

SPEAK UP!

Give More
Confident,
Persuasive
Presentations



Everybody loves making presentations right? Possibly not if you believe the statistic that people fear public speaking more than they fear death.

Ideally, we should be delighted to have the opportunity to stand up and make an important presentation to colleagues or customers. We should feel honored to be asked to present at a conference, or to make a wedding toast to a room packed with happy people.

After all, we'd be comfortable discussing project results or new ideas with a prospect, friend or colleague one-on-one. Why should presenting to a room full of people be any different?

And yet it *is* very different. The idea of delivering a speech, presenting a sales proposal to a large group, or even making a toast, is an open invitation to let emotions run wild. Sweaty palms are just the beginning, as breathing quickens, the heart races and panic sets in. We stammer, stare at notes and punctuate our speech with prolonged 'umms' and 'uhhs' as our adrenalin-saturated brain frantically seeks our next thought. We dream of running for the nearest exit.

Researchers have learned that it isn't speaking that people fear, but the consequence of speaking poorly. Making a presentation means risking the rejection and ridicule of your audience, finding your failure reflected in the eyes of your colleagues, and sinking deep into your own disappointment and misery.

Failure is not a desirable outcome, and there is a remedy: Fear evaporates in the presence of a presentation that is adequately prepared, solidly organized, and given plenty of practice.

Simply put, we fear the unknown. With the right preparation, there's no uncertainty and the unknown fear vanishes.

Your X Factor

Just as fear can be a barrier to getting something done, positive emotions can be wonderfully motivating. Think of the times when you've experienced the thrill of accomplishment, victory or success. Recall the moments when adrenaline rushed through your veins, your pulse raced, and your brain surged with powerful endorphins.

The moment that:

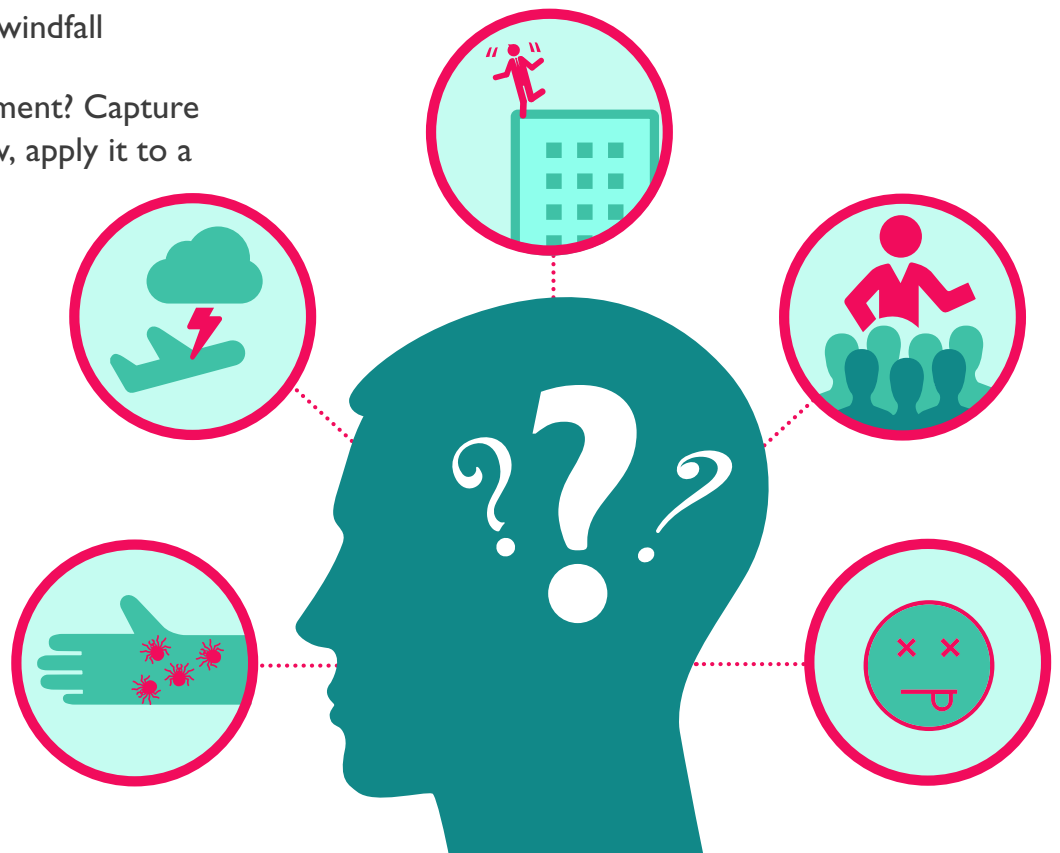
- you fell in love
- your first child was born
- you received that big promotion
- you won a contest or race
- you bought your dream car or home
- you closed a lucrative contract
- you received a financial windfall

What is your proudest moment? Capture that emotion. Savor it. Now, apply it to a successful presentation. Concentrate on the outcome, and how good it will make you feel to have presented successfully.

Would you rather:

- Have your arm covered with spiders
- Fly through a thunderstorm in a small airplane
- Stand at the edge of the rooftop of a tall building
- Speak before a large audience
- Die?

We all fear different things. Fear, rational or not, can be a roadblock to career advancement or provide career-boosting motivation. The choice is yours!



“Lend me your ears!”

The world is full of listeners in search of speakers. From the local garden club to national conventions, there is a great unmet demand for knowledge, entertainment, inspiration, assistance, encouragement, life-improving products and life-changing ideas. You have expertise and experiences to share, and there are audiences eagerly waiting to listen to you.

Once you decide that you can speak to groups, marvelous new opportunities unfold. The media – particularly TV and the Internet – has spawned a generation that would rather watch and listen than read. Today’s business gurus understand this: They write books that sell thousands of copies, but attract tens of thousands of people to their live seminars and webinars. These people would rather pay \$150 to attend an event than obtain the same information from a \$25 book. Essentially, they’re willing to pay \$25 for education and \$125 to be entertained! That means opportunity for any presenter.

Your audience awaits!

- Client presentations
- Internal business meetings
- Local clubs and organizations
- Public hearings
- State and regional conferences
- Webinars and social media presentations



The Message

Even before you decide that you're willing to deliver a presentation or have identified an audience, it's crucial to determine what message you want to deliver. Decide what you would like to accomplish, and how you want your audience to react.

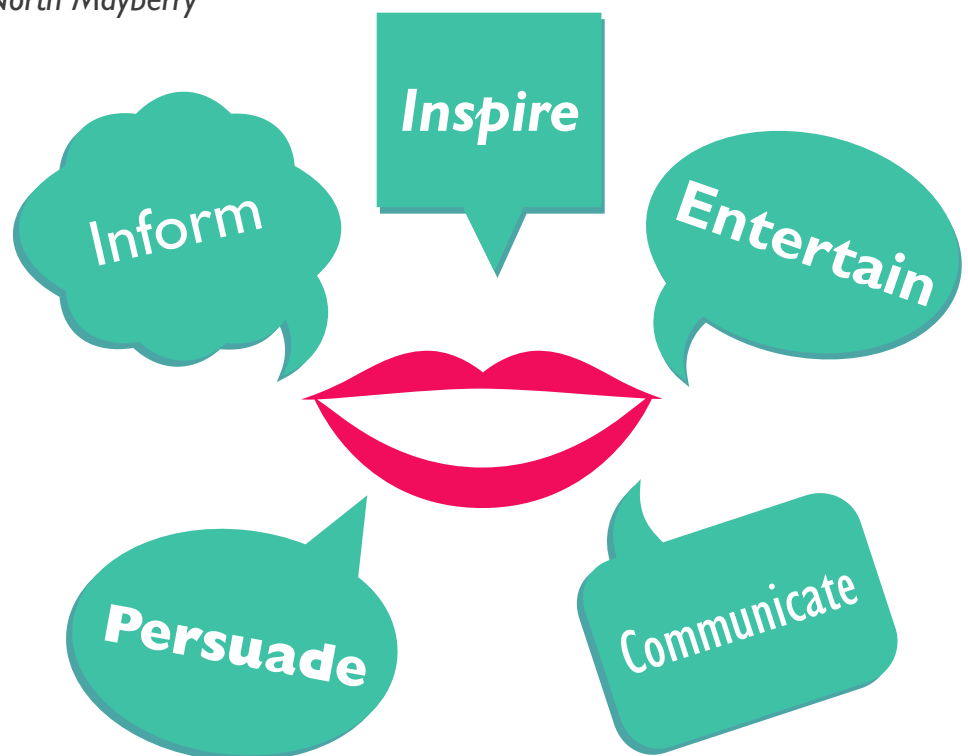
Messages should be simple, direct statements. The rest of your presentation merely adds support to your argument. For instance:

- *“Opening a new office would generate an additional \$4.5 million in sales by the end of next year.”*
- *“If the government does not take immediate corrective action, more tragic auto accidents will occur in the North Mayberry neighborhood.”*
- *“Thin Air Manufacturing is not only the state's largest employer; it is also the largest donor to the charitable organizations that improve the lives of thousands of our children.”*

What's your message?

We make presentations for all sorts of reasons. Speaking is not the destination, it's the journey. The destination lies in whether you were able to deliver your message in such a way that listeners were moved to take action!

We speak to:



Build a House

Think of your message as the foundation laid for a new home. Without its concrete base, the completed home would lack the stability needed to survive. Then, lumber is used to form the basis for the walls and roof – think of it as your various secondary messages and facts. Your presentation begins taking shape nicely.

The plasterboard and shingles that cover the studs and roof are analogous to your narrative – the points you use to support your messages and give them real-life believability. Finally, we add paint, floor coverings and the other touches that give

a house personality. This happens with presentations, too, when you share stories that give texture and dimension to your position.

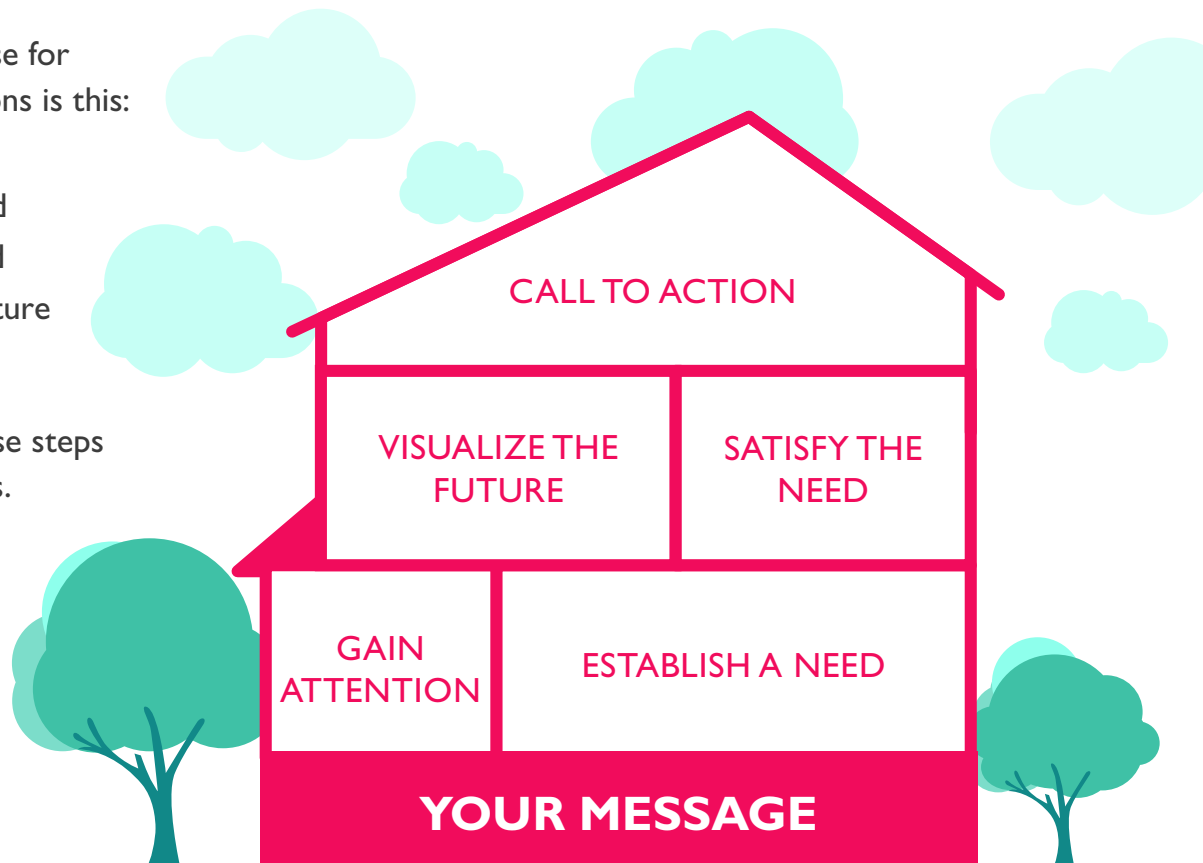
There's really little difference between building a home and constructing a presentation: foundation, support, and personality play roles in both jobs. Just as a carpenter organizes tools and materials before the first nail is driven, we need to organize our messages, supporting arguments and anecdotes that deliver a complete and compelling presentation.

Home construction

A model that we use for building presentations is this:

- Gain Attention
- Establish a Need
- Satisfy the Need
- Visualize the Future
- Call to Action

We will review these steps over the next pages.



Gain Attention and Establish a Need

Athletes often have a tendency to ‘jump the gun.’ They are keenly attuned to the fact that a race can be won or lost in the first moments after the starter’s pistol sounds. Getting off to a slow start in a presentation can cause a quick death. Loss of credibility, loss of interest, loss of attention are but a few of the potential outcomes of a slow start. The best presenters start by capturing the audience’s attention with a story or other device that asks a question, ignites curiosity, builds suspense or stimulates a chuckle. A good opening sentence generates immediate interest in your subject and begins to establish a need on the part of your audience.

Drama is an excellent way to grab an audience’s attention:

“1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10. Every ten seconds, a homeowner falls victim to burglars. In the time it takes me to deliver this presentation, 60 Americans will return home to find belongings missing and memories destroyed. That’s an interesting statistic, but you have to ask, ‘Will you be one of them?’”

Drama can be inspired by quoting an alarming statistic, like the example above. Often a speaker may open with a question or a quote – to put you in the mindset of the topic at hand.

“Okay, now I don’t want to alarm anybody in this room, but it’s just come to my attention that the person to your right is a liar. (Laughter) Also, the person to your left is a liar. Also the person sitting in your very seats is a liar. We’re all liars. What I’m going to do today is I’m going to show you what the research says about why we’re all liars, how you can become a liespotter and why you might want to go the extra mile and go from liespotting to truth seeking, and ultimately to trust building.” [Pamela Meyer: How to spot a liar](#)

Sometimes a speaker may share a personal anecdote – most often this is effective if the speaker has done it in a manner that helps his or her credibility. The flipside can be a personal anecdote that isn’t funny or relevant – can be that quick death we referred to in the opening of this section.

“Imagine a big explosion as you climb through 3,000 ft. Imagine a plane full of smoke. Imagine an engine going clack, clack, clack, clack, clack, clack, clack. It sounds scary. Well I had a unique seat that day. I was sitting in 1D.” [Ric Elias: 3 things I learned while my plane crashed](#)

Great Opening Lines

A great first line immediately captures attention. Screenwriters and novelists use an intriguing first line to lure viewers and readers, and speakers use the same device to captivate audiences.

“As far back as I can remember, I always wanted to be a gangster.”

Henry Hill (Ray Liotta) in *Goodfellas*

“Listen, here’s the thing: If you can’t spot the sucker in the first half hour at the table, then you ARE the sucker.”

Mike McDermott (Matt Damon) *Rounders*

“I remember those cheers. They still ring in my ears.”

Jake La Motta (Robert De Niro) *Raging Bull*

“Did you know there are more people with genius IQs living in China than there are people of any kind living in the United States?”

Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) *The Social Network*

“The key to faking out the parents is the clammy hands. It’s a good non-specific symptom; I’m a big believer in it.”

Ferris Bueller (Matthew Broderick) *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”

Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (1877)

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859)

Satisfy the Need – Visualize the Future

If you are trying to persuade people to change the status quo, it will take more than statistics and data – you will need to tie into some fear or unknown or unacknowledged desires of your audience in the body of your presentation.

What specific need have you created in your opening? What has gotten their interest? If you used a story or statistic, it is time to support that need with visuals or context that allow the audience to picture themselves accomplishing what they want.

Easier said than done? We try to follow the formula of Think, Feel, Do.



In the opening, we make the audience think. In the body of the presentation, we want the audience to feel. We want to make them uncomfortable with the current system, or at a minimum begin to question why they feel the need to continue to do things the way they have always done them. Finally, in the close, we want them to do. But before they are going to do anything, you have to make sure you have compelled them to action.

We have found the following presentation aids helpful in delivering a persuasive point:

Analogies Is there a similar cause and effect you can use to make your point clear?

Personal Experiences If you have effectively established credibility, this may be effective for you – how you saved money, saved time, built a better widget/experience, etc.

Expert testimony You can position yourself not as the expert, but as someone who knows a lot of experts, and you are sharing with the audience what the real experts have taught you.

Demonstration Seeing is believing – is there a video demo you can show that is compelling; short and to the point? Even a series of photos – before and after? Very compelling.

In the sales process, it is common knowledge that people buy based on emotion, and then use logic to justify their purchases. Don't think that by arming your audience with an overwhelming number of statistics alone that they will rush to change their behavior. You need to find that trigger point for your audience and play to it with an emotional argument. Facts alone will likely not make your case.

A Call to Action – “And In Conclusion...”

Just as a strong opening is critical to gathering your audience’s interest, and repetition holds it and provides credibility, a strong conclusion is critical to moving your listeners to take action – and isn’t that why you’re speaking in the first place? We want to inspire action, whether that means writing letters to Congress, voting on a bond issue, investing in your solar-powered dog blanket company, or experiencing the peace-of-mind that your product or service offers. Having an audience applaud isn’t enough. We aim to win hearts and minds – or at least checkbooks!

One particularly effective technique is to refer back to your opening, then modify it with a twist:

“1-2-3-4-5... We can slow the clock counting down the seconds between home burglaries by implementing a few of the safety measures I’ve discussed today. If enough of us do it, in fact, burglars just may find it more profitable to seek a different kind of work altogether. And that would be a real clock-stopper!”

You want to continue to create a vision for the future, help your audience see the next steps and their role in the action. Make it as simple as possible for your audience to envision the next steps they personally need to take.

Instead of “Contact me if you are interested”, how about:

“Join the Revolution”

“Begin the Journey”

“Improve the Process”

“Live the Dream”

Keep it simple but make it inspirational and very clear. An overcomplicated call to action can ruin an otherwise perfect presentation.

One final tip. Never, ever end your presentation with the dreaded Questions? slide. If you think there may be questions, show that slide earlier in the presentation. Too often the presentation is going well and then the dreaded Questions? slide is shown and silence falls around the room. The next and final slide is usually the thank you and an otherwise fantastic presentation has ended on a total downer. You leave your audience feeling disappointed instead of inspired. Show the questions slide, and then move on to your inspirational close and call to action.

We now hope that you have a better understanding of how to make your next presentation more compelling, thought-provoking and useful. To ensure that you’ll start applying the skills and techniques that we covered right away, we highly encourage you to enroll in Signature Worldwide’s **Persuasive Presentation Skills™** course. We cover each of these principles and more in greater depth; using workshop best practices in an interactive and participatory environment, and providing specific recommendations that will help you reach more people with your message – and achieve higher sales in the process.



Click here to begin your persuasive presentation journey!