

PRESENTATION REVOLUTION

CHANGING THE WAY THE WORLD DOES PRESENTATIONS
BY SCOTT B. SCHWERTLY



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*KEEP ON RAGING—
TO STOP THE AGING.*

DALE CARNEGIE

I'm dissatisfied. Even more so... I am disturbed, and you should be as well.

Today we live in a business culture that abuses the art and science of public speaking everyday. We power up our PCs (Macs, if we're lucky) and present poorly prepared and hideously designed presentations to audiences who want to be inspired but never get fulfilled.

It is a business climate where PowerPoint is the norm and reading from your slides is standard. It is a business climate where aimlessly pulling an audience is regular. It is a business climate where wasting an individual's time is a given. It is a business climate that is losing out on inspiring and motivating others to make a difference or even change the world.

Every man and woman has the opportunity to make a difference when public speaking. After all, what other activity in life allows you the chance to stand in front of a group, crowd, or stadium full of anxious listeners—watching, waiting, ready to hear you? It can be a very empowering experience. Take advantage of it. Live it. Breathe it. **Change the world one presentation at a time.**

Every person has a dream—to make a difference—to make an impact—to change the world. Unlock the power in you. Only then will you be able to grow into everything you are capable of becoming—a person who is extraordinary.

Only a few have tapped into their extraordinary abilities. They are the thinkers, the revolutionaries, and the nonconformists who have come and gone before us. These are the men and women who crafted speeches that made every man, woman, and child dream great dreams and believe that mankind is capable of almost anything. Each one of us is a powerful creation—a source of light, hope, love, and conviction that can contribute beyond anything imaginable. The question is: where is that contribution? Who is changing the world today? Why isn't it you?

It's time to start a presentation revolution. It's time to be a rebel.

According to the dictionary, “to rebel” is defined as: to resist or rise against some **authority, control, or tradition**. If a businessperson wants to create a legacy and succeed at giving a presentation, he or she needs to rebel against all three. Here’s how:

- **Authority:** Let’s face it... most presentations that are given in the corporate environment are given by those in authority. This includes managers, executives, and board members. Maybe you are one of them. Maybe you are not. How many times have you been in a presentation where an executive or your boss has stepped up to the podium, aimless and almost insecure, with nothing good to say? It doesn’t have to be this way.
- **Control:** A great presenter knows how to take command. A terrible presenter knows how to control. There is a significant difference between command and control. Command is about guiding and directing. It is providing an environment where the audience has faith and trust in knowing where you are taking them. Control is forceful. It’s pushy and it turns people away. Fight the evils of control.
- **Tradition:** Don’t you love those corporate templates? Nobody likes them, yet all companies seem to use them. Break out of the traditional and try something new. Perhaps you should use large visuals and minimal text. Maybe even no visuals and just a dynamic performance. Your audience will appreciate it. I promise.

A **presentation rebel** should really be defined as someone who:

“**Revolts** against the ordinary and fights for change. A rebel **engages** with the people and world around them through tireless contribution. He or she **bestows** their knowledge and shares their gifts with others, which in turn **equips** their listeners with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to help them grow and become extraordinary. And most importantly, a rebel **lives** life to

the fullest. In the words of a wise man, they understand that life is not a “got to” moment, but a “get to” moment.”

You need to be a maverick when it comes to presentations. You need to fight against authoritarian egos or maybe even yourself. You need to command, not control, and you need to break tradition. By doing these things, you have become a rebel with a cause—a good cause.

Every revolution and cause worth fighting for contains deep roots—a purpose and mission. Rebellion is about creating change—sometimes to break new ground, and at other times, to get back to the starting point. In this case, it’s the latter. The ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, taught about the essentialness of three presentation components. They are ethos, pathos, and logos.

Ethos—The ability of the presenter to establish credibility with the audience.

Pathos—The ability of the presenter to display and arouse passion with the audience.

Logos—The ability of the presenter to exemplify the stature of an expert with the audience.

All three concepts require grit, determination and hard work. They are about building trust (ethos), winning people (pathos), and delivering results (logos). What rebel behaviors can turn our world around? In modern terms, these basic components can be accomplished by a rebellious approach to the content, design, and delivery of a presentation. If you are locked into presentation conformity, presentation rebellion is the key.

CONTENT

Build it in a Crockpot

Below is a tip to keep in mind the next time you start preparing for a presentation. Trust me, you'll be considered a nonconformist just by preparing in the right way.

A winning presentation must be well thought, brewed on, and dreamed on. It takes time. It takes research. It takes patience. You can't build a memorable presentation in an instant. Therefore, it can't be prepared in a microwave. A great presentation must be built in a crockpot.

All the great thinkers and presenters that have come before us spent meticulous hours crafting their masterpieces. If you want to create a legacy, you must spend the right amount of time crafting your speech. Our nanosecond culture, where time is our most precious asset, makes it difficult to prepare accordingly. However, there is no quick fix. Practice is the mother of skill. I can't emphasize more on the concept that title or knowledge will not save you when public speaking. Only true preparation creates the confidence that will enable you to succeed.

A Lesson from Mr. Ron Burgundy

In the movie, *Anchorman*, Will Ferrell plays the obnoxious, self-centered, but surprisingly loveable anchorman named Ron Burgundy. If you haven't had a chance to see the movie, Ron is the lead anchor for KVWM—Channel 4 News. He lives in “a time before cable—when the local anchorman reined supreme—when people believed everything they heard on TV. This was an age where only men were allowed to read the news, and in San Diego, one anchorman was more man than the rest—his name was Ron Burgundy. He was like a god walking amongst mere mortals; he had a voice that could make a wolverine purr and suits so fine they made Sinatra look like a hobo.”

Ron is attempting to woo Veronica Corningstone (played by Christina Applegate), his future co-anchor. The conversation begins with Ron asking, “Do you know who I am?” Veronica: “No, I can’t say that I do.” Ron responds: “I don’t know how to put this... but, I am kind of a big deal.”

This short scene reminds me of the circumstance that most executives and business professionals get trapped into when preparing for a presentation. They feel that their 20+ years of business experience or countless hours of executive coaching imply that they need no prep time before presenting.

Unfortunately, the reality of public speaking is that preparation is the most important facet of any great presentation. It’s amazing how an effective presentation can deliver more results than an entire year slaving behind the desk. Presenters need to take prep work seriously. Prepare and then prepare some more. It may make the difference between no sale and a very large bonus.

REVOLT: DEFY THE HABITS OF EGOMANIACS, AND PREPARE LIKE IT IS YOUR FIRST AND LAST PRESENTATION.

The “333 Rule”

A rebel knows how to prepare for a presentation. He or she lives and dies by something I like to call the “333 Rule.” This concept is simple and the hallmark of a captivating and memorable presentation.

3 goals: Remember the lesson from Aristotle. Build trust. Win people. Deliver results.

3 stages: Every presentation has a strong beginning, middle, and end. In other words, it has a powerful introduction, body, and conclusion.

3 points: Before you pick-up a writing utensil to start your presentation outline, define the three takeaways you want to leave with your audience. Three points. No more, no less.

333. Simple, isn’t it? It’s the rebel way.

DESIGN

Nobody Does It Better

In 1977, Carly Simon had her hit song, *Nobody Does it Better*, peak at #2 on the Billboard charts. You may remember the opening line and chorus:

*Nobody does it better
Makes me feel sad for the rest
Nobody does it half as good as you
Baby, you're the best*

This song was obviously written about love and not public speaking, but did you think “Baby, you’re the best” about the last person that presented to you? Probably not. I didn’t. Were they a rebel or a follower?

John F. Kennedy once said, “The only reason to give a speech is to change the world.” Each day there are about 30 million presentations given across the country, and it’s hard to imagine that these presentations are positively changing and impacting lives. They’re probably ending lives due to the overuse of PowerPoint and bullet points. In all seriousness, there is clearly a lack of presentation training in America.

Let’s change it because “Baby, don’t you want to be the best?”

Who's one of the Best?

You may know of a college dropout who experimented with drugs and eastern religions and was the most unlikely candidate to revolutionize the American computer industry.

His name is Steve Jobs.

Credit is rightly due to the man behind the machine. In their early twenties, Steve Jobs and his life-long friend, Steve Wozniak, started Apple in Jobs' garage, making personal sacrifices, including Jobs' Volkswagen van and Wozniak's scientific calculator, to start their business and apply their ideas. With much work, dedication, and persistence they were able to create a revolutionary machine that has now created even more powerful line extensions with the iPod and iTunes.

Clearly, Steve Jobs has made a dramatic impact on the world. His ability to look "outside the box" has allowed him to emerge as a prominent leader and thinker of our time. As a college drop-out, who built the personal computer in his garage, Steve Jobs, was the most unlikely candidate to revolutionize and change the world.

BESTOW: APPLE MADE AND CONTINUES TO MAKE MEANING THROUGH REVOLUTIONIZING THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY. STEVE JOBS MAKES MEANING, ADDS VALUE, AND CHANGES THE WORLD EVERYDAY, NOT ONLY THROUGH HIS PRODUCTS, BUT ALSO BY HIS ABILITY TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC AS WELL.

Dissecting Steve

With every new innovation, Steve Jobs generally announces Apple's new upgrades and improvements from the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater in San Francisco. During a recent presentation, when discussing changes to the iPod family and iTunes, his choice of visuals was simple and stunning, just like the products he creates everyday. His approach was conversational, casual, and straight to the point with bits of humor. All in all, the presentation, like all of his other creations, was fantastic. So what makes him so good? These next few sections will unpack his craft.

No Clutter

BJ Bueno and Matthew Ragas wrote an excellent book on branding a few years ago. It is entitled *The Power of Cult Branding: How 9 Magnetic Brands Turned Customers into Loyal Followers (and Yours Can, Too!)*. The book simply addressed 9 of America's cult brands. This list included Apple, Linux, Harley-Davidson, WWE, Volkswagen, Vans, Oprah, Star Trek, and Jimmy Buffet. The beauties of these cult brands are that they differentiate, take risk, and sell lifestyle.

I don't want to get too caught up in the details of cult branding. Obviously, a whole book can be written on the topic. However, when you take a look at powerful brands such as the ones mentioned above, there is one unifying component. They all have one vision, message, and purpose. There is no clutter. This rule also applies to presentation slide design. No clutter.

Bullet Points Kill

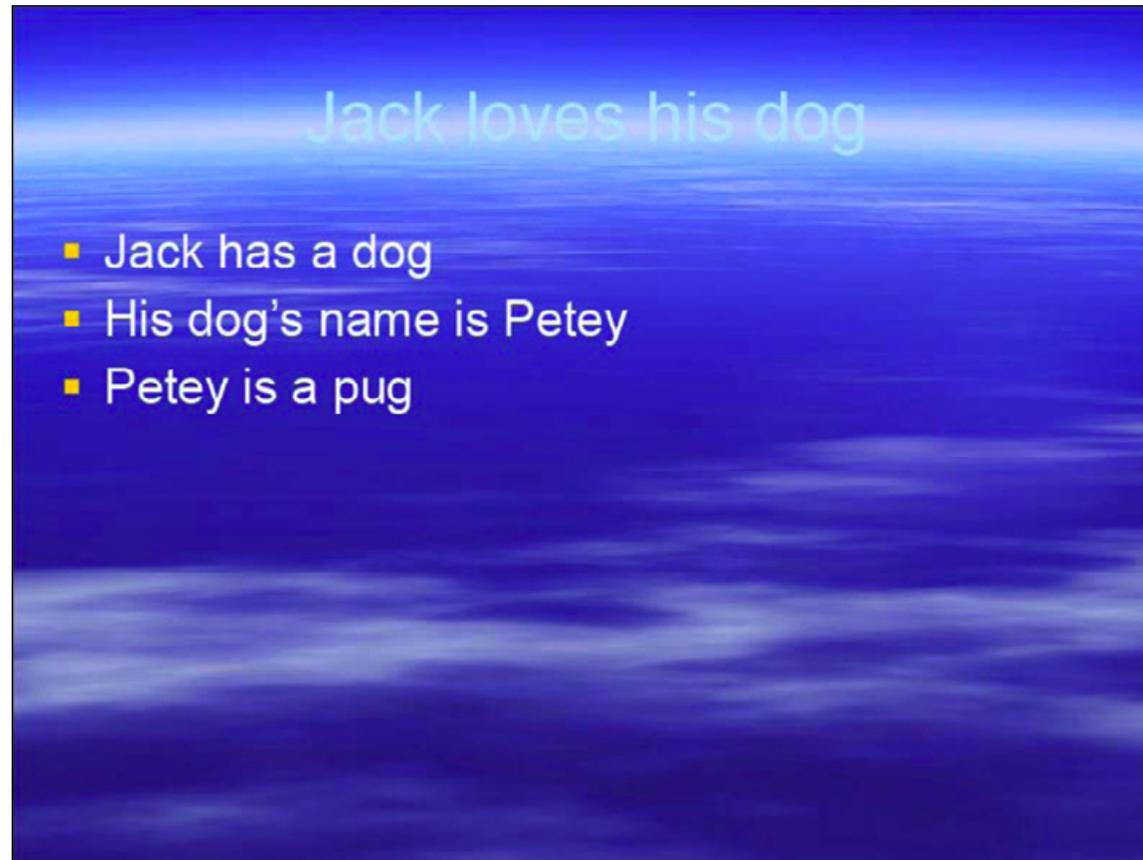
If you are looking for a quick and easy way to disconnect yourself from the audience—create bullet points the next time you use PowerPoint. Bullet points make people wonder why they should be listening to you if they can read what's behind you. The lesson here... Don't use them. Public speaking is all about connecting with people. Let them connect with you and not with the words behind you. Your visuals should only aid your presentation, not guide it.

Whether you are a facilitator, trainer, or keynote speaker—people are coming to hear you speak and not read the words behind you or in front of them in a handout. Here is an example of how slides should be done if you choose to use presentation software:

The Wrong Way

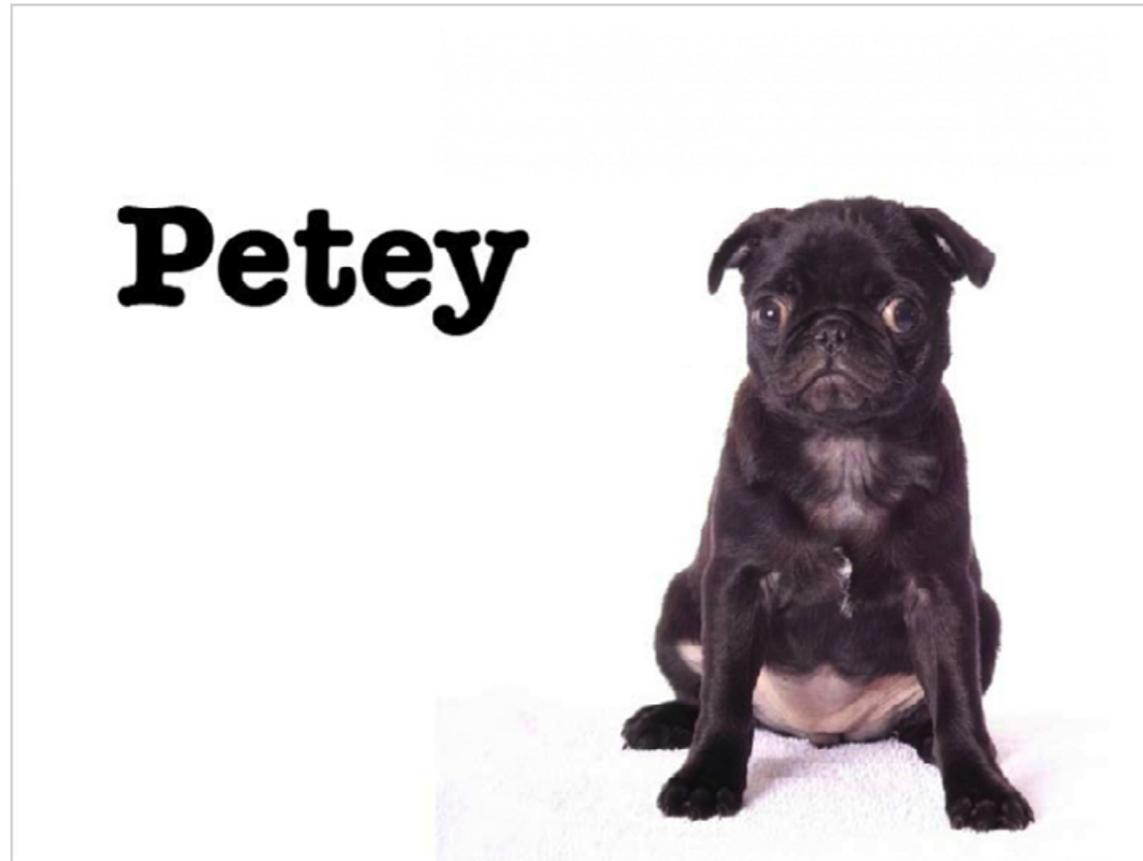
On this slide you see the main header “Jack loves his Dog.” Three points follow this header:

1. Jack has a dog. 2. His dog’s name is Petey. 3. Petey is a pug.



The Right Way

On this slide you actually get to see “Petey”—the dog Jack loves. Do you see and feel the difference? Notice how the main point (Petey the pug) is given special focus. It becomes memorable and not buried amongst other points.



ENGAGE: DON'T MAKE THEM THINK.

Slides should accent the speaker rather than control the speaker.

Baby, You're the Best

Do you want to be like Steve? You can be. Practice these laws of simplicity. You'll see and feel the difference and your audience will too.

REVOLT: CHANGE YOUR PRESENTATION PARADIGM, AND YOU WILL CHANGE THE WORLD.

Seize the opportunity to make a difference through your choice of slides, color, and pictures. Be creative! Be yourself! Be a rebel!

DELIVERY

The Power of You

What do a flea, pig, snowman, semi-truck, and school of fish all have in common?

Any idea? They are all the Disney characters of John Ratzenberger, also known as Cliff from *Cheers*.

One of the most important traits of any great presenter is having an authentic voice. It's about being distinctly you.

All of the characters by John Ratzenberger sound the same. They are distinctly John, and all are enjoyable. You need to be you. No faking allowed.

Once you find your authentic voice, you will be able to establish credibility.

**EQUIP: RESPECT THE TIME YOUR AUDIENCE INVESTS IN YOU.
GIVE THEM SOMETHING OF VALUE... ALWAYS.**

The beauty of America's interstates always intrigues me. There are millions of cars driving at speeds of 70mph—sometimes upwards of 80, only separated by painted dashes in the road and a few inches to spare. It's really amazing when you think about it.

Living in a metro area, I put my life in other people's hands every single morning when I drive in to work. Why do I do this everyday with no fear or hesitation? Trust. I trust those around me. I have confidence that they will accomplish their task of commuting without bringing harm to me. I trust them and they trust me.

When people walk in to hear you speak, they give you trust just as people do when they hit the road. Unfortunately, most speakers don't know how to maintain that trust and lose credibility quickly, often within the first few minutes or even seconds of their presentation. Establishing and maintaining trust is the most important component of any presentation. As mentioned before, people naturally give it, but keeping it is the hardest task. Here's how to maintain it:

Be Genuine: Simply, be yourself. Audiences can quickly tell the difference between an expert and a faker. Be real. Be true. The audience will appreciate it. Developing trust through genuine behavior with your audience is the hardest but most rewarding thing you can do when communicating with a group.

Be Factual: Show statistics, graphs, charts—anything to help solidify that you know what you are discussing. Credibility comes instantly when your audience perceives you as an expert. Present your facts but proceed with caution—there is a gray line between presenting too much and too little information. Say too much and eyes will glaze over. Say too little and people will think you are a poser.

Be Giving: Life is about contribution. It's about sharing with the masses. A great presenter equips his or her listeners with the tools, knowledge, and resources needed to help them grow. People want to walk away with something of value. Provide them with something that either motivates, changes, or improves their life.

BESTOW: REBELS REALIZE THAT NOTHING IS MORE SATISFYING THAN GIVING. GIVE AND ALL BENEFIT.

The next time you pull out of the driveway, remember that trust is what keeps you and the people around you moving. Without trust, we would all be hiding in our homes. People trust you. Don't take advantage of it. Unlike the conformists of today who build unmemorable presentations, a true rebel establishes and maintains credibility.

Feast On It

Most presentations today are easy to forget. The key objective with delivery is to create memorable presentations. Thus, if there is only one thing you remember about delivery, remember this concept. It is called the Chow Technique. Try this method the next time you speak in public. It will increase memory and retention levels.

A great presentation is like a fabulous three course meal. In other words, it is like great chow. Think of your favorite restaurant. What did you eat? Perhaps some filet mignon, risotto, or maybe you enjoyed a nice glass of chardonnay. No matter what it was, I'm sure it was delicious. A great presentation is laid out the same way.

Starter: A captivating presentation has a strong open. Maybe it's a story. Perhaps it is simply asking a question. Whatever it may be, it needs to be captivating.

The Main Course: Your entrée (body) needs to be flavorful and engaging. It should also be simple, and easy to digest.

Dessert: Your ending needs to be as strong as your open. There is an old saying amongst actors: "By their entrances and their exits shall ye know them." End strong or you risk losing credibility.

Change the World

Great presenters build trust, win people, and deliver results. These are the habits that establish them as agents of change. Therefore, they create lives that others want to document.

A book about you—would you buy it? Is your life interesting enough that somebody would want to buy a book about you? Like the U2 song, *Original of the Species*, states, “You are the first one of your kind.” You are unique and there is no one else like you. Live with passion—today.

LIVE: THINK OF THE GREATS—MLK, JFK, AND LINCOLN. THEY LIVED AND SPOKE WITH PASSION. THEY CHANGED THE WORLD. WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY?

Passion fuels change. Change the way you present—and you can present change to the world. So what can you do to build passion or add value to your life, your relationships, your job, and your world? Create imprints today. Maybe you need to start small. A trick I learned not too long ago was to keep five pennies in my pocket. At the beginning of the day, you store them in your right pocket. Each time you do something extraordinary—maybe step outside your comfort zone, call an old friend, say hi to a stranger—you move a penny to the other pocket. Transfer all five and you have done more great things in one day than an ordinary person does in a month. Do this daily and you will experience the wonders of compounding. Do this long enough and you may have a life worth documenting.

Succeeding at presentations is the same thing. By becoming a rebel, you find new ways to maximize your content, design, and delivery techniques every day. Do this monthly and you will make a difference. Do this annually and you will change the world. There is power in rebellion.

The question you need to address today is simple: Do you want to change the world? Join the presentation revolution.

info



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Schwertly has loved giving and hearing presentations since he gave his first big speech in the 7th grade. Scott has spent the last eight years working for television network affiliates helping them create story-telling visuals and has worked in marketing for both the private and public sector. He has a B.A. in Communications and an M.B.A. from Harding University. Helping you build, design and deliver captivating presentations is his passion. He currently serves as both Founder and CEO of Ethos3 Communications and is the author of the blog, www.presentationrevolution.com.

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