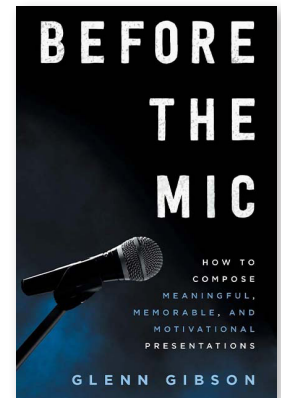


Before the Mic

How to Compose Meaningful, Memorable, and Motivational Presentations

by **Glenn Gibson**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Over the years, Glenn Gibson has built a career of writing presentations, composing thousands of them and seeing them delivered to audiences numbering into the thousands.

He's honed a repeatable methodology used to write all of his presentations, along with a range of tools, tricks, and templates to help create the words and visuals quickly while working on multiple projects and presentations simultaneously. He's trained hundreds of executives and sales professionals using this methodology, and it has been used to write keynotes, sales pitches, board presentations, and even eulogies, commencements, and wedding speeches.

Now, this methodology is available in *Before the Mic*, an in-depth guide that provides methods for creating meaningful, memorable, and motivational presentations that follow a proven structure designed for maximum impact.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- The aMMMazing method for creating presentations that are meaningful, memorable, and motivational.
- The JAM method for creating your presentation from first brainstorming to finished, polished product.
- How tools like the rule of threes can make your presentation more meaningful and memorable.
- How to structure the introduction, body, and conclusion of your presentation.

Introduction

How do you feel when you are standing before the mic and about to begin speaking in front of a room full of people?

Perhaps you don't present very often and the idea of public speaking fills you with dread. Or, on the other end of the spectrum, maybe you present all the time and you feel totally comfortable commanding the attention of a room or a video conferencing session. What if you learned that how you feel about speaking in front of an audience is irrelevant as to whether you can be effective at it or not?

The aMMMazing Presentation Theory

The three Ms in aMMMazing represent the three hallmarks of exceptional presentations: meaningful, memorable, and motivational. A truly great presentation is all three of these things.

The three Ms mean that we are proactively involving the audience in multiple ways. We are trying to reach their heart by creating something meaningful for them. We are trying to involve their brain by structuring and presenting our information in a way that will make it memorable. We are also trying to influence our listeners' actions as we strive to motivate them.

We could say that the opposite of an ammmazing presentation is a BAD presentation: Boring And Dull. BAD presentations are forgettable because they can't connect with the audience and often overwhelm the listeners with too much information, audibly and visually.

The First M: Meaningful

How do we ensure that our presentations are meaningful to our audience? Here's the principle we should keep in mind whenever we have a new presentation to create: Ask questions first, create content later. It should be 'ready, aim fire!' instead of 'ready, fire, aim.'

There are three simple (but essential) questions to ask that will help you figure out what your audience wants to hear:

Who is my audience?

What do they care about?

What do I want them to do?

The answers to these questions help you to channel your thought process to include the right content in your

presentation.

The Second M: Memorable

If you want to write memorable presentations, the first thing you need to embrace is this reality: your audience will not remember everything that you say. Embracing this reality is one of the most liberating concepts of all when it comes to writing presentations. Why? Because once you embrace this concept, you can take control of it.

You will realize that adding specific memory-aiding techniques to your presentation is a really good idea—techniques like mnemonics (creating acronyms) and repetition.

The Third M: Motivational

The last M in an aMMMazing presentation is where we need to ensure that our representation motivates our audience to do the goal that you identified for them.

If you have gone through the process of selecting only the most meaningful information to accomplish that goal and have applied the rule of three and other techniques to make it memorable, then your presentation will be inherently motivational to your audience.

Secrets of Structure

The concept of structure is one of the most fundamental, and often most overlooked, elements of presentations. To understand the value of having a clear structure, consider songwriting. There's a repeatable structure within songs that has been in use from the Beatles to U2 to Ed Sheeran. It often goes Verse-Chorus-Verse-Chorus-Bridge-Chorus.

Notice how the rule of three applies to this classic structure, with three choruses separated by verses and a bridge. Similarly, presentations that are easy on the ear have a clear three-part structure. They have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

A Meaningful Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is to establish why the topic is meaningful to your audience and set up the rest of your presentation. Your introduction is your opportunity to grab your listeners' attention and make them care about the information you are about to deliver. How long do you have to do this? Well, quick Google search will provide you with a range of answers, from 2.7 seconds to 15 seconds. Without getting into the well-researched data around each

number, the point is that you have mere seconds to grab the attention of your audience, not minutes. You have to say enough in the opening seconds of your presentation to grab their attention and make them want to listen to everything else you are going to say.

A Memorable Body

The purpose of the presentation body is to present your content in a memorable way. This is the part where you get into the main content of your material—the middle ‘tell them’ in the ‘tell them, tell them, tell them’ principle. The body of your presentation is where you will cover the most information and should be arranged around three main topics, should be easy to follow, and should include just the right amount of information. Not too much, and not too little.

If you are using visuals, ensure they appropriately support the words being spoken. Meanwhile, make your three main points clear, and fill your time with the appropriate amount of supporting detail. Allocate an appropriate amount of time for the information without rushing or skipping slides.

A Motivational Conclusion

There are three keys to a motivational conclusion—summarizing your main points, managing questions, and including a call to action.

When summarizing your main points, make it clear that the body of the presentation is over and the conclusion has now begun. Include a brief summary of all the key points discussed, and close the loop by revisiting the analogy, story, quote, and so-on used in the introduction.

When managing questions, allow time for questions only when appropriate. Anticipate difficult questions and have a strategy to handle them. Prepare a strong closing statement to share after questions have concluded.

Finally, include a call to action. Specify it with clarity and outline next steps, what to do, who to contact, and where to get more information. Provide a one-page summary of key ideas as a handout, rather than the entire slide deck.

The JAM Session Writing Process

The J: Jot Everything Down

The first phase of the JAM process involves setting aside time to gather and generate all of the content that will make up your presentation. There are a lot of methodol-

ogies and tools out there to help facilitate brainstorming and creative-thinking sessions. Without exploring the various benefits of the concepts of ‘mind mapping,’ ‘thinking hats,’ and ‘lateral thinking techniques,’ there’s one concept that works every time.

To help you think creatively, use drawing tools, not writing or typing tools. These tools are designed to capture ideas as quickly as your mind thinks of them, without interrupting your thought process. Once you’ve done this, you can structure your ideas into an outline and create an initial script to work from.

The A: Articulate Your Words

You need to speak aloud while you are writing your presentation. Not after it’s written, not when you’re rehearsing the final script—while you’re writing it. When you say your presentation out loud, you will want to make changes. By embracing this fact, you can use it to your advantage rather than feeling frustrated that you are making changes after you thought you were done.

When you speak out loud, you will hear what your ideas sound like. You can observe how well your information flows and how long it takes to cover everything you want. Then you can keep the things that sound good, ditch the things that don’t, and change the things that need to be changed. Simply repeat this process until you’ve honed the speaking portion of your presentation into a well-oiled machine.

The M: Make Your Presentation Tools

At this point, you should have composed an end-to-end presentation that you could deliver without projecting any slides. It’s a pretty safe assumption, however, that most presentation scenarios today come with the expectation that you will use a slide deck. Graphics can complement and reinforce your words, lending them added power, so we will include the creation of your slides in this phase. Start by visualizing your slide ideas, create the slides themselves, then speak along with them to identify areas where the connection between your words and visuals could be strengthened.

aMMazing JAM Session Writing Process Checklist

Use this checklist to complete the steps for composing your presentations:

Jot Everything Down

Brainstorm ideas

- Who is your target audience? What do you want them to do? What do they need to know?
- Empty the pantry—extract ideas from existing content
- Explore ideas for your hook— an analogy, story, quote, statistic, news item, question

Use the rule of three

- Group related information and ideas into your introduction, body, and conclusion
- Arrange the body around three main ideas
- Do a sanity check (will the three main ideas really resonate with the audience?)

Script a draft

- Type up ideas to create a clean outline
- Fill in specific wording with your introduction, linking statements, and conclusion
- Add as much text as you'd like to complete your script

Articulate Your Words

Speak out loud

- Find a quiet space and read it aloud, start to finish
- Time yourself and get a feel for how much content you need to remove or add
- Jot down new ideas as they come to mind

Doctor your script

- Be ruthless. Cut unnecessary information.
- Be honest. Identify sections that drag or feel boring to talk through
- Be creative. Work new ideas, anecdotes, stories, or analogies into your script

Repeat until happy

- Speak through the script again
- Make additional script changes
- Finalize your script

Make Your Visuals

Visualize your ideas

- Print out or make a blank slide template
- Print out your script for easy reference
- Sketch slide ideas to match your script

Make your presentation tools

- Create your slide deck
- Create speaker notes
- Create a handout

Speak and tweak

- Find a quiet space with a projector, a pen and paper, and a timer
- Run through the presentation aloud with your deck, noting timing and edits required
- Make your tweaks and repeat until you are ready to deliver it



Glenn Gibson was born and raised in South Queensferry, Scotland, where he frequented the very pub (the Hawes Inn) that legendary Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson reportedly penned the literary classics *Kidnapped* and *Treasure Island*. Spending many an evening in this establishment with his friends and family inspired his dream of becoming an author. Glenn has combined his love of speaking and technology throughout his 20-year career in various roles, achieving technology certifications from Microsoft, Citrix, and VMware, and delivering technical support, teaching OnBase software installations, and running product marketing and technology evangelism teams.

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