

# Presentation of the business

## How to make a business presentation

A business presentation is a purpose-led summary of key information about your company's plans, products, or practices, designed for either internal or external audiences. Project proposals, HR policy presentations, investors briefings are among the few common types of presentations.

Compelling business presentations are key to communicating important ideas, persuading others, and introducing new offerings to the world. Hence, why business presentation design is one of the most universal skills for any professional.

### 3 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.

But overall, all types of business presentations can be classified as:

- Informative
- Persuasive
- 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.

#### 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 caliber 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.

## 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.

## 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:

- Introductory slide
- Agenda/purpose slide
- Main information or Content slides
- Key Takeaways slides
- Call-to-action/next steps slides

## How to Make a Business Presentation: Actionable Tips

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:

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

## 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.

## 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.

Here's how Nancy Duarte, author of *"Slide:ology: The Art and Science of Creating Great Presentations"* book and TED presenter, recommends opening a presentation:

*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 mindset 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. In the article *how to start a presentation*, we explore this in more detail.

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

## 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's 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 favored 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:

- **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.
- **Write as you tweet.** Create short, on-point text blurbs of under 156 symbols, similar to what you'd share on Twitter.

- **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, color 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 – Honor – 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.

## References

- [1] <https://slidemodel.com/business-presentation-examples/> (last accessed: 2023. 06. 26.)