

2. Content

Without content there is no presentation. Open **not Powerpoint!** In fact, never start at the computer. The first phase is a phase of discovery, ideas and experimentation. Anything goes. To stimulate the creative process, it works best to start with a large sheet, a whiteboard or plenty of sheets of paper. Begin by setting out the content in keywords. Which points must and can be made? Think of images to go with them. A chart, an attractive image, a technical illustration. Sketch these out on the sheet too. Give yourself free rein. Think while scribbling and drawing.

Carlijn could start by putting the name of the project in the middle of the sheet. Around it, key words: what needs to be said about it all? Sketches of nice clips or photos to show. Bas can start with the name of the new tool in the middle. Around it, key words, benefits, development, images, cross-sections.

The next step is to think up stories and examples. An audience remembers a story or an example far better than a stream of factually presented information. If a good opening or closing line or an anecdote comes to mind, write it down straight away! With examples and stories you can show your enthusiasm to the audience. Make it personal (if possible), show your passion. This works very well to involve the audience in your presentation. Take Bas: as an IT specialist, not the most obvious person when it comes to personal passion. What he does is very abstract for his audience. If he tells them what it was like to get his tool working, or what the circumstances were at the time ('I jumped up in delight and knocked over my coffee. It ran straight into my PC, which promptly burnt out! But nothing could spoil my joy; I ran around chuckling with the smell of burning in the background! Kees from the accounts department thought I had gone mad. '), it is easy for the audience to feel connected to him and to make a connection with what Bas does.

With all these ideas, stories and images to hand, it is time to devise a structure. A structure is very important. Bear in mind that an excess of information does not work. Nor should you branch off in all directions in your presentation. For everything you intend to say, consider whether it really contributes to your message and to the connection with the audience. If not, delete it. Simplicity of message is your aim.

Simplicity and a tight, clear structure should be the basis of every presentation. You achieve this by having a clear idea of exactly what you are going to say and then applying the Hamburger method. The Hamburger method means that you first say what you are going to do, then you deliver the content (the meat part), after which you close by summarising what you have just said. However, living on hamburgers alone is unhealthy. Make sure there is variety! You do this by considering, within your structure, where there is room for a story, an example, a video or visual images.

With the structure in mind, you can start writing out the presentation. **Not in Powerpoint**, but in a word processor or on paper. Lay out all your material around you, with the structure closest to hand so that you can glance at it quickly. It is usually most pleasant to start with the 'meat' of your story. The middle section. Write in spoken language. Avoid long sentences and long words. Do not use words the audience does not know. (Bas needs to watch out for this!) After that you can turn to the introduction and the closing. In the introduction it is important to introduce yourself and to say what the audience can expect: how long the presentation will last, what you are going to talk about, and ideally you also want a good opener. A good first impression can generate a great deal of goodwill among the audience. Do not force anything, though, and do not come up with something you do not stand behind. Given the sensitive subject, Michel had better not open with a joke about redundancies. Bas, as a typical nerd, should not try to make an overly slick remark as an opener. Keep it personal and do what suits you.

For presentations intended to persuade people, such as Carlijn's, it is important to tell the audience in the introduction straight away what they stand to gain from listening to the presentation. 'This is your chance to make a unique project possible, one that will shed light on major social problem "X" and cause quite a stir.' Keep the introduction short and to the point.

Ideally you want a spectacular ending. If something comes to you: use it. In the closing, at the very least briefly say what you have told them and what you want the audience to take away from your talk. There is one thing that will always be appreciated: finish slightly earlier than you said you would. Do **never** go on longer. The audience has geared itself up for a certain length of time and will become tired and restless if they have to listen for longer.

Exercises: Content

1. Use a whiteboard or a large sheet of white paper. In the middle, write a key word, key image or (provisional) title of your presentation. Now write everything you could or would like to use in the presentation around it in key words. If you have ideas for visual support, sketch them next to the key words they belong with. Start with this and keep going until you have no further ideas. Then wait a day and add anything else that comes to mind for content or an extra image. This way of working is called '[mindmapping](#)'.
2. Think of stories, examples and anecdotes. Come up with as many of these little stories as you can. Don't hold back and don't judge yourself. Sketch them out next to the keywords they belong with. Draw most of your inspiration from personal stories and examples. (You don't have to use them in the final version.) You can also think of widely known examples, sayings or events. Write down as much as you can. Wait a day and add each new idea as it comes to you.

3. Take an A4 sheet. Look at the sheet you already have. Now set out a structure in blocks on the new sheet. Write down what you want to begin with, what order you are going to use, where you finish, and what definitely has to be included. Select which stories/examples and which images you want to use and where. Look at the structure and assess each element on its function. Does it contribute to conveying the message of the talk? Be strict here: is it really necessary? Is the structure clear and unambiguous? Take plenty of time to arrive at a simple and clear structure. Use several A4 sheets. Check in the structure whether there is already enough variation in the presentation. Also note down all your ideas for visual support. Which images/graphs/videos belong where? Vary between story, example, graph, arguments, video and so on.
4. Write out your presentation using a word processor. Most people find it easiest to start with the middle section and only do the introduction and conclusion later. Think of the hamburger method: first say what you are going to say, then deliver your message, and finish with a summary of what you have said. Write in spoken language. Bear in mind the background knowledge of your audience. In long presentations, summarise along the way where you are in your story. Work in your stories and examples. Read your sentences aloud to hear how they sound as spoken language.
5. The better you master the material, the structure and the key points of your presentation, the fewer nerves you will have. How well do you know the content by now? Summarise the content of your presentation in one key sentence. (Note: this is a different sentence from the objective sentence in the previous chapter.) An example for Carlijn. Her objective is: persuading financial backers to invest in the film. Her content could be: this film will be the most innovative and most talked-about film of the year.
6. The elevator test. Summarise your presentation in 30-45 seconds. The name of this exercise comes from the following scenario: suppose you have the chance to tell your story to a very important person, but you only have the length of a lift ride. You have to do it in 30 seconds! It may not apply to you, but always do this exercise. It forces you to present your content concisely, to focus on the most important points, and you become increasingly familiar with your material.