

Stand Out from
the Crowd



5 Ways to

WOW!



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1. | Think Suit Then Cufflinks



You have a super-important presentation coming up and you want to look the part.

So, you go shopping. Would you buy a pair of cufflinks and then go and look for a suit and shirt to match? Or buy ear-rings and then go looking for a dress to match?

Of course you wouldn't! There is an order for doing things when shopping. Likewise, when presenting, there is an order too.

You need to get your content completed. Then, and only then, do you accessorise it with your slides. The PowerPoint is really the visual aid, the final touch to help make your message memorable.

Now this might sound pretty basic, but it can be the difference between an awful presentation and an awesome presentation.

So, the next time you have to give a presentation, think outfit then accessorise i.e. **content then slides**.

2. | Love Your Lovely Slides

Now from the previous point, you might think I am anti PowerPoint. I certainly am not! However, I really detest poor slides and the damage they can do to some presenters and their presentations.

When you have good slides you can really make your audience happy. But when they are poor, really poor – well, they just make your listeners sad at best and annoyed at worst!



So, consider making your slides even lovelier than they already are. Consider investing in professional slides if you are giving a presentation that has the potential to have a big impact on you or your company. If you are presenting a product worth tens of thousands of euros or dollars – a small fraction of this will get you a top class slide deck.

Why not ask your branding agency to create a deck for you? Alternatively, you might prefer to find a local slide guru. Here in Dublin we have the guru Ed Fidgeon Kavanagh of www.Clearpreso.com. Ed has the Midas touch when it comes to slides. He has a particular expertise in helping companies to create clear crisp slides that help simplify their message.

Even if you don't get professional help, always keep your slides crisp and clear. Sometimes, when I work with clients, they can become a little bit obsessed with keeping the number of slides low.

Don't suffer from slide clutter! If a slide is cluttered, break it into several clearer slides. **Better to have more slides that are really clear, rather than fewer slides that are over-crowded.**

It is often a good idea to have more than one version of the slides. A pared back version that you present from will keep things easy on the eyes of your audience. Then use a more detailed version as a hand-out.

Whether you opt for one version or multiple versions – make sure that your lovely slides add to your impact and help you stand out from the crowd.

3. | No Eminem

This was an expression recently acquired from Emma Sutton of www.nakedpresenting.co.uk. I have endorsed the same thought but Emma has put it so much more eloquently!

You might know the song by Eminem – “My name is., my name is.”. repeat ad nauseam!



Well, No Eminem relates to not starting your presentation with the words “My name is”.

Why not? I hear you ask.

Because that’s how 90% of people start their presentations. You don’t want to be predictable – you want to stand out, so **do something different!**

Of course you can state your name, if the audience don't know it or you haven't been introduced. But it really should not be your opening words. The purpose of your opening should be to grab their attention, get their mind off whatever it was on before coming to your presentation, and set a sense of expectation that your presentation will be worth listening to.

You can open by asking a question, taking something topical and relating it to your presentation, use a quote or maybe sharing a fascinating fact.

Then when you have hooked them in ... tell them your name, if you must!

4. | Be Like a Mini Skirt



You may have heard the expression - your presentation should be like a mini skirt. Long enough to cover the essentials and short enough to keep them interested.

There really is beauty in brevity – particularly as our attention spans are getting shorter and shorter.

In May 2015, Microsoft produced results of research that showed people generally lose concentration after eight seconds – that is one second shorter than a goldfish! Pretty stunning, when you think about it. Apparently this is because of the impact of an increasingly digitalized lifestyle on the brain.

Someone who didn't appreciate the beauty in brevity was William Henry Harrison. He was the 9th President of the United States.

William Henry Harrison was unique in several ways including serving the shortest term and giving the longest inaugural speech. Believe it or not the points are linked.

William Henry Harrison gave his speech on an extremely cold winter's day and he wasn't wearing an overcoat. His speech lasted an excruciating 1 hour and 45 mins (Barrack Obama's first acceptance speech lasted 18:39 mins). He died 32 days later of pneumonia. I'm not saying that a long speech or presentation will necessarily kill you – but it is likely to kill your chances of standing out from the crowd in a positive way.

It's interesting that Obama's speech was around the 18 minute mark.



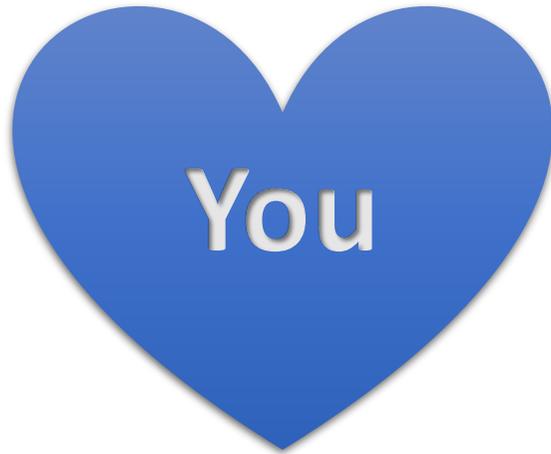
For those of you familiar with TED talks you will know that the maximum length of these inspiring talks is 18 mins. According to Chris Anderson, TED curator, 18 mins is long enough to be serious but short enough to hold people's attention.

Why are presentations always allocated in units of 10? 10 mins, 30 mins, 60 mins? Why don't you break the mould and make your next presentation an unusual number of minutes? Maybe you could suggest at your next weekly meeting or huddle, that everyone presents in a shorter, less round number of minutes?

Could you imagine how pleased people would be if your presentation finished a few minutes earlier than normal? Think of all the man hours that would be saved weekly, monthly and annually... **start the mini skirt revolution!**

5. | It's Not Me – It's You!

We have saved the best till last with this nugget.



Think about your own thoughts when listening to someone speak. You are probably generally interested in what they have to say. However, you are more likely to be interested in what the implications of their message are for you. So, when you are speaking, include the word you or your wherever you can.

We mentioned William Henry Harrison, the 9th U.S. President – with the longest ever inaugural speech. He said the word “I” 46 times and the word “**you**” a mere 4 times. Contrast this to Obama’s 2008 speech. He used the word “I” 32 times and the word “you” 33 times.

When you are practising your presentation, record yourself. When you listen back, check for the “I” versus “you” ratio. Make sure that it is an absolute minimum of 1:1. If there is an inordinate number of I’s, look for opportunities to either remove them or replace them with “you” or maybe even a “we”.

If you look at even the first sentence in this document.

“
***You** have a super-important presentation coming up and **you** want to look the part.*”

It is a bit more interesting than:

“
When I have an important presentation coming up I want to look the part.”

I think it is fair enough to say that you are not as interested in my presentations as your own!

Your audience are the same when they are listening to you. Their concerns, their issues and their world is more important to them than yours. Keep this in mind and remind yourself that it is “not you – it is them”.

So the next time you have to get on your feet and give a presentation – remember these pointers and **you** might indeed, **stand out from the crowd!**

P.S. For more tips on all things presenting – check out our blog www.onyourfeet.ie/blog