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IBTEKR



How to Gov Series

Storytelling for Innovation
in Government

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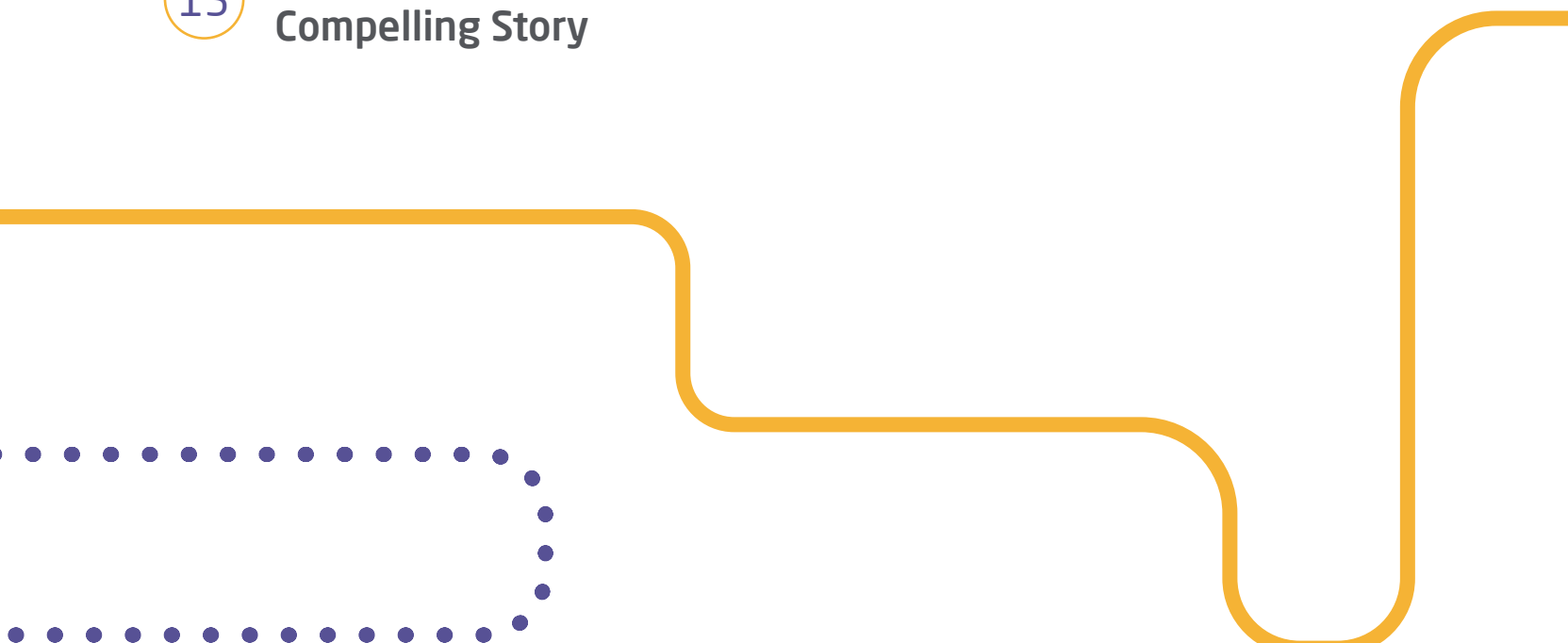
GOVERNMENT OF
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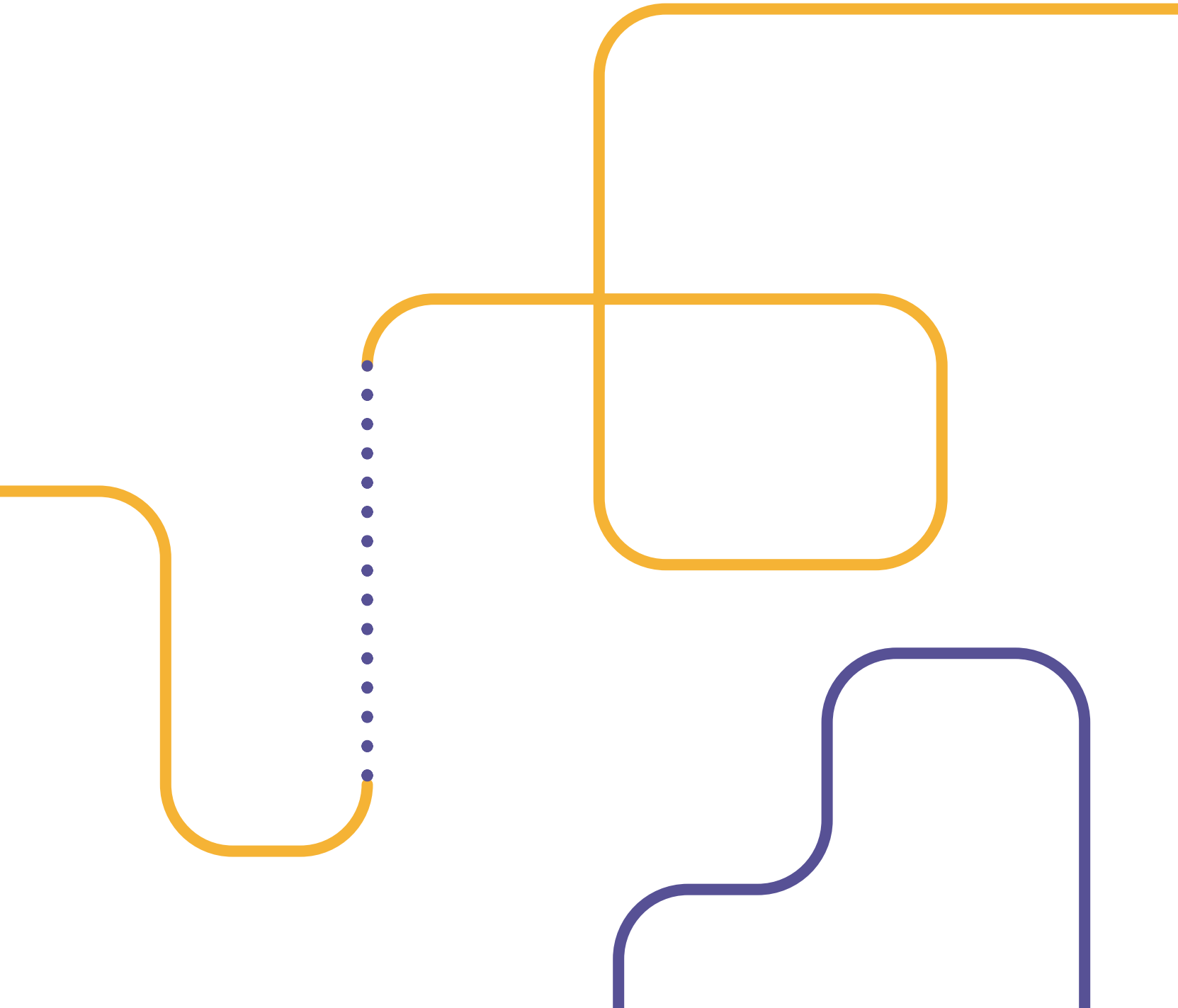
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Step 3

Storytelling and Pitching Your Idea





Innovators are the most resilient people. Why? Because as innovators, we very often pour our passion into powerful, atypical ideas only to hear the word, “No” or “Not now” or “Well, the idea is good... but I can’t see it on the annual roadmap, so let’s shelve it for now.” It’s important we accept the resilience that must come with invention. But... what if it’s not the actual idea that causes stakeholders to red-light or shelve a pitch?

What if the pitch itself is the real barrier to buy-in?

To achieve faster buy-in, we must share our ideas, prototypes, and research in more compelling, aligned, engaging ways. It’s better to let people explore your idea and make it theirs. The best way to sell your idea is to give your audience the feeling that it is (or at least could be) their idea. How do you do this? You help your audience empathize through powerful storytelling.

Here is how you develop a powerful pitch:



3.1 Rediscover Your Story

Reflect

Remember two or three moments from your life when you stepped out of your comfort zone and tackled a problem to make a positive difference in the world. What was your “call to action”/“aha moment?” How did your action make you feel, and impact others? Recall these moments vividly, using all of your senses. Then select one of these moments as the basis for your story. You might want to write freely about these moments, create an audio recording of your response, or draw a map.

Build Your Story -The Narrative Arc

Every story has a beginning, middle, and an end. Describe the central conflict or challenge you hope to address in order to inspire hope with your solution. The following questions can be helpful as you build your story around one of the key moments you identified above. Your goal is to inspire others to share your vision. The protagonists could be the founder(s) of the organization, staff members, or people who have benefited from your social venture. Ask a friend or colleague to interview you and record or type responses to the narrative arc questions.

You can adapt and use the following questions to tell a story from a different narrative perspective (i.e. staff member, beneficiary, supporter, community member, ...).

1. The Hook - setting the stage

This is the opening that pulls your audience into the story and introduces the context and protagonist.

- a. Paint the scene. Describe the when and where of your story.
- b. Introduce the protagonist. From what perspective do you want to tell your story? First person stories tend to be very powerful, but you might consider telling your story from the perspective of a staff member, beneficiary, supporter, community member, ...

2. The Challenge - introduction to the central problem

This part of your story identifies your central challenge/problem.

- a. What is the need, problem, or challenge that you are trying to address?
- b. Describe the moment when you developed empathy for, and an enduring connection to, the problem. How has it impacted your life and the lives of those around you?
- c. Why is there a need for your solution? What are the deeper causes of the problem? Describe the organizational, social, environmental, political, or economic climate.

3. The Big Idea - the "a-ha" moment or turning point

This section introduces your solution.

- a. What is your solution? How did you get to your "a-ha" moment?
- b. What's unique or transformative about your solution? How are you seeing the central challenge in a new light? How is your approach different from the standard one to similar problems in this space?

4. The How-To - the strategy behind your big idea

This part details how your solution works.

- a. What is the current stage of your idea?
- b. How and why does your solution address the need you identified? What would be a good example or scenario to illustrate this?
- c. What has been most challenging? Why? How have you worked around the challenges?
- d. How are you involving the people directly affected by the problem, team members, citizens, community members, external entities in government or the private sector...?
- e. Who disagreed with your idea and how did you respond to or address the points that critics made?

5. The results from the prototyping and the testing phase

This section explores the impact your solution created when you first tested it through prototyping.

- a. What impact have you made in the prototyping phase? What qualitative or quantitative data could you incorporate?
- b. How did people directly affected by the problem respond to your solution? What's the positive difference in their lives? Think about one to three concrete examples.

6. The Call to Action - key learnings and future steps

This part describes your key learnings, future steps, and makes a concrete call to action.

- a. How can your audience become part of the evolving story of your public service, or the social cause that it relates to? What can they do to help?
- b. What are your plans and vision for the future? What would a world look like where you are completely successful in working on your problem?
- c. What is the broader significance of your innovations?

d. What is your call to action?

Depending on its context and purpose, your story does not necessarily need to have a clear resolution of the central challenge. An ambiguous ending might work well to create empathy for an issue and leave your audience wanting to learn more.







3.2 Creating Your Story

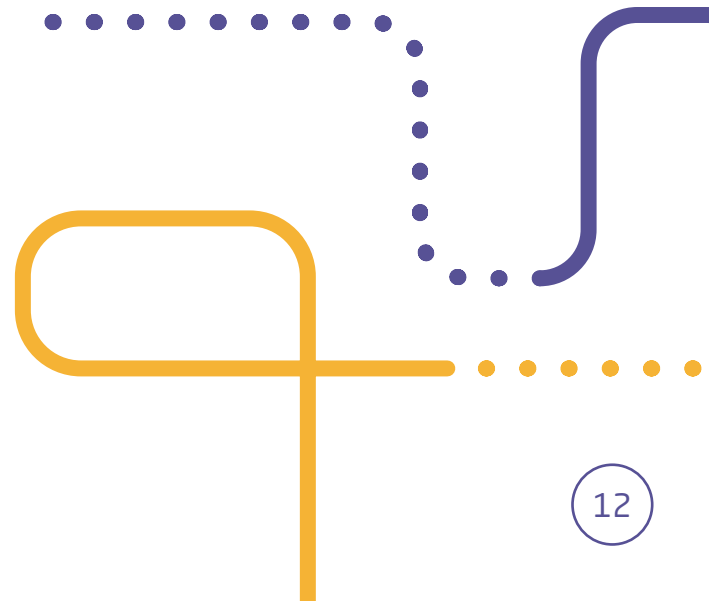
3.2 Select Your Key Audience

Who wants and needs to hear your story? In order to create a compelling story, you need to understand your audience and what motivates them to take action. Make sure your story addresses your target audience. Which audience(s) do you want to reach?

- a. The General Public want stories that are dramatic, inspiring, surprising, and emotionally moving.
- b. Innovators want stories that give insight into the process of addressing a problem, turning insights into practice, and overcoming challenges.
- c. Thought Leaders want to know how the new solution fits within the bigger picture of creating change and emerging trends, and what makes it innovative, unique, or transformative.
- d. Funders want stories that describe new solutions and contain convincing evidence of impact/return on investment potential. They

want to see that you really understand the problem you are trying to address and that nothing else exists that sufficiently addresses the problem.

Capture the attention of your audience quickly. Surprise them. Teach them something. Speak to their interests and worldviews and tailor the narrative. Enable your audience to find themselves inside the story and make it their own.



3.3 Know Your Core Message

Why are you telling this story (e.g., to raise awareness or funds, or to advocate for a position on an issue, etc.)? What is your main message? Distill your solution and mission into one idea that is easy to remember.

3.4 Select Your Story Type

Choose the best story to create to reach your target audience. The following are proven story types that inspire people to take action.

- a. The Challenge Story: This story is about a protagonist overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles to turn their idea into reality. It is dramatic, inspiring, accessible, and emotionally moving.
- b. The How-To Story: This story focuses on explaining the process of solving and implementing a social problem in a unique way. It gives social innovators and thought leaders insights into emerging best practices that are effective, and how they could employ these methods themselves. It also inspires and gives hope by showing exactly how change is possible.
- c. The Big Idea Story: This story focuses on describing a novel solution and explores how it fits within the bigger picture of creating social change and emerging trends in the social impact sector.
- d. The Impact Story: This story focuses on describing the impact of the solution, providing convincing evidence that illustrates return on investment potential. It includes some measures of impact and shows current and future funders that their support makes a difference.

3.5 Create Your Call to Action

What do you want your audience to do upon hearing your story?

- a. Share your story with their network
- b. Become a supporter/champion of your cause
- c. Fund your solution
- d. Help you scale up your solution
- e. Convince staff at higher ranks to give you a green signal to go forth with your innovative solution
- f. Start their own program based on the solution that you have designed

Consider: How are you going to measure the success of your story? Do you have a clear ask associated with your story? Are you giving your audience action steps they can understand and complete? Clearly state the urgency of the action and make it unambiguous what you want your audience to do.

3.6 Choose Your Story Medium

Once you have distilled the core components of your story, you can tell it through a variety of media. Choose the medium that best allows you to engage with your target audience. This could be through a written story, spoken story, or a digital story using sound, animation, and photographs. We will cover this in more detail in Phase 4 of this manual.



More Tips to Create a Compelling Story

1. Solicit examples or testimonials of similar product/processes

Being able to present some evidence of the possible success of your idea is an incredible tool to use when pitching. While you would be already showing this through the results generated from the Prototyping stage, it would also be valuable to talk about examples of similar innovations elsewhere. You can gather these examples and testimonials from within the country or even internationally. If you recall, in the last section of this manual, we talked about how to gather such examples.

2. Be ready to deal with objections and tough questions

Objections and tough questions aren't necessarily negative. In fact, they show that you've made your audience think critically about what you're saying and what you're offering. However, to get them closer to saying yes, you need to be able to handle their objections with grace and ease. So before you head into a pitch session, try this five-step exercise:

- Write down the top 25 objections you're facing when it comes to your innovation.
- Write down your best answers to each objection.

- Limit the answers to a maximum of three sentences.
- Have at least 10 people review your answers and give feedback.
- Test yourself to know these answers by heart.

Once you've gone over the objections that are likely to pop up during your pitch, addressing them in real time with your audience will be a breeze.

3. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

Confidence is key when it comes to pitching. Before you step on any stage or into any office with your pitch, you should know it front to back. Try it out on people from your personal and professional circle, on your partner, your parents. The more times you go through it, the more natural it'll feel.


And when you're practicing at home, speak out loud. Record yourself presenting and play it back. What sounds strange? Where do you make mistakes? It's easy to skip over these issues when you're reading silently, but when you actually hear them, they become more and more noticeable.



Step 4

Presentation Tips



A silver laptop is shown from a front-facing perspective, open. The screen is a solid, vibrant purple color. Centered on the screen is white text. The laptop's keyboard and trackpad are visible below the screen.

Now that you have crafted your story, it is time to present it in a compelling way to your audience. Here are some tips on how to create presentations that tell an effective story.



1. Don't recreate your notes

When your PowerPoint presentation is simply a colorful recap of your speech notes, you can expect your audience to start nodding off. Don't think of your PowerPoint as a script - rather, it should provide a visual illustration of your point. Something for your audience to hang their hats on.

Instead of using the slides to double down on the content of your presentation, use them to illustrate your presentation.



2. Cut down on text

Hopefully you're now scrapping your plan to turn your presentation into a teleprompter - so let's take that one step farther and take out those giant paragraphs of text and bullet points. Text-packed slides do you the disservice of dividing your audience's attention. Since they can't listen to you and read paragraphs of text at the same time, they'll end up tuning out one or the other.

Rather, call out important points and facts, and try to use as few words as possible.

Try this technique with bullet points, too, using an individual slide to make each point a punchy visual instead than trying to cram it all onto one page.



3. Be eye-catching, but legible

You don't want your audience to strain to get your point. To avoid this problem, use the right size of font, and make sure there's enough contrast that it can easily be seen. Use contrasting colors to highlight certain words or phrases - people like to skim, and even if you only have a sentence on each slide, highlighting will make it as easy as possible to get your point. Try reading your slides from across the room on your computer screen to get a good idea of how legible they'll be when presented.



4. Use data visualizations to tell your story

Telling stories to illustrate your point is standard advice to speakers - audiences will more easily remember your points if they have a story to go with them. The beauty of a PowerPoint presentation is that it lets you use the visual progression of slides to further cement your stories into people's minds.

What is data visualization actually?

Put simply, data visualization is the visual representation of information, using things like charts and tables, with shapes, color and graphics to represent data findings.

Basically, it's anything that communicates the point of data findings in a visual way.

Data visualization does a great job of:

- Providing context
- Strengthening the persuasiveness of your claims

- Making key insights more memorable
- Prompting intuition from the audience

Yet, the real magic happens when data visualization is mixed with great storytelling.

What is data storytelling in presentations?

Knowing how to develop and deliver a data-driven presentation is now a crucial skill for many professionals. No longer is it enough to just say something – we need statistics, numbers and quantitative evidence to confirm the legitimacy of claims and make them mean something. The sheer amount of data we need to sift through in our lives is overwhelming. It's hard – and not to mention, time-consuming – to spot patterns in a long list of numbers on a spreadsheet.

This is why we need visually compelling charts in unit meetings, research reports and pitch decks. But still, sometimes even that's not enough.

Although they might look pretty, a good data storyteller isn't the one who slaps bar chart after bar chart on their pitch, or spends hours designing data graphics. They're the one who considers their audience before any visuals are rendered.

When you create a chart or a piece of data visualization, you need to ask yourself:

- **Will my audience understand this?**
- **Is it effective in teaching them something new?**



After all, effectively communicating your message with an audience is the bread and butter of a presentation. So to answer those questions positively, it's worth taking note of the following...

5 tips to improve data storytelling in your presentation

Tip #1: Use the right chart

We're all familiar with the humble pie or bar chart. These are by far the most commonly-used graphs in presentations, as they are versatile and easy to understand. However, that doesn't always make them the right choice. Often they are too simplistic for complex data, which skews the audience's understanding and threatens to knock you off-course on your hunt for the perfect presentation.

So what type of graph or chart do you want? Well, that largely depends on what you're aiming to do – or, what your 'data visualization goal' is.

For example, if you want to...

- Inform (convey a single data point that's easy to understand, with minimal context), then use a single large-scale number, with simple symbols or icons to emphasize growth, decline, etc.
- Compare (show similarities or differences among values), use a bar chart or bubble chart. If it's to compare parts of a whole, a pie chart or a stacked bar chart are the best options.
- Show change (visualize trends in time or space), use a line chart, a timeline infographic or alluvial diagram for time. To visualize trends in space, a choropleth map is the best bet.
- Organize (show groups, patterns, rank or order), use numbered lists, Venn diagrams, mind maps, or flow charts.
- Reveal relationships (show correlations among variables or values), use scatter plots, radars, matrixes, or a histogram.

Tip #2: Check for legibility

This may sound obvious, but sometimes what's readable to you, on your laptop screen, may require the person in the back row of your audience to really squint their eyes – especially if they're contending with a broken set of blinds and sunlight streaming in!

To avoid the hasty hunt for the projector's brightness button, use big fonts and primary, accessible colors so viewers can get the gist of the graph. Even from the back of the room.

This is especially important if you're using graphs copied from journals or the internet, as they are often pixelated, unreadable and blurry when projected onto the big screen.

To save yourself from an uncomfortable-looking audience, find a comparable, legible graph, or create a new graph showing the same data in a PowerPoint-friendly format.

Tip #3: Keep it simple

As the old saying goes: less is more. And that's certainly true in data storytelling.

Minimalism in chart design is key to achieving a sophisticated look, while allowing your data to be the star of the show.

Remember, you may have been working with the same chart for weeks or months, but your audience only sees it for a few seconds to give them the best chance of comprehending your data, and use a clear, simple design. Borders, gridlines, background colors, and other extra decorations should take a backseat to the points, bars, or lines that actually represent the data

Here's a few hacks to help you out:

- Lighten or remove gridlines
- Avoid borders and outlines, remove backgrounds
- Get rid of 3D, shades and other 'special' effects
- Use color for function, not decoration – don't use more than six colors

Tip #4: Highlight what matters

Every chart has a number or range of data that reveals something crucial to your point, so drawing the audience's attention to that piece of data is vital in maintaining their engagement.

- Go monochrome with a highlight: pick two complementary but distinct colors and give your most important piece of data the highlight color
- Guide the eyes: use lines, arrows or circle marks to physically point out the key data sets
- Fade out unimportant data: choose one key color to distinguish more important values and use gray for the data that you want to be less of a focus
- Animate important segments or bars, a good visual can become awesome if you add some animation and interactivity

Tip #5: Don't use defaults: customize!

Most audience members can spot a PowerPoint, Keynote or Excel default color theme from a mile off. And what does that say about your presentation? Leaning too heavily on default styles suggests you've not taken the time to really consider your data visualization.

To maintain the professionalism of your presentation, steer away from that 'default' look and redesign your charts to match your presentation's colors and style.

Not only will it suggest you've put in ample effort, but it will intrigue an audience and make them more likely to listen to what this style-savvy, professional presenter has to say.

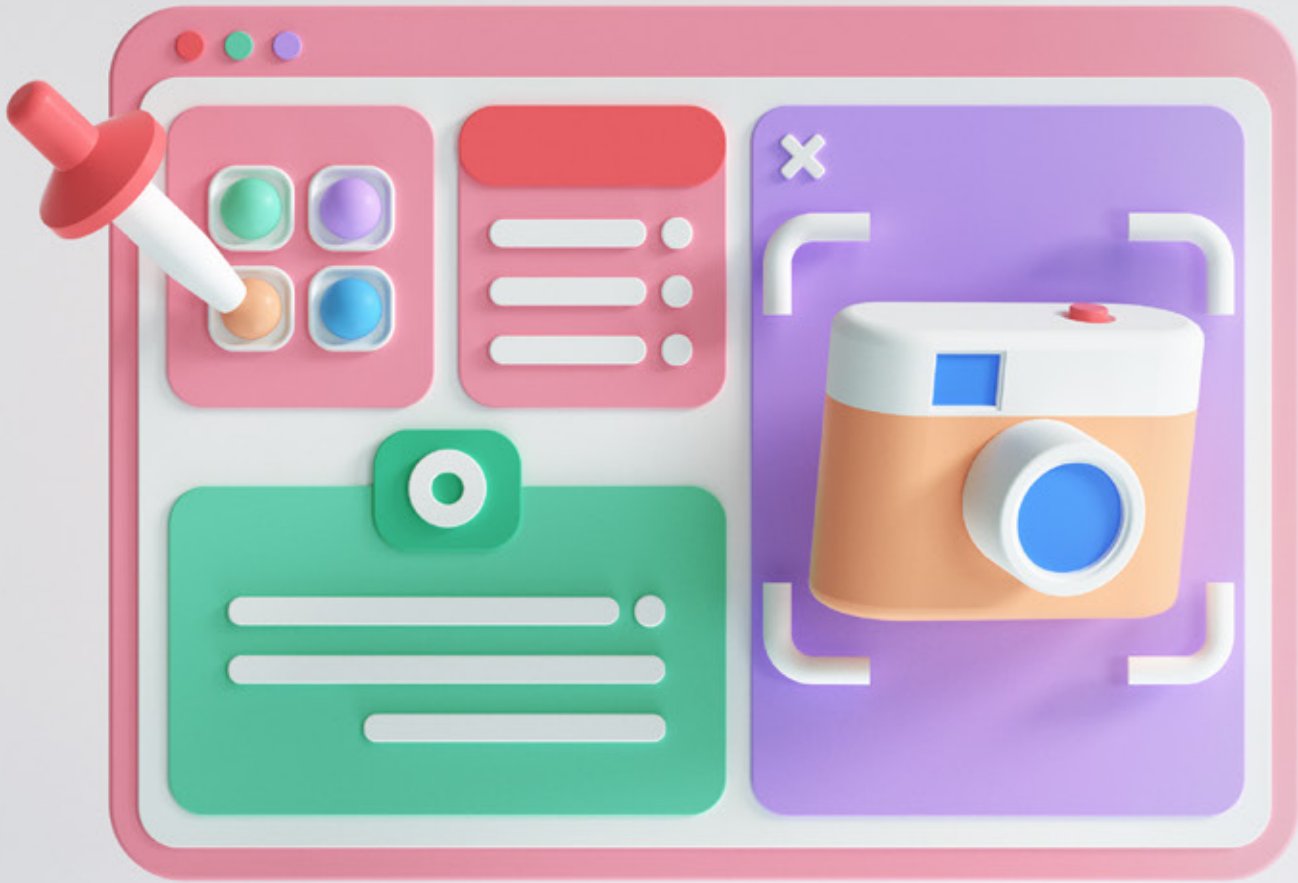






5. Use transitions...

...but not transition effects. Forget the bouncing text, wipes, and fades. They may look fun, but they'll only distract from the message of your presentation. You should still give your audience a visual cue when you're changing topics, or moving from one point to the next. Do this with a transition slide that states your next topic, and stands out from the format of the slides around it. You finally have a perfect-looking and well-flowing powerpoint presentation. But how do you ensure that you deliver the presentation to make sure your point goes across to your audience effectively? However, for those not born with natural eloquence, public speaking can be remarkably nerve-racking. Here are some tips to harness that nervous energy and transform it into positive enthusiasm.



Some tips when giving your presentation:

1. Practice!

Naturally, you'll want to rehearse your presentation multiple times. While it can be difficult for those with packed schedules to spare time to practice, it's essential if you want to deliver a rousing presentation. If you really want to sound great, write out your speech rather than taking chances winging it - if you get nervous about speaking, a script is your best friend.

Try to practice where you'll be delivering your talk. Some acting strategists suggest rehearsing lines in various positions. The more you mix up your position and setting, the more comfortable you'll feel with your presentation. Do a practice run for a friend or colleague, or try recording your presentation and playing it back to evaluate which areas need work. Listening to recordings of your past talks can clue you in to bad habits you may be unaware of, as well as inspiring the age-old question: "Is that what I really sound like?"

2. Transform Nervous Energy Into Enthusiasm.

Studies have shown that an enthusiastic speech can win out over an eloquent one, therefore, make sure that you are as enthusiastic and energetic as possible before going for your presentation.

3. Attend Other Presentations.

If you're giving a talk as part of a conference, try to attend some of the earlier talks by other presenters to scope out their presentation skills and get some context. This shows respect for your fellow presenters while also giving you a chance to feel out the audience. What's the mood of the crowd? Are folks in the mood to laugh or are they a bit more stiff? Are the presentations more strategic or tactical in nature? Another speaker may also say something that you can play off of later in your own presentation.

4. Arrive Early.

It's always best to allow yourself plenty of time to settle in before your talk. Extra time ensures you won't be late (even if Google Maps shuts down) and gives you plenty of time to get adapted to your presentation space.

5. Adjust to Your Surroundings.

The more adjusted to your environment you are, the more comfortable you'll feel. Make sure to spend some time in the room where you will be delivering your presentation. If possible, practice with the microphone and lighting, make sure you understand the seating and be aware of any distractions potentially posed by the venue (e.g., a noisy road outside).

6. Meet and Greet.

Do your best to chat with people before your presentation. Talking with audiences makes you seem more likeable and approachable. Ask event attendees questions and take in their responses. They may even give you some inspiration to weave into your talk.

7. Use Positive Visualization.

Whether or not you're a Zen master, know that plenty of studies have proven the effectiveness of positive visualization. When we imagine a positive outcome to a scenario in our mind, it's more likely to play out the way we envision. Positive thoughts can be incredibly effective - give them a shot.

8. Remember That Most Audiences Are Sympathetic.

One of the hardest fears to shake when speaking in public is that the audience is secretly waiting to laugh at your missteps or mistakes. Fortunately, this isn't the case in the vast majority of presentations. The audience wants to see you succeed. In fact, many people have a fear of public speaking, so even if the audience seems indifferent, the chances are pretty good that most people listening to your presentation can relate to how nerve-racking it can be. If you start to feel nervous, remind yourself that the audience gets it, and actually wants to see you nail it.

9. Take Deep Breaths.

The go-to advice for jitters has truth to it. When we're nervous, our muscles tighten--you may even catch yourself holding your breath. Instead, go ahead and take those deep breaths to get oxygen to your brain and relax your body.

10. Never Read From Slides

Guess what? Your audience can read. Your slides should only support and reinforce what you are saying. Reading the slides makes you look unprepared, inconsiderate, and unprofessional. And it's the fastest way to get your audience to stop listening to you.

11. Smile.

Smiling increases endorphins, replacing anxiety with calm and making you feel good about your presentation. Smiling also exhibits confidence and enthusiasm to the crowd. And this tip works even if you're doing a webinar and people can't see you. Just don't overdo it!

12. Work on Your Pauses.

When you're nervous, it's easy to speed up your presentation and end up talking too fast, which in turn causes you to run out of breath, get more nervous, and panic! Don't be afraid to slow down and use pauses in your speech. Pausing can be used to emphasize certain points and to help your talk feel more conversational. If you feel yourself losing control of your pacing, just take a nice pause and keep cool.

13. Actively Engage the Audience.

People love to talk and make their opinions heard, but the nature of presentations can often seem like a one-sided proposition. It doesn't have to be, though. Asking the audience what they think, inviting questions, and other means of welcoming audience participation can boost engagement and make attendees feel like a part of a conversation. It also makes you, the presenter, seem much more

relatable. Consider starting with a poll or survey. Don't be put off by unexpected questions - instead, see them as an opportunity to give your audience what they want.

14. Be Entertaining.

Even if your presentation is packed with useful information, if your delivery is not effective, so will your session. Including some light-hearted slides is a great way to help the audience feel more comfortable, especially when presenting them with a great deal of information. However, it's important to maintain a balance - after all, you're not performing a stand-up routine, and people didn't come to your presentation with the sole intention of being entertained. That said; don't be afraid to inject a little humor into your talk.

15. Prepare some questions.

If you're going to have a Q&A at the end of your presentation, be prepared to get the ball rolling by having up a question or two up your sleeve.

16. Admit You Don't Have All the Answers.

Very few presenters are willing to publicly concede that they don't actually know everything because they feel it undermines their authority. However, since we all know that nobody can ever know everything about a given topic, admitting so in a presentation can actually improve your credibility. If someone asks a question that stumps you, it's okay to admit it. This can also increase your credibility with the audience, as it demonstrates that, no matter how knowledgeable a person might be, we're all learning, all the time.

17. Use a Power Stance.

Practicing confident body language is another way to boost your pre-presentation jitters. When your body is physically demonstrating confidence, your mind will follow suit. Studies have shown that using power stances a few minutes before giving a talk (or heading to a big interview) creates a lasting sense of confidence and assurance. Whatever you do, don't sit--sitting is passive. Standing or walking a bit will help you harness those stomach bats (isn't that more appropriate than butterflies?).

18. Don't Fight the Fear.

Accept your fear rather than trying to fight it. Getting yourself worked up by wondering if people will notice your nervousness will only intensify your anxiety. Remember, those jitters aren't all bad - harness that nervous energy and transform it into positive enthusiasm and you'll be golden.



