', go back to step 1 and see how you answered the question, "what do you want the audience to feel, think or do as a result of your presentation?"** This will give you the basis of your closing remarks. Give the group a positive take-away and finish things on a high note, leaving people inspired to take action.

## STEP 6: PRINT A SET LIST

If you've ever been to a rock concert, you've probably seen a set list in action, even if you didn't know it. They are usually scrawled in marker and taped to the stage so all the band members know what song to play next.

You can use this same strategy to stay on track as you're delivering your presentation. Using large type (large enough that you can read it from 6 feet away), create a bulleted outline of your talk. Just the main points and sub-points will be enough. Print it out and lay it on the floor of the stage (even if you're not on a real stage). Even if you don't refer to it often, it's a great safety net that will give you confidence.

## STEP 7: CRAFT YOUR SLIDE DECK

**First off, ask yourself if you really, really need slides. Really. Do you?**

You know from experience the pain and horror of **DEATH BY POWERPOINT**.

Do you really want to put your audience through screens full of endless text, charts and graphs? No, you don't.

If you do decide that you need slides, keep them minimal. **As a general rule, I suggest you only have a few words or an image per slide.** The exception would be a great quotation that really helps make a point, or some vital data or statistics. Keep the font size bigger than you think you need to. Assume that your Grandma is in the back row and that she forgot her reading glasses.

Keep in mind the sight-lines of your audience members. **In a large room with rows of chairs, it's likely that most people won't be able to see the bottom 1/3 of the screen, so keep your content high on the slide.**

Based on your outline, create your slide deck to accentuate your points. The slides are not the presentation - they are there to support YOU and your presentation. Keep it simple. A photograph or simple diagram will communicate far more effectively than a page of text.

# STEP 8: PRACTICE, REFINE, REPEAT

**Now that you've crafted your presentation, it's time to iron out the kinks.**

- 1** Run through your talk a few times, timing yourself and refining it along the way. Stand up and actually say the words out loud. You'll likely discover that sentences that look great on the written page 'sound funny.' This is the time to go back and edit your script.
- 2** Then video record yourself giving the presentation and review the video. Yes, it's an uncomfortable experience. Get over it - this is a worthwhile step. Take note of the flow and any areas to improve such as body language, timing and stories. Make any necessary tweaks to you your script and/or outline.
- 3** Next, give your talk in front of a small audience to get honest feedback. This can be just one or two people you trust to give you honest feedback.

**All this research, preparation, and rehearsal may seem like overkill, but when you step on stage, you'll be happy and confident knowing that you've done all you can do to ensure an exceptional experience for your audience.**

**You've been given an opportunity. You can make a difference in the lives of your audience members. Inspire them, teach them, help them and they will thank you for it.**

## ABOUT DAN

Dan helps teams improve engagement, better solve problems and boost performance with unique keynotes and workshops. By using world-class magic, humour, stories and interactive exercises he delivers a powerful message about learning to see things from other people's perspective to improve communication and influence. This provides business and life changing opportunities for those who adopt it.

**Find out how a customized program can help your team.**

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