



99 THINGS YOU NEVER LEARNED ABOUT PRESENTATIONS IN SCHOOL

— BROUGHT TO YOU BY —



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CHAPTER 1



A CASUAL INTRODUCTION



Hello!

You might be reading this for a few reasons: either you have an important presentation coming up, you want to learn how to improve your presentation skills in general, or you are unhappy with the level of education you received and wish to avenge yourself by learning anything you might have missed.

You came to the right place.

Ethos3 is founded on a single principle: **to empower presenters.** We create presentations every day. Sometimes we create them twice a day, if we happen to dream about them before work. We're experts. We live it, breathe it, eat it, and unfortunately, we also die by it.

These 99 tips are specially designed to be quick, helpful, and essential components to a great presentation. They encompass everything we know about presentations and how to make them compelling.

PREPARE YOURSELF.
YOU'RE ABOUT TO
BECOME EMPOWERED.

-The Ethos3 Team

CHAPTER 2



WHY YOU **ABSOLUTELY**
NEED TO KNOW ALL OF
THIS STUFF



Do you remember school?

Was it miserable? Were you ever beaten up for wearing unattractive clothing?

WE HAD A SIMILAR EXPERIENCE.

This was probably why most of the things we learned in middle school, high school, and college didn't fully prepare us for adulthood. We were simply too busy trying to avoid being punched in the face.

Even worse, our education often didn't have the foresight to see us as attractive business people in the future. We never learned how to make compelling presentations that could educate, sell, and make our audiences excited about our message.



A lot of our clients range from frustrated to emotionally distraught when they bring us their presentation. This is because they don't feel equipped to tell the story that they want to tell. School never really prepared us for a pitch deck trying to raise \$1.5 million for a start up.

Someday, somewhere, somehow you are going to need to make a presentation. What you learned in school about the MLA style and bullet points simply won't cut it. In fact, it will probably hurt you.

If anything, these crucial skills can be applied in other areas of your life.

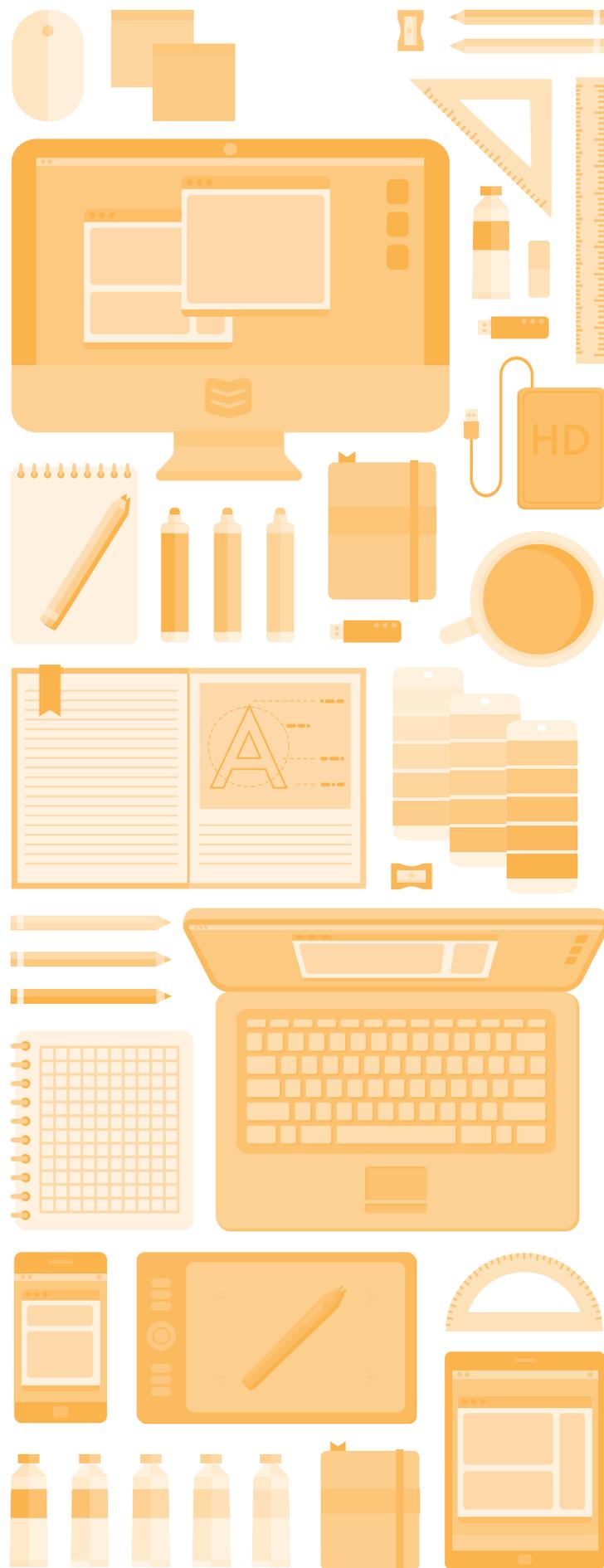
A compelling speech at a wedding?

CHECK.

Better writing skills overall?

YEP.

And if you ever wanted to brush up your design in general, these tips are even useful for that.



PRESENTATIONS ARE ABOUT SHARING A STORY.

Even if you're just sharing a funny story about your dog Pickles, this is a crucial skill.



CHAPTER 3



MAKE YOUR POWERPOINT CONTENT **STUNNING**



Content is its own living, breathing, dinosaur-sized entity in a presentation. It's going to tell your story and make people want to buy everything you're selling, or it's going to make them throw tomatoes at you.

HERE'S OUR PHILOSOPHY ABOUT CONTENT AT ETHOS3: **SIMPLICITY RULES.**

There should only be a few words on each slide in order to guide the speaker through the content and give main ideas for the audience to focus on. The rest goes in speaker's notes, or simply gets deleted.

Another thing we do differently?

We believe that content should tell a story. This includes a beginning, middle, end, and even a hero. Without launching into a lengthy 10 chapters on why storytelling works, you can either trust us or use a trusty search engine to look up the neuroscience behind it.

Finally, we always include a call-to-action at the end of the presentation. Even if it's just to insist that people think a little bit harder about how good you look in a suit.

A lot of this information is counter-intuitive. We've always been taught to fill our slides with bullet points as long as Santa's naughty list, or that everything you need to say should be crammed on one slide like a teleprompter script.

It's simply not true.

SIMPLICITY IS **BEST.**
BULLET POINTS
ARE AN **EYESORE.**
STORIES **WORK.**

How do we know this?

Because we've written over a thousand presentations with different purposes and messages. It doesn't matter how conservative the information is: **dull content will put everyone to sleep.**

Without any more fluff, here are the 25 writing tips which will make you the next Presentation Shakespeare-Homer-Dickens.

01. WRITE SOBER, EDIT SOBER, WAKE UP EARLY

Don't heed the advice of Hemingway or Wilde or any other brilliant author who (probably) nursed a jumbo bottle of Listerine at the keyboard. When you approach your presentation content, all you need is a clear head, a quiet space to write, and a meaningful purpose. **Great presentation content can come from anywhere, anytime.** It doesn't have to be *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

02. COMPILE EVERYTHING

When we start a presentation, we never begin writing without the assets for the project. This includes any data, taglines, or necessary information that will be placed into the on-slide content. What do your assets include? Print them out or place them into one working document as your starting point.

"The will to win is important. But the will to prepare is vital."

-Joe Paterno

03. PUT YOUR AUDIENCE FIRST

Before you even place a finger on your keyboard, **you must consider your audience.** They are the reason this whole process should even begin: the #1 VIP Kings of the Universe to your presentation.

WHAT ARE THEIR NEEDS? THEIR CONCERNS? WHAT DO THEY WANT TO SEE OR LEARN ABOUT?

If you start writing your content like an “About Me” section of a social media page, you will lose their interest. Jot down everything you know about them in advance, and plan from there.

04. DEVELOP A MESSAGE

Some of the most difficult clients we have aren't mean, scary, and shout-y: they simply don't know what they want. **What is this presentation trying to accomplish?** Try to sum it up in one sentence, like a movie tagline. This main message should contain a core emotional meaning, but it doesn't have to be long or verbose to become a powerful presentation.

05. THREE TAKEAWAYS (OR LESS)

Your takeaways describe the pieces of information that will support your message. **The audience's mind works like this: one, two, three... I forget.** They're not going to have patience for more than three takeaways. Write these down separately before you begin to draft your full presentation. Ask yourself: what are the three things I want the audience to walk away knowing?

"No one can remember more than three points."

- Phillip Crosby

06. APPLY STORYTELLING

This is where it gets tricky for everyone. How can storytelling fit into your very professional presentation? Consider telling the story behind its story, like an example of someone using your product/service, or just share a relevant tale about your Pop Pop's favorite fishing tackle. Start with a story and end with a story, or maybe even weave one throughout the whole thing: **just do it.** It will enhance your audience's memory and make them feel invested in your message.





07. CREATE A HERO

The best way to build a great story in your presentation is to **start with a hero that the audience can root for** (or boo loudly at).

This character can mirror the audience, be a representation of you in the past, or simply be a fictional hero that uses your product/service/idea for the first time and experiences radical changes. Put a name and a face to your hero, and flesh them out before you create your first draft.

08. GIVE IT A CLIFFHANGER

If you're going through all of the work to insert a story into your presentation, then be sure you're also giving the hero a journey to travel, a problem to solve, or a change that will make a significant impact. Don't leave the story hanging after you introduce the main character, and also make sure you plan their journey in advance.

09. CONSTRUCT A STRUCTURE

Back in school, **this was known as the outline of your essay**. But for presentations, the process can be a little bit more refined to support your call to action (see Tip #11). Your structure doesn't have to be like the foundation of a house, in that it doesn't need to last a thousand years and withstand the blows of time. It just needs to have a logical flow and the flexibility to change as needed.

10. DECIDE ON A THEME

A theme is a fantastic way to infect your presentation with creativity. Come up with a single word that encompasses your message, an interesting metaphor, or an overall feeling that you want to evoke. Once you've got a nugget of an idea, reference this theme on nearly every slide through the visual choices or content itself. The more creative the theme, the more easily you'll be able to think of image ideas and create copy. Because no one ever had a party writing about "integrative techniques," but perhaps everyone rejoices at a theme like "space cowboys."



11. CREATE A STRONG CALL TO ACTION

A call to action tells your audience exactly what they should do once the presentation ends. It can truly be anything:

call your mom, become an investor,

share your email address, etc.

Be sure that your presentation always has one, otherwise all of your hard work may vanish in a cloud of "I forgot" once the audience leaves the room.

12. LAY OUT EACH SLIDE

Unlike your loose storyboard sketch (see Tip 9), laying out the content on each slide is a lot more detailed and closer to the final product. On top of writing the text for each slide, be sure to also include some design notes or image suggestions that matches the overall theme. This way you can move the text around, edit, and work through any flaws in logic without having put all of the work into designing each slide.

13. LET SPEAKER'S NOTES GUIDE YOU

Have you ever used speaker's notes before? If the answer is "no," imagine us shaking our heads and saying tsk tsk tsk over and over. Speaker's notes are a fantastic way to clean up the bulk of content on a slide and still make sure you'll have all of the necessary information you need to deliver the talk.

IN SHORT, DON'T
LET YOUR SLIDES
BECOME WORDY.

Solve it by sweeping all of your additional content under the speaker's notes rug.

14. APPLY A HEAVY DOSE OF SIMPLICITY

It doesn't matter what stage of the presentation you're working on: be as simple as you possibly can. **Don't snowball into a "this is important!" spiral that leaves your slides with a mess of information.** No one is going to remember more than a main point or two, so cater your message around making the most memorable points of all time.

"A good speech should be like a woman's skirt; long enough to cover the subject and short enough to create interest."

-Winston S. Churchill

15. THE "TWITTER" CHALLENGE

Here's one good way to minimize text on each slide to make sure you're not overwhelming or distracting your audience. If your content wouldn't fit into a Tweet (140 characters long, including spaces), then it's too long. It's as simple as that. Test your current content on each slide using this rule to see how you stack up.



16. ELIMINATE OR DEFINE JARGON

Unless you know for a fact that your audience will be familiar with every term and any jargon within the content, you're safer leaving them out or verbally defining them during the talk. Don't alienate your audience because you have a fancy vocabulary and went to Hogwarts for high school. Make them feel included, even in the language you speak.

"If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time — a tremendous whack."

-Winston S. Churchill

17. BEWARE OF BULLET POINTS

Bullet points are the tiny criminals of PowerPoint. They sneak in under the guise of an important task, and before you know it, these bandits are littered across every slide and stealing the show. Bullet points can become a crutch for speakers, and cause them to painfully read aloud each sub-header in front of an audience that knows full well what the slide says. Avoid them if you can. No matter how difficult the task may seem, avoid them.

18. LET EMOTION HAPPEN

Inauthenticity doesn't happen when a presenter is careless with their topic or lacks investment. It often occurs when a presenter cares so much that they water their message down to a safe, corporate monotone.

Allow yourself the freedom of using your real opinions, real vocabulary, and real tone of voice throughout your on-slide content and in your delivery.

19. SPRINKLE IN SOME QUESTIONS

Turn your audience into active listeners by asking them poignant questions, especially if they are hypothetical and meant to be silently, personally answered during the talk. Get them thinking about big issues, their own participation in larger problems, and just generally about things that will make them noodle and feel like mindful participants.

20. A WORD ON QUOTES

Quotes are like seasoning your meal with garlic powder. Add a little and it can make your dish tasty and wonderful. Add too much? It will taste like poison in your mouth. Consider using quotes to bolster your intro and outro, but don't rely on them too much within the content. Give your content the strength of your own voice, not Mark Twain's.

21. KEEP IT CONSISTENT

Consistent content means coordinating verb tenses, making sure that you don't contradict yourself, and keeping the same overall amount of text on each slide. It also just means flipping through your storyboard again and again until you feel like **each individual slide could fit together within the larger piece.**

22. THE POWER OF REPETITION (REPETITION)

If you have something you want your audience to remember, don't hesitate to remind them. Take a suggestion from flash card days of yore and show the audience what you want ingrained in their minds. As the old saying goes, tell them what you're going to say, say it, and then remind them of what they just heard.

23. A SECOND (OR THIRD) PAIR OF EYES

No man is an island, and no content should go without an outside opinion before the time of delivery. Show it to someone trustworthy and ask them to look for more than grammatical or spelling errors. They should also be able sniff out overall flaws in flow, logic, or any other glaring mistakes that a spell check simply can't find.



24. CUT, CUT, CUT

The secret to incredible writing is editing down to the essentials. **You don't need probably half the content you think is necessary: we mean it.** Write down everything you feel is important, and then go back and slash and burn the whole thing.

Less is more.

Minimal is the new mega-mal.

25. THE FINAL SLIDE

The final slide serves two purposes: it should leave the audience with a clear call to action, and it should present a good transition into a continued conversation, AKA a Q&A session. Make sure the content on your final slide is more than just a "thank you," but a place to remind the audience of the thing they should remember or do after they've left the room.

CHAPTER 4



THE SECRETS OF VERY **EASY YET** **LUXURIOUS** DESIGN



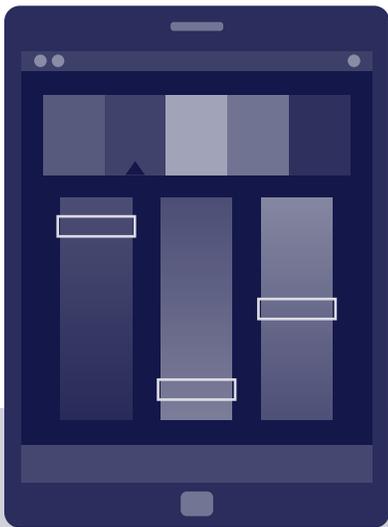
We have recruited a team of elite designers at Ethos3 in order **to make all of our client presentations beautiful, impactful, and worthy of framing at the MoMA.** All of these super designers have had years of experience with a range of clients, turning some scribbles and a few coffee-stained plans into something great.

We realize you may not have the training or resources to learn how to paint the presentation version of the Mona Lisa.

You also probably didn't have a lot of design training in school. **Software changes every year, pop stars age, and the inevitable march of time turns all of us into novices.**

Our short design tips will build on each other to help guide you to greatness. All you need to learn are some basic principles along with some no-no's that will prevent a larger mess. You may be surprised to find that good looking design is more about taking elements away than slopping them on, and generally requires the same concise vision as the content.

Enough anticipation! *Let's get started with design tips that will help your presentation good looking, nay, even luxurious.*



26. COLOR THEORY

Learning how different colors interact with each other within a presentation can be as simple as learning about the color wheel itself. There are a lot of great resources online which can help you select which shades will compliment other shades, many of them with tools that can show you what the colors look like side by side. Use the power of the search engine once again!

27. THE RULE OF THIRDS

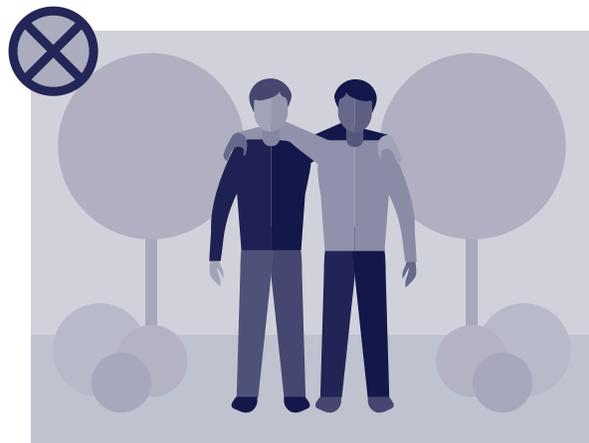
Want to grab someone's attention? Try the classic Rule of Thirds. In short, it describes a layout where $\frac{2}{3}$ of the image is devoted to open space, and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the image contains what you want the viewer to focus on, using the natural frame of the remaining white space. The secret to this trick is keeping the bulk of the slide simple in order to enhance the most important piece.

28. STOCK PHOTO DO'S

In order to pick a stock photograph that doesn't look "stocky," be sure you're selecting images that fit your right demographic, are cropped or altered to frame the text, and convey natural-looking experiences that relate directly to your message. **The goal is to find a photo that looks like you specifically took it for the presentation**, rather than to force a stock-looking image to do the job.

29. STOCK PHOTO DON'TS

There are definitely some "don'ts" when selecting a stock image. Don't use any image where the people are positioned unnaturally, i.e. looking at the camera or laughing at nothing. Also, beware of using a whole image without cropping or experimenting with the photo in some way to make sure it fits appropriately on the slide. In general, you want to avoid photos that don't match your demographic or overall tone, and just feel like they were inserted to be inserted.



30. LESS IS MORE

This concept is essential to any design philosophy, but especially to presentation design where the amount of space is limited.

FEWER DESIGN ELEMENTS
MEAN A CLEARER MESSAGE
AND AN EMPHASIS ON WHAT
ACTUALLY MATTERS.

Consider using a smaller palette of colors, selection of photos, or set of design accents on each slide. **You may find freedom in the simplicity,** especially when you don't have an entire internet full of fonts, colors, and images to choose from.

"A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but where there is nothing left to take away."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

31. THE LESSIG METHOD

Here's a presentation design philosophy to try out, created by Harvard University law professor Larry Lessig. The principle is simple: spend about 15 seconds on a slide rather than taking a minute to speak to it. He recommends balancing your use of text-only and image-only slides, but the most important thing is to **have only a single short idea and element per slide.**

32. THE TAKAHASHI METHOD

Say it all in black and white with the Takahashi Method, which is minimal to the very core. The philosophy designed by Japanese thought-leader Masoyoshi Takahashi is easy: **clean white backgrounds and an enormous piece of thick black text in a font of your choosing.** Sound dull? The art is found in the use of a single word on each slide, which gives the copy a huge boost.

33. THE GODIN METHOD

This image-centric presentation style created by marketer Seth Godin is all about using minimal words and never repeating yourself. Yes, never repeating yourself. His concern is with redundancy, when what is being said matches identically with the content on slide. Be sure to eliminate any design redundancies not only in the visuals of the presentation, but also within the verbiage of the content. In the end, **the speaker does the speaking and the slide does the showing.**

34. THE KAWASAKI METHOD

This design and content method created by thought leader Guy Kawasaki comes at you like a hurricane: **it's 10 slides delivered in 20 minutes with a 30-point font on each slide. 10-20-30.** That means that each slide needs to be perfectly calibrated to be digested in a little over a minute. If you want to give this method a try, your design should reflect a speedy pace, with large enough imagery to compliment the jumbo font on each slide.

"Graphical excellence is that which gives to the viewer the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time with the least ink in the smallest space."

-Edward R. Tufte

35. AVOIDING VISUAL CLICHES

It can be hard to pair high-level content with imagery that matches perfectly. That's why a lot of presentations fall victim to visual cliches like handshakes, people answering a phone and smiling, and a whole host of other tired stock images. **The best way to avoid a cliche is to apply a fresh visual theme throughout, based around a metaphor.** For example, choose a "growth" theme using plant images. Need a way to show an expanding client base? A vine creeping up a wall. Need a way to show a good connection? A garden filled with flowers. The more abstract it is, the more options you'll have to choose from.

36. PICKING A PALETTE

Before you start designing your presentation, decide on a limited palette of background and accent colors that you will use throughout. Limit yourself to around 3-5 colors to ensure that you won't clutter up your deck with too many shades. If you're lost, revisit Tip #26 about color theory, and look online for different resources about shades that go well together, and how to pick the right accent colors.

37. BULLET RULES

If a slide must have bullets, then sometimes it must. While we aren't advocates of these slide-stealing, soul-crushing lists, we also acknowledge that sometimes they exist for a reason. If you're designing a slide with bullets, **consider that they don't have to be listed at all.** Play around with different arrangements of the items on the slide. For example, making a map with each item represented as a separate destination, or showing each bullet laid out in a circle. Get creative with it! Bullets don't have to be a vertical affair.

"A plain circular bullet is widely disdained for its banality."

- Carolina de Bartolo

38. FULL BLEED IMAGERY

High-quality, full-bleed photos with some tasteful text overlay can transform a slide into a masterpiece. However, be sure that your full-bleed image is complementary to the shape and color of text so that your audience will be able to read it clearly. You may consider using the white space afforded by The Rule of Thirds (see Tip #27) to select and adjust your image appropriately in the background of the slide.

39. SAY IT WITH ICONS

Icons are a great way to approach high-level content on a slide when there are no specific photographs that would appropriately match the topic. They can also be used next to listed items (i.e. bullet points), or on header slides like a bold “stamp” of approval. Just be sure they fit with your specific industry and the overall style of your presentation.

THEN, SPRINKLE THEM SPARINGLY THROUGHOUT YOUR EXISTING DESIGN.

40. CHARTS AND GRAPHS



Sometimes there has to be a chart. No matter how much we want to avoid them, there simply is no other way to show a grouping of data. The best thing you can do is to avoid the dreaded screenshot of a chart or graph from an Excel document by designing your chart in another program entirely. It should also use the consistent palette colors you've chosen, and it doesn't have to be incredibly detailed. If the details of the chart or graph are supremely important, consider using a handout rather than putting all of that information on the slide itself.

"Less is not necessarily more. Just enough is more."

-Milton Glaser

41. APPEAL TO YOUR AUDIENCE

When an advertising agency seeks to land a big client deal, they transform into detectives. They learn everything to know about their audience: age, hobbies, likes, dislikes, political affiliations, favorite flavor of pizza, etc. The point of any purposeful pitch should be to appeal to specific audience needs, which can sometimes be very specific. Likewise, you should always put on a detective hat and **design with your audience's known preferences in mind**. All of your pictures should reflect their demographic, and all of the visual metaphors and other elements should appeal to their interests. Don't let your design be an unsolved mystery: put in the extra work!

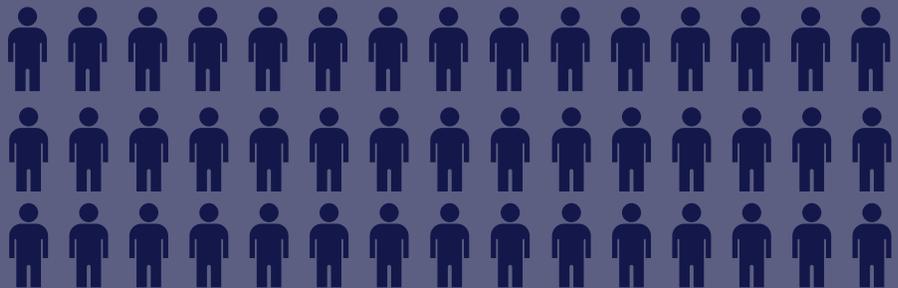
42. A WORD ON ACCENT COLORS

It's easy to allow bland design take over when you're worried about playing it safe or conservative. If you're only using a few of your brand colors which are found in your logo or current website, you're at risk of death by blandness. The word on accent colors is simple: **make sure you're using them**. Experiment with a dash of bright orange, red, yellow, hot pink, neon green...the list is endless. Just a small bit can help highlight important points on each slide and escape the blah.

43. PRESENTING DATA THE SMART WAY

So, you have a lot of data and you're not sure whether you should just copy-paste the whole thing onto a slide, create a chart, or pretend it doesn't exist. We believe that within every set of data, there is generally a way to summarize it using the most important figures, or even replacing the whole thing with a generalized statement. Consider even pulling the top three figures and giving them their own slide, thus preventing a visually overwhelmed audience.

100%
OF ETHOS3
EMPLOYEES
LOVE
PRESENTATIONS



44. SCALE UP

Presentations offer a unique design challenge because they are often consumed on a screen in front of seated audience members, vs. personally viewed on a smaller screen.

THIS MEANS THAT YOU NEED TO THINK BIG. REALLY BIG.

Scale up your fonts, boost the size of your icons, and make sure your images are high resolution enough to get bigger and bigger. The audience in the very back of the room should be able to see every line and texture.

"If you can't make it good, make it big!"

-Michael Rowley

45. VARY ALIGNMENT

Keeping all of your text, images, and other design elements completely centered on each slide is probably something Wes Anderson would do, but is generally a bad idea for the rest of us. Avoid sameness by changing up the alignment of your various elements. For example, ask a question in the top corner of one slide, and then place the answer text on the following slide in the bottom corner. Change things up a bit!



46. HIERARCHIES

Each slide will have an item of information, a word, or even an image that represents the most important concept or idea. Once you've locked in on exactly what the most essential element is, try designing around the item using a hierarchy of size, color, and placement. For instance, make a word bolder by making it the largest element, brightest color, or placing it front and center with all of the other words framing it.

47. MOODBOARDS

Need a little inspiration? Take a queue from our designers and consider creating a Moodboard that combines different visual elements you are drawn to for your particular project. This can include real-life magazine clippings, screenshots you've taken, examples from other presentations, and more. Place all of your inspirational pieces side-by-side to help give you some overall style direction.

48. INCREASE CONTRAST

Our first favorite word is "simplicity," and our second favorite word is "contrast." **Contrasting shapes, colors, and image vivacity is a fantastic way to add design interest and prevent your presentation from The Blah.** Contrast is also at the core of some pretty effective design philosophies (see: Tip #31-34). Mess around with different colors, levels of brightnesses, and the like to give your slides more "pop."

49. VIDEO AND IMAGES

In general, our advice is always to keep visual and video assets at the highest quality they can possibly be. Period. The only reason you may rebel against this advice is in the event that you need to be wary of file size. If you're running your presentation on unknown or older devices, our suggestion is to avoid any technical mishaps that may happen with tons of video and images. Keep it simple and consider: does your presentation really need a video if you can explain the topic in person?

50. IF ALL FAILS, HIRE A PRO

There is no shame in admitting defeat. If you can't quite get the design of your presentation to the place you want it to be, consider hiring a professional firm that specializes in presentations (hint: us). **We're here to help prevent another tearful all-nighter.**



CHAPTER 5



DELIVERING A PRESENTATION LIKE YOU WERE BORN TO DO



“Public speaking” is widely considered to be a bad word. Frankly, it’s terrifying. Marching in front of a group of people and then talking about something (anything) takes courage that few possess. Even incredible speakers suffer from hesitation and doubt before they walk on stage.

So, we aren’t hunting wild animals in a quicksand forest like our ancestors, but we do have to deliver a 30 minute talk on Quarter One.

Somehow, the talk is scarier.

You’re not crazy if you sweat profusely and have a panic attack before starting a presentation, but you are crazy if you don’t prepare. Preparation is the only way that you can work through the terror.

PREPARATION IS **EVERYTHING.**

Think of preparation like a secret Ace in your pocket, or Liquid Luck, or a magical rabbit’s foot, or a word of blessing from Mark Twain. **If you fully prepare, you’ll be able to deliver your presentation nearly on auto-pilot,** even if something goes horribly wrong.

The following collection of short tips and tricks won't do the preparation work for you, but they will definitely help. Trust us: this collection of knowledge has been built from 10+ years in the presentation training realm.

51. MOVEMENT

You have two enemies when it comes to moving around on stage: pacing and the podium. Too much pacing and you'll be a distraction, and hiding behind a podium doesn't convey confidence. Seek a balance by giving yourself freedom to move without the podium, yet still within a chunk of space that won't cause your audience to clearly turn their heads and follow your movement.



52. THE STARE DOWN

Eye contact is massively important.

It conveys confidence, it makes your audience feel included, and it makes you look engaged as a speaker. Break the room into three different directions to look at, and then spend time in each "quadrant" making brief yet meaningful contact (no evil glares, please) with people sitting throughout them.

53. START STRONG

The best presentations have attention-grabbing introductions accomplished through one of the following: a mighty quote, a personal story, an example story, or a hook sentence that startles. Don't just step on stage and explain what you want to do; give your audience a sentence pitch that helps reinforce why they are sitting in those ergonomic office chairs.

54. END STRONGER

The purpose of the opening is to grab your audience's attention for the duration of the talk. The purpose of a close is to keep them thinking about the talk long after it ends, which means it needs to be even more grabbing. Consider painting a vision of the future, ending with a moving story, including a potent call or action, or perhaps even finishing on a memorable quote. **It doesn't need to be perfect: it just needs to stick.**



55. QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS

Ask questions (hypothetical or not) to your audience throughout your presentation in order to connect them to the message. These questions can be big, small, life-changing, or mundane...just so long as they get your audience thinking about the topic at hand and imagining themselves within the larger picture.

56. ANTI-ANXIETY PRE-GAME

You are what you eat! Avoid stomach-churning food and drinks like caffeinated beverages, fried foods, alcohol, and sugar-free items, all of which tend to increase an anxious stomach. Instead, consider food and drinks that will fill you up or relax your stomach, like bananas, rice, toast, applesauce, hot un-caffeinated tea, and candied ginger.

“The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.”

- Lady Bird Johnson

57. HAND GESTURES GONE WRONG

On the whole, hand gestures are a perfect way to display your own energy and naturally show whole-body involvement with your subject matter. However, we recommend that you avoid aggressive pointing, flailing, and anything that might be seen as regionally offensive. Keep your pointing finger reserved for passenger seat navigation, and you should be fine.

58. DELIVERING A CALL TO ACTION

We’ve mentioned that a call to action is important within the content and design portion of your presentation (and it is!), but don’t forget to spice it up by adding extra emphasis to it during your delivery. Pause before you say it, pause after you say it, and be sure you’re making the best “this is important” face you have in your arsenal.

59. USING PAUSES LIKE A PRO

Some of the most powerful (and even a little spooky) speakers in the world use a pause to indicate an important moment within their speech, or simply to grab the audience's attention.

Silence is unnerving.

It makes the audience remember where they are and why they are there. Even if you need a moment to catch your breath and gather up your thoughts, consider using a pause in the place of an apology or an "um."

60. CUSTOMIZED

If you aren't planning to customize the presentation content and design for the audience, then it will fall on the strength of your delivery to address to make them feel special. This is akin to a band addressing the city they are touring in, only perhaps less cheesy. Consider an in-depth Q&A after your talk with questions specifically geared towards their needs, or some general opening remarks about their experience. **The more customized your delivery, the more potential there is for a meaningful connection.**



61. SPEED AND TONE

The debate rages: should you increase the volume of your voice until you sound like a tenor? Put on a dignified whisper? Try to use your inside voice? In general, your normal speaking voice will do just fine. The only thing to be wary of is the speed of your message, which tends to increase with nervousness. **The most effective remedy is practice, especially with a timer, a metronome, or a friend.**

62. PRACTICE STANDING

You already know the power of muscle memory, which gives you the strength to make coffee in the morning with 0% of your brain working. In the same way, if you practice your presentation standing up and moving around as you would during the actual event, it will increase your comfortability and can help you pull through the public speaking jitters.

63. CHUNK YOUR MESSAGE

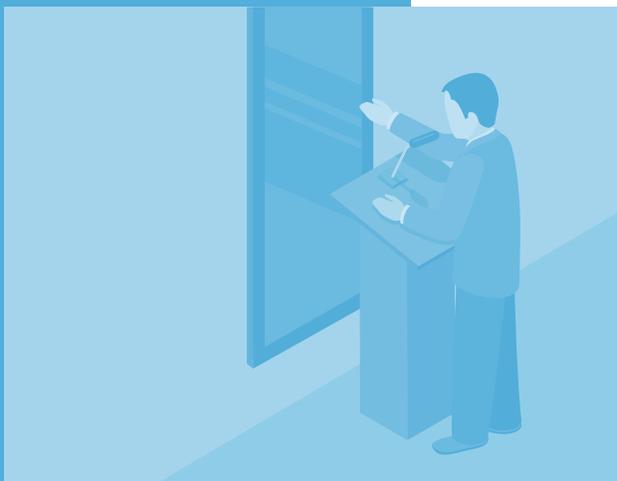
If you are delivering an especially long or content-heavy speech, break it all up into pieces as you rehearse and deliver. This starts by first creating sections, then breaking those sections into sentences, and then even breaking those sentences down into parts that can be individually practiced. Sometimes all you need to remember is a single point from which you can build on conversationally.

64. ELIMINATING UM'S

Word filler is a built-in part of the way we speak. It's the brain's way of giving our mouth a way to catch up with our thoughts, and generally isn't noticeable or annoying. If you feel like you're going overboard with "um's," then ditch memorization and stick to natural speaking styles like storytelling or an imaginary conversation. Becoming familiar with your content is also crucial, so your brain won't waste additional energy trying to conjure up what you've memorized.

Try familiarization, not memorization.

65. HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU REHEARSE?



There is no magical formula for every speaker, but we recommend you fully run through your presentation from start to finish seven to eight times in a similar environment as you will be speaking in. That means you should stand, use the materials you've created, and time yourself. It's important to get as close to the final product as possible, lest a technological mishap ruin the whole thing. **Read the intro again to remind yourself about the power of practice.**

66. THE ART OF SPEAKER'S NOTES

If you've followed our design and content tips to the letter, then the bulk of your content will be found tucked neatly within the speaker's notes rather than on-slide. Thus, we recommend practicing with them to your level of comfort, but only in places where the subject is complex and the numbers matter substantially.

67. A WORD ON APPEARANCES

If it jangles, causes prism rainbows, distracts, or inhibits movement, then don't wear it. Otherwise, allow your personal style to speak for you. Don't be afraid to wear something considered dangerously non-corporate so long as it reflects your personal brand. Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs didn't get to where they did worried about dress suits and ties.



68. THE BUDDY SYSTEM

It's a technique as old as time itself. It can help you correct poor pacing, gestures, and any other mistakes you may be blind to. The secret? Ask a friend to help you practice. The key is for the environment to be "feedback rich," which means they should be the kind of friend who is willing to be honest as well as in-depth.

69. Q&A TRICKS

Q&A sessions are best when drenched in encouragement. **You want to ensure that even the most off-the-wall question about how much sugar you like in your tea is responded with a “great question,” and then tied back to the main message.** Also, be sure to let your audience know that there will be a Q&A session before the presentation begins, which can help them collect their thoughts and come up with a meaningful question. You can't anticipate every question, but you can prevent some foolish ones.

“The very best financial presentation is one that’s well thought out and anticipates any questions... answering them in advance.”

- Arthur Helps

70. HANDLING HECKLERS

Sometimes there is a rotten hater in your barrel of apples. If this is the case, be sure to address them by asking them a question rather than a series of argumentative statements. Be mindful of your tone, speed, and volume of your voice. The quieter, cooler cucumber always wins. And finally, ask any particularly vicious heckler to speak with you after the event, but do so with enthusiasm and kindness verses “let’s rumble in the parking lot later.” Instead, say something like “I would be happy to address your concerns in depth after the talk.”

71. VISUALIZATION

This method of practice doesn't require a timer, fancy equipment, or your presentation notes. It entails simply sitting down before the event and mentally running through your entire plan from beginning to end. Picture the stage or podium, imagine setting up your equipment, and mentally run through your delivery. This meditative technique can help calm jittery nerves for the same reasons we dream about a big event over and over before it occurs.

72. WORKIN' OUT TO WORK OUT

If you have a few hours before your big delivery, how about a run? The endorphins released when you exercise can last for hours after the workout, and can give you the extra confidence and energy you need to deliver a great presentation. And if they don't? You did something healthy and probably burned off a bagel from your continental breakfast.



73. BE SUPERSTITIOUS

If you've got a lucky hat, pin, or sock, then don't be shy to wear it during your delivery. Tokens of good luck may not have actual value, but they tend to work as effective placebo. **Don't be ashamed to throw a little magic in your game.**

74. THE FIRST MINUTE

Most of the hard work in a presentation relies heavily on that first minute of presenting. The audience is getting to know you, you're getting to know them, and most of the technological issues are bound to happen regardless of anyone getting to know anyone. Give that first minute the most attention and practice in order to see the most results.

"No one ever complains about a speech being too short!"

-Ira Hayes

75. HIRE A COACH

If your anxiety is big and the stakes are bigger, there's no shame in hiring a presentation or public speaking coach to help pull you through. We offer presentation training services for groups, but there are probably individualized options in your area with a little keen online searching. The extra push may help you overcome anxiety and refine your overall techniques for presentations in the future.

CHAPTER 6



NETWORKING AFTER YOUR PRESENTATION



You've done it!

You delivered a great presentation because you carefully followed our advice for content, design, and delivery. You've outclassed your former self and have emerged like a beautiful butterfly.

This next chapter will cover some important things that can (and should!) happen after a presentation takes place: **networking**. Just a small bit of chit chat with your audience can lead to some valuable insights about how you did, and help to sharpen your skills in the future.

But most importantly, **it's about making a long-lasting impression on your audience**. This means they'll remember your message, act on your call to action, follow up with digital contact later, and maybe even send you a Christmas card in the mail.

HERE ARE SOME TRICKS TO HELP GET YOU THAT MUCH-DESIRED MERRY CHRISTMAS.

76. BE AVAILABLE

Schedule time after your presentation to stick around and talk with the audience, even if it's only for fifteen minutes. **Your audience is a great resource, so don't waste it by doing a "dine and ditch."** Consider this time as your extended Q&A for in-depth questions, even if it means you're spending a little time educating and sharing rather than getting a few pat-on-the-backs for yourself.

77. CREATE A GOAL

You already know what you want to accomplish with your presentation: roaring applause, fifty signatures, a million dollar funding, etc. Likewise, **create a goal for yourself when networking**. Do you want to make three strong connections? Collect ten business cards? Talk to at least six people? Create a mental to-do list and tackle it after you deliver.

78. LISTEN

One of the most important things a networker can be is a careful, respectful listener. No one wants to keep a conversation going with someone who steps over them, especially after a presentation where you've already had time to pitch yourself and your ideas. Learn the art of asking, patiently listening, and following up only when the time is right.

"Successful communication depends on how well we listen, rather than how well we push our opinions on the person seated before us."

-Kenya Hara

79. AVOID A SALES PITCH

Although it seems counter-intuitive, **networking isn't about selling yourself**. It's about making connections and starting conversations to be continued later. You've already shared your ideas, and your call to action should be clear enough that any conversations which follow don't require Presentation: Round Two.

80. FOLLOW THROUGH

This is a pretty simple concept with a low execution rate: if you receive an email address, business card, phone number, or anything during your time post-presentation, then make sure you follow up with that person within a week's time afterwards.

81. TIE UP LOOSE ENDS

If someone asked a question during your presentation or had some comments, address them specifically after the talk. This is also a follow-through on Tip #70 about hecklers. Don't let them leave the room without having a respectful discussion about their concerns, and see if you can reach an agreement before everyone else has left.

82. SET A TIME LIMIT

If you're nervous about networking, it can be helpful to set a mental time limit so you don't feel trapped in a whole afternoon of beauty queen smiles. It doesn't have to be a long time, either, just as long as it takes to show that you are available for questions and comments. **Start with a minimum of 15 minutes, and set your goal time from there.**

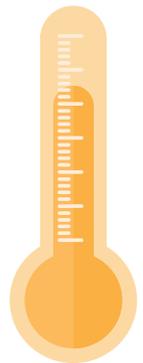


83. GATHER FEEDBACK

If you don't want to use the time after your presentation for networking, say you work with everyone who saw the presentation for instance, then you should devote this time to gather verbal feedback about the deck and your delivery. **Ask a few pointed questions such as: "did you feel convinced?" and "was there anything you felt unclear about?"**

84. GAUGE THE TEMPERATURE

If you really, really don't have time to network, sometimes all you'll need to gauge the reaction to your presentation is a keen set of observation skills and perhaps even a short handout survey. You could also use your call to action to encourage a feedback email, providing them with your address on the final slide.



85. LEARN FROM YOUR (INEVITABLE) MISTAKES

Your presentation isn't going to be perfect. Videos won't load, you'll forget a point, or you'll completely ditch networking and run off to lunch afterwards. Conclude your presentation with a self-survey, listing the good, the bad, and the mediocre. Revisit the list before your next presentation, learn from it, and move on.

"Speak clearly, if you speak at all; carve every word before you let it fall."

-Oliver Wendell Holmes

CHAPTER 7



CLEVER WAYS TO RECYCLE YOUR CONTENT & DESIGN



When the smoke clears, the audience leaves, and the balloons have been deflated, all that remains is you and the beautifully designed presentation that you've worked so hard to create. **Is this it?** You may wonder fearfully. After all this hard work, all I have is a PowerPoint file and some memories?

Not true!

There are loads of different ways to use an existing presentation for content marketing purposes or other various reasons. This chapter already assumes that you are working within some kind of self-branding or corporate-branding space: i.e., anything that you built for work can be used for work.

A presentation never has to die. It can live on forever in the digital realm, or live again in the form of a new presentation.

A PHOENIX FROM THE ASHES! A MIRACLE!



One thing we mistakenly learned from school is that once a paper or project is done and you've been graded, it's all over. You've accomplished your task and you can wipe your hands clean. We encourage you to take a hoarder's approach to presentations:

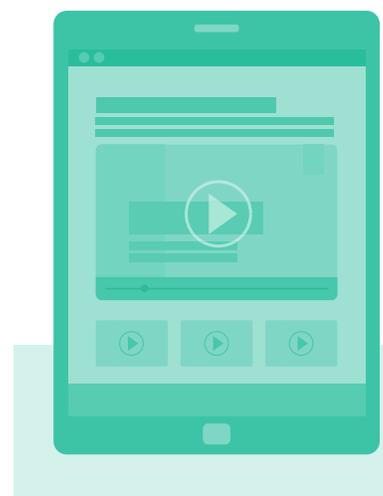
Keep everything.

All of your notes, design images, slides...everything.

HERE ARE 13 DIFFERENT THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR PRESENTATION AFTER THE CURTAIN FALLS.

86. SLIDESHARE

SlideShare is the place for people to upload presentations and share them with others online. Right now, it's the top site for social presentation sharing. All you have to do is create a profile, upload your file, and share the link. The site accommodates all varieties of presentations, and if you're lucky enough, your deck may even be featured on the home page.



87. LINKEDIN

If your presentation is relevant to your industry, choose a few of your best standalone slides to upload by themselves as images on your LinkedIn feed. This could include a quote slide, a great chart, or just an inspiring sentence from your original deck. LinkedIn also accommodates links directly from SlideShare, provided that you have your presentation uploaded there. Finally, put a few slides or a link to your whole deck directly onto your personal page **to show off your content and design chops.**

88. FACEBOOK

Facebook is a great place to upload individual slides right onto your company's page. Their "EdgeRank" system prefers images that you upload directly verses links to outside websites, and these images will tend to be seen by more people in the News Feed. Pick a few slides that represent high level ideas from the presentation (and also look great) to give your fans an inside-scoop about your company or any upcoming offerings.

89. TWITTER

The short character requirements make it tricky to share presentation slides, because you won't have room to explain much. We recommend that you use Twitter to link to existing presentations uploaded on SlideShare, with a brief "teaser" text to encourage people to click and learn more about it.

90. OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn...these are currently the Kings of Social Media. But in the event that something else huge comes to knock them off their throne, just be mindful that social media is the best way to gain traction on the ideas in your presentation.

Share! Share often!

Break the whole thing up into individual slides and edit them in order to become individual content marketing pieces that stand alone.

92. TEMPLATES

If you designed your presentation directly into the software (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.), then the whole piece can be used as a template for future designs. Remove any content-specific elements, slap on some placeholder text, and keep the entire piece for future use.

You wouldn't throw away Thanksgiving leftovers, so why throw away a perfectly good presentation?

93. INFOGRAPHICS

Have you considered gathering up important facts and stats from your presentation and making an infographic from them? If you don't have the design resources to do so, you can always outsource your efforts. The important thing is that you have the information to work from right at your fingertips within a presentation.

94. PURPOSE-DRIVEN EMAIL

If your content marketing strategy include blast emails, a presentation is a perfect way to spread the word. Link to your SlideShare presentation or simply send an image of one good summary slide. You can also use the text of the email to give that slide more context or act as a "trailer" for the SlideShare post in full.

95. COMPANY OVERVIEW

The question you should ask yourself after every completed presentation is: can I convert it? If you don't already have a company overview presentation to easily share with prospective clients and interested people, consider using your opening and closing narrative within the existing deck to create a short overview of what you do.

96. PITCH PRESENTATION

Using a similar Frankenstein technique from Tip #95, your run-of-the mill presentation can be transformed into a pitch deck. Reuse your opening and core material, but edit the content at the end of the presentation depending on your changing call-to-action. Back it up with some supporting information, and voila! A pitch presentation you didn't know you already had.



97. EBOOK INSPIRATION

We know content marketing can feel like an enormous, uphill struggle to climb Content Mountain. If you're looking for inspiration for an eBook, consider your humble presentation. What was the motivation behind it? How can you translate that into an eBook? Use each slide as supplementary visuals throughout the text, and there you have it: a download-friendly eBook ready for your audience.

98 WEBINAR

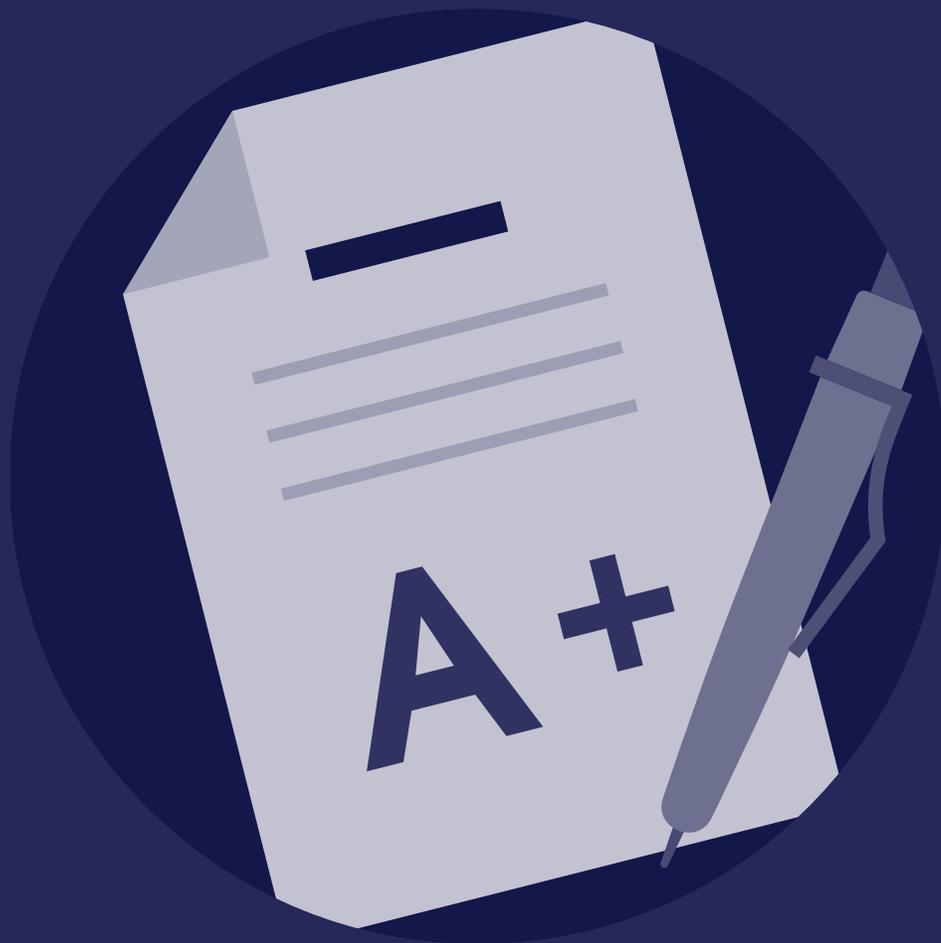
Widen the audience to your presentation to include the hundreds of millions of people online by uploading a webinar version of your presentation to a video hosting site. All of the prior uses for the presentation (see Tips #86-90) can now be used to host and feature your video.

99 MOODBOARD POTENTIAL

Don't let the best parts of your presentation design die: reuse slides and design elements to create another visual moodboard for your next deck. You can start building your own brand of design style using inspiration from the existing colors, fonts, and photos.



CHAPTER 8



YOU'VE BEEN SCHOOLED



That's it. That's all. You've read 99 tips about presentations covering all of the things you never learned in school. In our mind, you've graduated with honors.

While these tips are meant to be short and sweet, you can find a wealth of content with greater detail on **ethos3.com/blog**

If you're ever stuck emotionally, creatively, or maybe even physically as you work on your next big presentation, **give us a shout at start@ethos3.com**

We hope that these tips will help you write, design, and deliver a pretty incredible presentation next time, regardless of your former education.

NOW, GET OUT THERE AND SCHOOL YOUR AUDIENCE!

