

Content

“Communication is *what* you say and *how* you say it.”

Content is the “what” part of a presentation and includes:

- Facts
- Ideas
- Reasons
- Statistics
- Stories

“Content is King”

During a presentation content is king and always will be. This is because a presentation is all about giving information. The information in the presentation is its content.

Generally the more useful and interesting the content, the more successful it will be.

What is good content?

The first trick to creating good content for your presentation is to be sure that your content will have *specific appeal* to your *target audience*.

Next you want original content. Content that's different and unique and not the same thing that people have heard before.

Your content should be easy to understand and use regular English as far as possible, if you have to use topic specific words that could be difficult to understand make sure you explain them.

Keep your sentences short, about 10-20 words each is ideal. This is the way people usually talk.

Making good content

To make good content you can use the presentation writing method known as:

'Why? How? Prove It!'

This method of writing presentations and speeches was developed by Graham Jones, a leading British public speaker and trainer in presentation skills.

Key message

Your presentation **MUST** have a key message. Leave your audience in absolutely no doubt what you came to tell them. Don't lead them up to your messages - they won't stay the course. Hit them between the eyes with your message right up front. You should provide your key message **within the first 15 seconds** of starting your talk. Research shows that if you don't do this you risk losing the attention of your audience.

Why?

Having provided your audience with your key message they will inevitably be asking themselves:

'Why should I do that?' or 'Why should I think that?' or 'Why should that be the case?'

In any event, all the questions that follow from an action-oriented key message are of the 'why?' kind. That means if the next stage of your presentation sets about answering these questions your talk is following what the audience perceives as its route through the material. The result is that **you have them on your side immediately**.

How?

So, your audience now knows what you expect them to do and why they should do it. Now you need to answer their next inevitable question - how are they going to achieve what you suggest?

In this section of your talk you need to provide some explanation of how your audience can take the action you suggest or how they might go about changing their minds on a situation.

However, this is **the least important part of your presentation**. You are merely giving ideas at this stage. Once people have bought into your idea by understanding why your key message is important, the 'how?' they might do what you suggest is nice to know, but not need to know material. Hence, the 'how?' may only be a couple of sentences of suggestions, nothing very detailed.

Having said that, 'how' is an important part of the presentation as it necessarily **follows the logical set of questions being asked subconsciously by the audience**. Hence to leave it out disturbs the natural logic in the audience's mind and you lose support, reducing your influence.

Prove It!

So, you've told your audience what you expect them to do, why they should do it and how they can get on with things. But even though you may have got your message across, you haven't really underlined it as yet. You need to provide evidence for your assertions - **prove what you have said is beyond dispute**. The 'prove it' section of your talk is the most important part you need to write, after the key message. So spend lots of time in planning this.

You can prove your key message in several ways, but the main evidence will come from:

- Personal examples
- Case studies
- Statistics

Individual, **personal examples are immensely powerful** - especially if you tell them as stories. Case studies are in depth examples and can be useful, but they are more difficult to tell as stories. Statistics are useful to help prove a point, but they do not carry as much weight as examples and case histories.