



THE POWER OF THINKING, ACTING & DELIVERING DIFFERENTLY

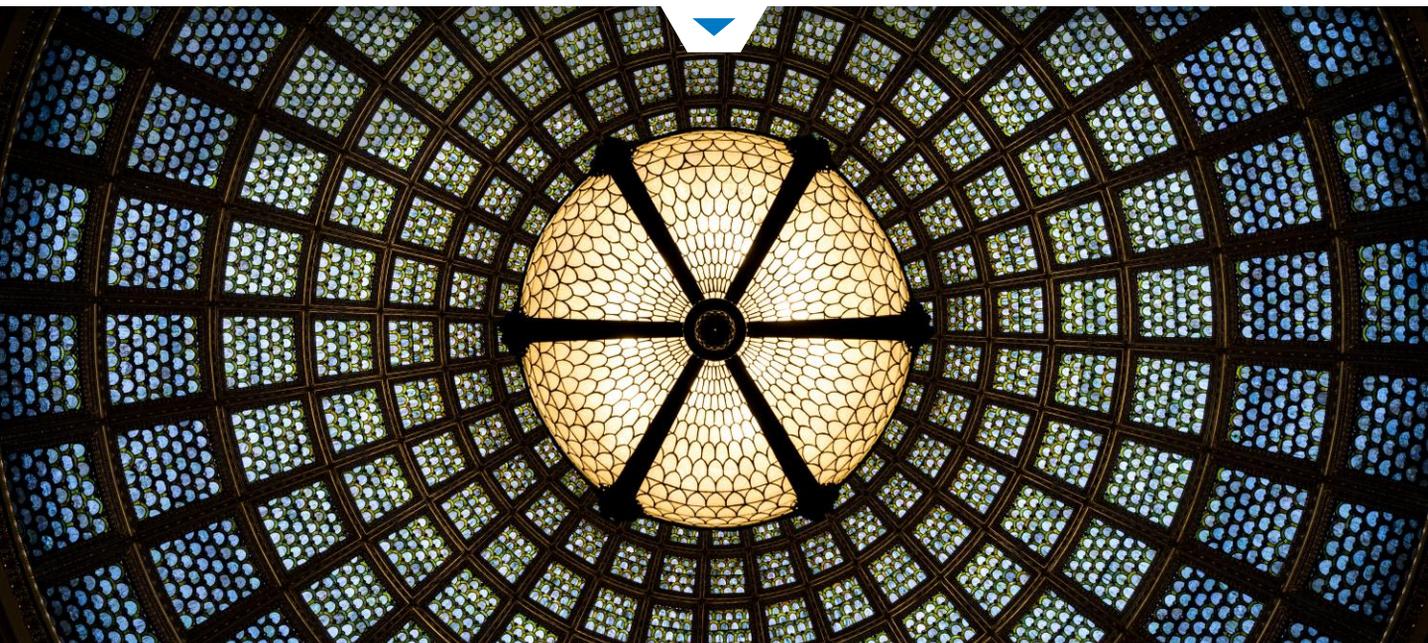
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Business presentations are in crisis...and have been for years.

A bold statement but one that I think holds up to scrutiny. Just how many years have we talked about Death by PowerPoint? Or how tools like PowerPoint and Apple's Keynote are dumbing down business communication? Take a look through any business journal and there will be article upon article on how to rid yourself of the scourge of over-reliance on PowerPoint and to approach life free of slideware. Indeed, some large organisations, Amazon and Diageo to name but two, have publicly stated they are pushing aside PowerPoint and trying to find other ways of communicating ideas within their organisations. These two companies sum up

a general sense across different industries, sectors and geographies, of people looking to 'do presentations' differently.

We should celebrate the enthusiasm people show to make the change. Look at how slavishly business people follow best practise gleaned from TED talks or from renowned orators like Steve Jobs. Then, of course, there is new software like Prezi that has been specifically developed to try and address the perceived shortcomings of tools like PowerPoint. Add to that numerous books, podcasts, blogs and YouTube videos all trying to get people to improve the way they wrangle with everything slide related. In short, it's all rather well-intentioned but steadfastly chaotic.



So now for the good news. My experience of having worked with organisations of all shapes and sizes across the world points to the fact that fixing this long-standing issue is actually a whole lot simpler than it might

originally seem. We've just got to start doing things a little bit differently. It's time to Think, Act and Deliver our presentations in a different way.

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In terms of thinking, we need to recognise the privilege of presenting in the first place. There is no getting away from the stark fact that your audience could be doing something differently with their time, rather than sat listening to you as a presenter. Once you have this simple equation foremost in your mind, it is very very difficult to 'sleepwalk' your way your next presentation. Sadly, too many presentations are created on the fly, created with little to no preparation and a pitiful level of consideration of an audience. By recognising the privilege of presenting, you will naturally be prompted to carefully consider your audience and importantly, what you want to get out of the presentation. Put bluntly, what message do you want them to take away with them?

Once you've thought differently, then you can start Acting differently - how you plan, structure and visualise your presentation. So rather than creating a Frankenstein's monster of a PowerPoint deck, something we call Presentationstein, actually take a step back, start planning your story on paper and build a presentation that truly engages an audience, prompting them to do something differently.

Finally, think about how you might be able to Deliver your information differently. This is where the new technology that has come as a result of people's frustrations with well-established programmes like PowerPoint can really help. Now don't get me wrong - I'm a huge fan of PowerPoint when it's used appropriately...but sadly this is a rare treat. So, look for life beyond death by PowerPoint and consider some of the other options available to presenters; Prezi, Keynote, tablets or even using your phone to get your message across. Equally, 'going analogue' and presenting information using nothing more than a pad and a pen, or maybe a whiteboard, are also great ways of engaging with your audience differently.

But now for the caveat - before rushing to equip yourself with a new set of technologies and techniques, it is vital that you ensure the tool you use is appropriate. This 'blended presenting' concept is dependent on the type of audience you are talking to and the reason they're listening to you in the first place. If in doubt, put yourself in the shoes of your audience and question what would help you engage with the presenter and their message.

My final point is perhaps the biggest mental hurdle to navigate. Despite all the well-intentioned noise and chaos that surround them, presentations are fundamentally simple things. They are about an exchange of ideas, prompting action from an audience and ensuring that a key message is retained and can be delivered beyond the meeting room. Perhaps you, like millions of other well-meaning presenters, have made the business of presentations a little more complex than it needs to be..?



GET IN TOUCH

For advice and support in ensuring your presentation delivers your results in an effective and engaging way, please do get in touch – we'd be only too happy to help.



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