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"*Online Presentations by Design* offers a timely guidebook that will elevate your online presentation skills. Whether you're a senior executive or an employee with high potential, looking to set yourself apart, you will gain new and useful skills from this text, from planning your presentation, to delivering your deck."

— **MARSHALL GOLDSMITH** is the New York Times #1 bestselling author of *Triggers*, *Mojo*, and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* and *Thinkers 50* #1 Executive Coach.

"Scott Allen and Maria Soriano Young have created an exceptionally comprehensive resource for instructors, students, savvy executives, and anyone who seeks to make memorable online presentations. Just long enough to be helpful without overwhelming, *Captovation* focuses on the design of slide decks, principles of delivery, and control of environment—all adapted to the new norms of presenting in an online setting. Well-researched and beautifully written, this is a must-have for anyone unsure of how to craft, revise, and deliver presentations with the new online medium."

— **DR. MARY ELLEN GUFFEY**, world's leading business communication textbook author

"*Captovation: Online Presentations by Design* is the essential guide for presenters planning engrossing and engaging online presentations. Many of the principles and concepts enunciated in the book go beyond the scope of online presentations and apply equally to in-person presentations. This well-researched and erudite book is an indispensable addition to the bookshelves of presenters and participants alike."

— **DEEPAK MENON**, DTM, 2019-2020 Toastmasters International President

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by DESIGN

Scott J. Allen, Ph.D. | Maria Soriano Young



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First Edition

Dedication

Scott dedicates this book to Larry Morrow—an inspirational teacher, mentor, and friend.

Maria dedicates this book to her husband, David, and her parents, Ben and Joni, who have always supported and encouraged her as a writer, teacher, and presenter; she also dedicates this book to her aunt Geri Deane, who she has looked up to as a role model of professionalism and kindness to others for many years.

Foreword

Where were you in March 2020 when the world shut down? There was a Darwinian pressure thrust upon many of us: adapt or die. A time to re-evaluate, a time to reflect, a time to evolve. Survival became the new success.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic forced countless event cancellations, the service/hospitality industry shut down, planes were grounded, and borders were closed. Through the cancellations and postponements, people understood that the show must go on—even if that “show” looked dramatically different than what we were accustomed to. A new horizon of communication practices has appeared...

Enter virtual gatherings and meetings.

The pandemic has led to new global standards for working—especially from home. Digital productivity has transformed all around us, no matter where you choose to work.

There’s been a dramatic increase in usage of online platforms such as Zoom, WebEx, and Teams. And along with the increase in platforms comes your need to excel in this new medium.

How do you make sure you hit it out of the park, even if you are sitting on your bed in your comfy socks? Or a suit and tie, dialed in from the waist up?

Thank goodness for Scott Allen and Maria Soriano Young.

They decided to commit to research and author a remarkable book to help us navigate these challenging times. Their offering is steeped in practicality and truth. A matter-of-fact, pragmatic approach to coaching all of us up to be the best we can be. It is desperately needed because there’s often less accountability with online gatherings.

I once made a sandwich, responded to 10+ emails, read an article in the *Times*, and did a puzzle with my kid, all while “watching” a 90-minute online presentation. I’m not proud of it, but I know I’m not alone. You know you are in trouble as a presenter when an audience member defaults to a thumbnail picture or chooses not to activate their video screen.

It’s not a giant leap to conclude that similar behaviors extend to web audiences, where the cloak of invisibility and easy access to multiple devices invite the opportunity to escape.

Understanding how to keep your audience engaged, and working with the challenges of the medium and the technology, requires some strategic but necessary adjustments in the design and delivery of your online presentation.

Use the methodology, tips, and tricks in this book, and you will have no problem creating high-impact virtual presentations. Go through these ideas every time you have a presentation to make, and you will soon find your peers and associates turning to you for assistance when it comes to creating a virtual presentation—one that is captivating and meaningful.

This pressure is good for us.

Evolve with it.

It will be easier for you if you implement what is in this book.

David Rae
President & Co-Founder / 503 Creative
Curator / TEDxPortland

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We also want to thank our reviewers for taking the time out of their own busy lives to read the text and provide both endorsements and critical feedback. Thank you to Marshall Goldsmith, Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey, Gordon Daily, Abby McNutt, Ken Kasee, and Deepak Menon for their praise and faith in our work; to the students of Scott Allen’s Executive Communication course at John Carroll University for their “test read” of the text and their comments; and to Gabriela Wanless, who dedicated additional time to proofread our work and give us specific suggestions.

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Introduction

*“What did you learn today? What mistake did you make that taught you something?
What did you try hard at today?”*
—Carol Dweck, *Mindset*

We would venture to guess that most of you had never heard of Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, or any of the other major video conferencing platforms that are common household names prior to March 2020. We’d also wager that the vast majority of you had never attended a virtual happy hour, a virtual sales call, a virtual retreat, or conference hosted completely online—nor would you have chosen to do so if there were online and in-person options. We get it; we wouldn’t have chosen to attend any of those events online either, and even now, we still may prefer to meet and talk with other people in person. What we do know is that both inside and outside the world of work, it’s likely that we will look back on 2020 as the moment that so many elements of our lives changed. What this means is that for some, remote work will become the norm. For others, sales presentations will no longer involve extensive travel—rather, they will occur online. And as virtual teams continue to become the normal way that employees and clients will work together, retreats, meetings, and planning sessions will no longer need to occur face-to-face. For financial reasons and to preserve the health and safety of others, we’ll be required to spend most of our days in front of a screen.

In some ways, the shifts mentioned above are positive. For some, online work may allow for a better work/life balance or may reduce travel time. In other cases, these changes could reduce expenses for both companies and individuals, and could create efficiencies and opportunities never imagined. In reality, the new landscape of work represents a great deal of opportunity for many organizations to refocus, reimagine, and reinvent.

With the positives have also come challenges, and there’s been a steep learning curve on multiple fronts. We’ve witnessed high-level executives show up as befuddled and ill-prepared and have seen some well-respected colleagues perform presentations in what looked to be poorly lit closets. Perhaps worse are the cheesy digital backgrounds that render the individual a ghostly figure as they move in and out of focus (despite the humor that comes along with seeing a colleague virtually sitting in the middle of a baseball stadium). As we settle into this new mode of working and communicating, we would guess there will be fewer instances of cats walking across screens, glitchy tech, and awkward camera angles! And maybe, just maybe, we will hear, “Carl, I think you are on mute” less and less as time goes on.

We believe that this is the first comprehensive resource about online presentations that explores the subtle nuances of delivery that may not immediately come to mind, especially as we challenge you to take a more active stance by *thoughtfully designing* each aspect of that presentation. If you are reading this book, you are undoubtedly familiar with the traditional norms and best practices of effective presentations. Rest assured, the foundational concepts are still in place, so that means you already have a baseline for creating and delivering successful presentations online.

However, there are some subtle (but important) shifts in this new medium. Maggie Mills, 2020 National Champion in the Public Forum Debate of the National Speech and Debate Association, said it well when she told us, “I think that all of the weaknesses that exist in live debate are magnified by Zoom. I think that’s true of most presentations I’ve seen. If you don’t have good eye contact in person, it’s unlikely that you’re going to be making eye contact with the webcam.” We agree, and have also seen in our experiences that everything is amplified with an online presentation. The good news is that each of us can improve, develop, and grow. After all, this medium is just different and it’s going to take deliberate practice to become an expert.

The future of presentations is here, ready or not. We feel that 2020 will forever be marked as the date when work shifted, education shifted, life shifted; in other words, the year of *creative disruption*. And even though conferences, meetings, and workshops may return to being offered in-person eventually,

we strongly believe that a “web option” will remain prominent. This notion is echoed by Brandon Charpiet, Executive Director of the Management & Organizational Behavior Teaching Society, who said, “The fact that we must all come to terms with is that online learning will not be going away following the pandemic. It will undoubtedly be scaled back, but it will remain here to stay.”

Why “Captovation”?

We have one goal with this book—to build confidence. More specifically, we want to build *your* confidence. Your confidence in delivering captivating online presentations that help you close the deal, win hearts, secure funding, inspire change, and change the world. So what is Captovation? Two words that translate to “attract” (captivate) and “applause” (ovation). We believe that this book will accelerate your journey toward attracting (digital) applause on your path to accomplishing your goals.

A second reason for the term “Captovation” is because it’s the name of a technology platform that can be used alongside the book to accelerate your development and growth. The technology is emerging, but like many other dimensions, we are exploring how technology can help you feel more confident, improve more rapidly, and augment human coaching. For more information on this dimension of the learning process, visit www.captovation.ai.

Our Emphasis on “Design”

“A designer knows he or she has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.”

—Nolan Haims, designer

Our use of the word “design” in the title of this book, and throughout the sections, is an intentional choice because of its complex nature and its mental and physical components. Architects design buildings. Scientists design experiments. Computer scientists designed the computer, phone, or tablet you are using to read this book. Thus, we view the topic of delivering engaging online presentations, in part, as a design challenge. Why?

- You *design* the structure and central message of your talk.
- You *design* your slide deck.
- You *design* a masterful delivery.
- You *design* your setting and space.
- You *design* your plan for growth and development.

It’s not a stretch to imagine that each of you reading this book has found yourself viewing an ineffective online presentation in recent months. The question is, *why* was it boring, demotivating, or ineffective? While we cannot answer for every poor presenter you saw, we would assert that there was a design challenge somewhere in that process.

Throughout this book, we will consistently return to this notion of design—both in terms of the mental exercise it requires and its active, hands-on connotations. What we mean by that is, design requires intentionality, a plan, forethought, and a purpose or desired end-state. It also requires time, emotions, tools, an eraser or the “delete” button, investment, and persistence. *Great* design requires creativity and nudges the world forward. And for you, that means activity, practice, and engagement.

Design is also a process that takes time and investment, and involves some kind of tactile element—whether that means physically sketching out the details of a Prezi before putting together the presentation (like Maria does) or moving graphical parts around a computer screen. We encourage you to stop after you read a section of our book and try something, or test it out—for example, if you’re sitting at your normal workspace and reading this book, stop momentarily after you read the section about your background and setting. Open up your Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google Meet, or other online meeting platform, and look around at everything *except* yourself. What’s in that background...

maybe that you didn't realize before? This type of reactionary approach is exactly what we are hoping for you to gain from this book, and represents the intentional approach that we want you take as you become a more conscious designer of your presentations (or your participation as an audience member).

Ultimately, we are excited to help you design online presentations that cause people to say:

- She was incredible!
- She was so well-prepared!
- That slide deck was awesome!
- I need to tell others about him.
- He was really good.
- I am so happy I attended.
- That person is going places. Wow!
- They are going to go far!
- I want to contact that person afterward and tell them how meaningful that talk was.

Our Research

Delivering online presentations is a quickly-emerging topic with little to no academic literature base that we have located. The landscape is forming as you read this text, and in a sense, we are learning in real-time. However, we believe that many fundamentals (e.g., use of voice, gestures, effective slide design, and sound structure) remain important; however, each of these brings nuances and adjustments in an online environment.

Our approach to researching this book is fourfold. First, we have looked at the literature for clues. We assume that topics related to general presentation skills that have a substantive literature base, such as respecting time boundaries, effective use of pitch, and signposting, hold in an online environment. We share many of those results here, and many other tried and true topics, but seek as our primary objective to explore the nuances of an online environment. Our second approach to the research was to interview senior-level executives, national champion debaters, and a world champion speaker about the transition. Many themes emerged from these conversations, and have informed the content of this book. You will also find poignant quotes from some of these interviewees throughout. The third component of our work was to conduct two informal surveys on social media platforms to take the pulse of business professionals. The first survey was geared toward anyone who had been a participant in an online meeting over the past few months, and asked respondents to rate the importance of a variety of attributes of online presentations. The second was aimed at managers, to ask about their expectations of their employees when attending or presenting to them. More rigorous research will be conducted in the coming months and years, but it was interesting to capture a snapshot just a few months into the transition. The final aspect that has informed this book is our own experience. Scott has taught and consulted on the topic of presentation skills for more than a decade. In addition to her work as an editor, author, and work as a writing coach, Maria teaches the business communications courses at our university.

Mindset/Skillset

The first step in learning how to create more effective online presentations, and to elicit some of the sentiments we listed above, is to accept the reality that this is what you, your colleagues, your bosses, and most other people in your industry are just going to *have to do*. In other words, we hope that you will approach this guide with a positive mindset and are willing to try and to learn!

Carol Dweck¹ has advanced the notion of mindset in recent years. In her work, she spends a lot of time differentiating between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset as a way to emphasize the allowances of a growth mindset. An individual with a fixed mindset shuts down the notion that they can improve, develop, and grow. When it comes to the topic of presentation skills, it is common for people to make

¹ Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The new psychology of success*. Random House Digital, Inc.

remarks like, “Well, I’m just not good at presenting.” “I will never feel completely comfortable in front of others,” “I am not a charismatic or funny presenter,” and so on. These perspectives lock the speaker into a certain way of being and suggest that they do not believe that they will improve (because they don’t want to).

When Scott is coaching someone and that person says, “I am not good at commanding the room” he responds with, “yet,” as if to simply add onto the sentence and to point out that the presenter’s mindset is locking them into a certain reality. Why is that additional word so poignant? *Because it changes the conversation.* In her TED Talk, *The Power of Believing That You Can Improve*, Dweck introduces a powerful idea: the concept of “yet.”² The sentiment of a statement can shift from representing a fixed mindset to a growth mindset if a speaker includes the word “yet” at the end of the phrase. Thus, adding the word “yet” keeps people in a place of exploration and growth, as opposed to a place of fixed reality. According to Dweck, people with a growth mindset see room for improvement, stay in the game, and see failure and setbacks as an opportunity to grow. They see themselves on a continuum of development versus a fixed place.

The lesson here is to pay close attention to the inner chatter that consumes your mind. As a presenter, do you view setbacks as cold realities or opportunities to learn? Are you overly critical if a presentation did not go as well as you had hoped, or do you capture the learning experience and move on? Do you jump into new and novel situations, or do you sit back and keep safe? Presenters with a growth mindset:

- believe they can get better at their craft
- enjoy the process of improving
- do not set unrealistic expectations for themselves
- understand the power of the word “yet”
- do not let setbacks define who they are
- love a good challenge
- view feedback and constructive criticism positively

Placing yourself on the fixed to growth mindset continuum at the beginning of your learning process as you enter this book is critical—not just for you, but for anyone hoping to improve their presentation skills. It’s important to continually monitor your own self-talk and reflect on how your mindset shapes your behavior. So, no, you may not feel like you are the strongest online presenter...yet...but by accepting the challenge of learning through this book and by willingly adopting a growth mindset, we are confident that you will get there.

Delivering Online Presentations—The Big Five

Online presentations present challenges and opportunities. The primary difficulties revolve around technology and audience engagement. The good news is that both can be managed with careful thought and preparation.

While it can be difficult to even get *experts* to agree on the characteristics of an excellent live presentation, and when informal poll results reveal a scattered opinion of “what matters most,” we are going to explore the main points in this text.³ When *we* think of great online presentations, there are some core elements of engagement that we want you to focus on. Presenting online requires *you* to be really good at capturing the listener’s attention. There are several distractions you are competing with, and in our experience, there are some critical elements of great online presentations. These high-ticket items should be areas of focus as you practice and perform. While we mention these five concepts briefly right now, we will spend more time developing them later on and throughout this text. But as you read, keep these central principles in mind:

² Dweck, C. (2014, September). *The power of believing that you can improve* [video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve

³ Joe, J., Kitchen, C., Chen, L., & Feng, G. (2015). A prototype public speaking skills assessment: An evaluation of human-scoring quality. *ETS Research Report Series, 2015(2)*, 1–21.

Oral Signposts & Clean Structure

Oral signposts help listeners follow the trajectory of your presentation. They are clues that guide listeners through the narrative. Phrases like “my agenda for today” or “the outline of my talk” provide listeners with your overall path.

Repetition

Similar to oral signposts, repetition is a rhetorical technique designed to facilitate recall and retention of your content. To be clear, repetition can be disastrous and unconscious, and what we are really referring to here is the repeated mention of the same words, phrases, images, or even data numerous times throughout your presentation. This is not what we are advocating. Quite the opposite—we suggest that carefully placed and intentional use of repetition is a powerful tool, especially if you want engagement. The Greeks identified many strategies of repetition which are highlighted in the article *Effective Rhetorical Strategies of Repetition*.⁴

Vocal Variety

The concept is simple in theory, but difficult to master in practice. In short, vocal variety underpins great storytelling and serves as an opportunity to *use* variations in pitch, pause, tone, pace, and volume to engage listeners. Effective vocal variety breathes life into your presentation and keeps listeners engaged—and if you are outstanding, enthralled.

Word Choice

Presenting online requires you, the presenter, to create the energy. Part of this is done via vocal variety, but we suggest that word choice is another critical element of engagement. Using words that communicate wonder, excitement, frustration, or gratitude will engage listeners in ways that correspond with what emotions you aim to elicit. One caveat is that your nonverbals must align with your words—this is called congruence. For instance, the phrase “I’m excited” often requires a smile to be congruent.

Multimodality

Christina Cashin, the Senior Vice President of Talent Management at KeyBank, reminded us that online presenters should “use a lot of different tools and techniques to pull the audience in.” Her assertion was one of many similar sentiments shared by the people we interviewed. We use the term “multimodality” to communicate the need to “switch things up” and not default into one mode (often lecture) for extended periods of time. As we will discuss in more detail later, adding a poll, a question in the chat, or sharing a quick video are ways to facilitate engagement.

Conclusion—An Analog Topic With a Digital Twist

“The goal of effective communication should be for listeners to say ‘Me too!’ versus ‘So what?’”
—Jim Rohn, speaker

There are hundreds, if not thousands of books on the topic of presentation skills. However, we have not found any specifically designed (there’s that word again) for the online environment. This reality presents a wonderful opportunity for us as authors, and for you as a reader. We believe that with some conscious practice and attention, you can quickly set yourself apart from the competition in this new and emerging medium.

⁴ Nordquist, R. (2019). *Effective rhetorical strategies of repetition*. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/effective-strategies-of-repetition-1691853>.

While many of the topics are the same (e.g., the importance of structure and slide design), many of the traditional topics have nuances online, such as eye contact, hand gestures, and participation. You will find as you read this book that while many of the skills necessary for good presentations in person also apply online, there are some significant (and additional) differences between the two spaces; we applaud you for taking the time to explore this new domain with us.

As you read, observe, and practice, we would love to hear from you. What have we missed? What subtle differences are you noticing? What topics would you like us to address? What research would you like us to conduct? We are open to your suggestions and look forward to your feedback.

Chapter 1: Audience-Centered Design

“You must have an appreciation for what the audience experiences as you use the technology.”

—Ed Markey, Vice President of Corporate Communications
at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

Before you begin conceptualizing and planning your presentation, it's critical to ensure that you understand your audience and have a clear understanding of their expectations. Without this information, you are guessing, which is not a recipe for success. As a result, there are some critical questions to ask (either to yourself or to a contact at the organization who can give you more information) as you design your presentation.

First, consider or find out about the people themselves—those to whom you will be speaking. Since you will see their faces, hear their voices, and see their comments in the chat box, you want to think about what they expect from you and what you can expect from them during the pre-design phase. Here are some questions to consider about your audience:

- How many people will be tuning in?
- Will they be on individual devices, or will they be gathered in one room?
- Will participants be mobile, at home, or at their desks?
- What devices might they be using?
- When and where will my audience be accessing this content? Will they be tuning in live, watching a recording later, or both?
- Will participants remain on mute?
- Will participants be expected to have their screens on?

In addition to the attendees themselves and their expectations, there are norms around technology and flow that must be clarified before you can begin the design process. Micki Byrnes, President & General Manager at WKYC-TV, told us the following: “However you decide to do the chat protocol, figure it out. Stick with it, and let everybody know at the top of the presentation.” Consistency with your strategies is critical so that audiences can focus on what you are saying and what they want to say when they engage, not worrying about *how* to engage. While not an exhaustive list, here are some of the significant questions to clarify before designing your session.

- What platform will we be using (you'd want to know this in advance in case you need to download and familiarize yourself with a new platform)?
- What is the general flow of our time together?
- What are the time boundaries for my portion? The Q & A?
- Who will provide introductions (i.e., will the meeting host introduce you, or will you have the opportunity to introduce yourself)?
- Is this audience familiar with the technology? Do they need a tour of the functionalities?
- Could I project an opening slide or a scrolling slideshow while participants are signing in, or would you prefer to begin with a blank screen or faces showing?
- Will questions be asked via the chat functions?
- How will the Q & A segment work? Will people ask throughout or after?
- Will participants with questions raise their hands?
- Will all functionalities be available (e.g., polls, breakout rooms)?
- What is the appropriate dress code?

Once you gain some background information about your audience members, the technology, and the flow, you can then start to think about the content of your presentation and its elements (slides, handouts, etc.). You'll want to get a sense of what the organization expects from the content and format of your presentation before you start creating your slides. Recently, Scott worked with a CEO who prefers “PowerPoint Lite”—in other words, that CEO does not want presenters to come to him with long slide decks full of text. While this might be a preference for some organizations, in other contexts, the expectation is that you cram as much content as possible on the slide.

Thus, a clear understanding of the norms and expectations is critical as you design your presentation. Some questions in the phase may include:

- Is there content I must include?
- Are there limits on the number of slides or amount of text on each slide?
- Do members of the audience have expectations I should understand?
- Will participants have a strong command of the content?
- What does the audience already know? What do they need to know?
- What can I do to make the vast majority of audience members feel content?

Extreme Clarity of Purpose

“A wise man speaks because he has something to say; a fool because he has to say something.”
—Plato, philosopher

When we are designing presentations (whether for professionals, students, or conference attendees), we think about audience members at home after the event has concluded. We envision them speaking with their family or roommates and debriefing the day. Inevitably, they will be asked the question, “How was your session?” This is a critical question, and in some ways, it’s the ultimate test of your success. Do those audience members say, “It was incredible, you know...” or is it more of a “Meh. I wish I’d had my morning back”?

You need to base your presentation on its purpose—why, more specifically, you are presenting that day. Presumably, the purpose has been articulated in your conversations with the organization or person who has invited you to speak; if you’re not clear on that, you’ll want to ask more specifically. The purpose will help you decide on the most appropriate tone, emotion, and vocabulary.

Clear Learning Objectives

Based on how you’d want your audience members to respond, here are some questions you can consider during the design phase:

What do you want them to learn? After the presentation ends (whether 10 minutes or 10 days later), can the audience member accurately reiterate the important content you wanted them to know? Or is it lost in a haze of content and missed opportunity? All too often, a presenter will throw the “kitchen sink” at their audience, hoping that some will stick: too much data and text, every angle and fact to consider, and graphics galore. This results in audience members who are overwhelmed and exhausted, and they will tune out quickly. When asked about the presentation, their responses will be something like “I don’t know what was most important to remember...there was too much information.” To avoid overwhelming your audience members, begin by asking yourself: What are the few facts, ideas, or concepts you want your audience to recall?

How do you want them to feel? In the same hypothetical conversation, the individual sharing their day will have an emotional response embedded in their answer. How people feel at the end of your presentation is almost as important as what they know.

What do you want them to do? Another design challenge to think about ahead of time is complete clarity on what you want the audience to do with their newly found knowledge and enthusiasm. Do you want them to donate time, talent, or treasure? Rethink their stance on an issue? Even if there is not a concrete action you have in mind, you may simply be seeking their support. Changing human behavior based on your ability to emotionally move them to do so is an incredibly powerful skill.

Based on the hypothetical objectives noted above, next time you are designing a session, be sure to think about the *learn*, *feel*, and *do*. Can they tell someone else (a coworker who had to step away from the presentation for a moment, their boss, or their significant other) your key points? Do they feel excited and enthused about your product, service, or idea? And, perhaps most importantly, are they willing to change their behavior (invest, vote, advocate, support) based on their time with you?

Based on the information you receive in the initial contract meeting, you have a lot to think about. In addition to clarity of purpose, you hopefully will also have clear objectives at this point. These should be agreed upon by you and your contact, and it's also useful for you to present these to your audience at either the beginning or the end of the presentation (or both). Some examples include:

- At the end of the presentation, participants will understand the importance of digital marketing.
- At the end of the presentation, participants will have a clear understanding of the eight largest social media platforms and their functionalities.
- At the end of the presentation, participants will understand and feel enthusiastic about the opportunities afforded by digital marketing techniques.

Once you are clear on the audience and what you want them to *learn, feel, and do* (your purpose), as well as your specific learning objectives, you can begin the hands-on process of designing the experience. While the following section may feel overwhelming at first glance, each element is critical if you are serious about designing a transformational learning experience.

Presentation Design

“90% of how well the talk will go is determined before the speaker steps on the platform.”
—Somers White, speaker

Design for Multiple Entry Points

As you begin the design process, be mindful of the various devices and screen sizes a remote audience might be tuning in on; a person tuning in on their cell phone will be viewing the presentation in a different way than someone who is watching on a full-size desktop monitor. We have had attendees access our presentations on tablets, laptops, personal computers, and cell phones. In some cases, attendees were not using the video—instead, they were accessing the presentation as a phone call. Understanding *how* people will log in and engage with the presentation and maintaining awareness that your participants' access points *could* be all of the above is an important consideration as you design.

Design for Stickiness

Because participants will be experiencing your presentation in so many different ways, it's important, if possible, to send your materials ahead of time. Doing so will better prepare the individual who is “on the go” and not in front of their desktop. Likewise, participants will have time to prepare and reflect upon the content. Another design tool for ensuring your message is remembered is the rhetorical technique of repetition. If they are hearing some elements of your content 2–3 times, they are more likely to recall your central message. Likewise, remember the “power of three.” If you can package your main points in a way that sticks, participants will more likely recall your content. Here are some common phrases that exemplify our point:

- “Reduce, reuse, recycle.”
- “People, planet, profit.”
- “Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”
- “...of the people, by the people, for the people.”
- “Stop, drop, and roll.”
- “Location, location, location!”

A fourth technique is to keep your slide design simple and clean. We have two quotes to keep in mind as you design your slide decks. The first is attributed to Blaise Pascal, who said, “If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter.” The second quote is from Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, who stated that “Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it

simple.” Nobody wants excessive clutter, unreadable charts, and confusing graphics. Take the time to get your thinking clean, eliminate noise, add strong visuals, and tell stories that align with your purpose.

Designing for Time

One executive we recently spoke with shared how time (as a concept) has significantly shifted in his line of business. He lamented that his team used to have much more time with clients and now, they are often relegated to a 30-minute online meeting. Christina Cashin, the Senior Vice President of Talent Management at KeyBank, also observed this shift. She is used to designing full-day programs and after the extreme move to a work-from-home culture, she told us, “For me, it has to be short and engaging—like 60 minutes. 90 minutes is pushing it and anything past 90 minutes, I just start to zone out, or multitask, or get distracted. So to me, the norm should be shorter content, maybe more frequently.” What used to be a full or half-day session is now significantly reduced or spread over a period of weeks. What this suggests for you as a designer is that you may need to significantly alter what you would have done before, perhaps into a shorter amount of time, or into different increments. While we highlighted only a couple examples in this paragraph, it’s important to note that shifts in how we approach time emerged a common theme among the executives we interviewed—therefore, it is a crucial principle to keep in mind.

Another aspect of time is how you, the presenter, use that time in the context of the presentation. Some research has shown that the average attention span for a lecture-based presentation begins to decline at about 10 minutes,⁵ while other scholars found that “Students report attention lapses as early as the first 30 seconds of a lecture, with the next lapse occurring approximately 4.5 min into a lecture and again at shorter and shorter cycles throughout the lecture segment.”⁶ And while there is no conclusive evidence, multiple studies land in the range between 5–20 minutes.⁷ All of this suggests that you need to intentionally plan how you will recapture your audience’s interest about every 10 minutes. This research was reinforced by Jennifer Cowles, Leader of Leadership and Executive Programs at KeyBank, when she suggested that “You can’t go any more than five, seven minutes without having to change the way that people are interacting with you.” In the context of a live presentation, this may mean that a participant is simply daydreaming, checking their phone, or engaging in a side conversation. Online, people can “check out” much more easily, which means that you need to be that much better at commanding their attention. Online participants are pulled in multiple directions—sometimes by choice, other times by necessity. In reality, you are competing with their family members, email, project work, personal correspondences, the news, and so on. And they could be doing a variety of activities, from checking and responding to emails to preparing and eating a meal.

Though you cannot control what your audience members actually do during an online presentation, you still want to find ways to get them to turn their attention back to you—to *tune back in*. To avoid the 10-minute fade, ask yourself this during the design process: What am I doing to switch my approach every few minutes? You need to *design* for engagement. Brandon Charpied, Executive Director of the Management & Organizational Behavior Teaching Society, has managed academic conferences all over the world. He suggests the following when coaching presenters: “Experience has shown that the optimal alternative is to prepare for the entirety of the 30-minute window. Devote 20 minutes to a presentation, and the remaining 10 [are] broken up into interaction (as simple as Q & A) inserted into the 10- and 20-minute marks.” Think about simple interventions you can use to keep people engaged: a joke, a quick story, an amazing statistic, your enthusiasm, a micro-conversation, a rhetorical question, a written reflection, a quick video, a demonstration, audience polling, incredible slides with compelling images, a breakout discussion, a question in chat, and your skillful delivery...just to name a few.

In the context of presentations, there are few experiences worse than being stuck in a long and boring presentation. Time moves slowly, your mind is distracted, and the presenter seemingly has no idea

⁵ Sousa, D. A. (2006). *How the brain learns*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, SAGE.

⁶ Bunce, D. M., Flens, E. A., & Neiles, K. Y. (2010). How long can students pay attention in class? A study of student attention decline using clickers. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 87(12), 1438–1443.

⁷ Bradbury, N. A. (2016). Attention span during lectures: 8 seconds, 10 minutes, or more? *Advances in Physiology Education*, 40, 509–513.

how the audience is experiencing them. As we design for time, we keep the voice of Larry Oskowski, National Sales Senior Director at GOJO Industries, in mind. He told us, “I have found that people’s attention spans just aren’t what they are in person. My suggestion is to be concise, include clean slides and graphics, and ensure your presentation is well-timed.”

When you are planning your presentation, then, think to yourself: How do I want the audience to experience time? How do I make the time that they’re spending watching and listening to me more worthwhile than the time they could be spending doing other work?

Design for Interaction & Engagement

“It’s the difference between speaker and facilitator. No matter what you are presenting, no matter who the participants are, you can ask questions, leverage chat, and use other facilitation tools to pull the audience in and engage with them.”

—Jennifer Cowles, Leader of Leadership and Executive Programs at KeyBank

When presenting online, it’s helpful to include a slide at the beginning that has an agenda/learning objectives (or you could even copy and paste it in the chat box, if you are not using slides). Likewise, it’s helpful to include a slide that highlights norms for the session. Doing so will help participants understand *how* they should engage with you, the content, and how they can make the most out of the session.

In addition to an agenda and communicating norms, you will want to design *for* interaction and engagement—meaning you must actively plan for it to happen. Maggie Mills, the 2020 National Champion of the Public Forum Debate in the National Speech and Debate Association, reinforced this point nicely, even in the sphere of high school speech and debate competitions. She suggests that she and her partner are “always just trying to make sure that the judge is engaged and feels like a part of the debate rather than someone on the outside.” We feel the same about presentations. Do people feel like they are a part of the storyline? Or are they on the outside? The following is a list of interventions that can help you provide a learning experience that does not feel like it’s dragging on for participants. Include a handful of these interaction tactics in your presentation to help meet your learning objectives. Intentionally adding some of these tactics throughout your presentation will ensure that attendees will remain focused on *you*—not their email inboxes, their messages, or the clock.

“Make sure you have finished speaking before your audience has finished listening.”

—Dorothy Sarnoff, actress

Interactive moments should not simply be inserted “just to be sure everyone is engaged” or at gratuitous moments to make the audience feel involved. Rather, interactive experiences should *connect to* and *enhance* the overall purpose and objectives of the presentation. We often consider three variables when choosing an interactive tool: timing, purpose, and modality.

1. *Timing* – Remember the 10-minute anecdote we shared earlier? Interactive moments can be strategically placed throughout the presentation to consistently recapture the attention of the audience.
2. *Purpose* – Does the interaction underscore a point or aid in the learning process? Will it allow you to gain some information about the audience? Or does it simply represent a “Hey, are you paying attention to me” moment? We mention the importance of pedagogical purpose here because we have been involved in too many sessions where a gratuitous poll did little to add value. For example, Maria recently attended a session that featured “test your knowledge” poll questions inserted within the Google Slides. Her observation was that this tactic “made us feel like we were in school and the teacher just wanted to be sure we were listening.”
3. *Modality* – We work to incorporate various types of interactive interventions to avoid predictable patterns and learner fatigue—three slides and a poll, three slides and a poll, three slides and a poll. While some presenters may feel constrained by the online environment, there are a number of

options available. The point here is that your objective would determine the best type of interaction to select, especially online.

The Chat Function – Throughout a presentation, the chat function can be used to ask/answer questions in real-time (or to collect them for a Q & A portion after the presentation), secure real-time feedback from participants, provide additional information or links, report out on small group discussions, or even serve as a tool to quickly get to know the audience (i.e., asking everyone to answer questions like “Where is everyone from?” or “What was everyone’s first concert?”). It can also be used to facilitate dialogue—and admittedly, it takes some practice and skill to present *and* facilitate a dialogue, especially online when the dialogue could be happening in the chat box while you are speaking. Jennifer Cowles, Leader of Leadership and Executive Programs at KeyBank, emphasized the difficulty that she has noticed speakers have with managing these two, and also reinforced the importance of facilitation when she told us, “Right now that’s the gap I’m seeing is people can present or speak, but they can’t facilitate a dialogue.” In other words, it is crucial for you to work toward learning how to effectively speak *and* facilitate (even if you designate a co-pilot to help you, which we will address later). We’ve even used the chat function as a tool to conclude the session: “Please post one word in the chat to summarize your experience today.”

Tweeting or Social Media Posts – Some participants enjoy live-tweeting or posting to social media in real-time. For some, the process keeps them engaged and active in their learning. Likewise, this technique can help learners synthesize, summarize, and highlight content that resonates with them. If you are willing to offer that option, be sure to ask the host or organization in advance about social media protocol; they may expect that your presentation remains within the company. If they do permit or encourage social media interaction, address that at the beginning of the session, perhaps creating a hashtag for the session and sharing your social media username.

Polls – Polls represent a nice way to take the “pulse” of an audience, get quick responses, or gauge an audience’s familiarity with or knowledge of a topic. A well-designed poll question can fuel discussion and dialogue for long periods of time. For example, during a webinar about effective learning methods for online courses that Maria attended, the presenter incorporated a poll shortly after the introduction and asked attendees to select which learning model their universities were planning to implement in the upcoming academic year. Participants were given about 1 minute to respond, and then the presenter verbally summarized the results and spoke about their significance before moving into the next part of the presentation. This poll had dual benefits: It allowed the presenter to get a sense of how many people were familiar with or would be working with certain instructional models, and it also helped attendees see how many universities were following similar models (or how many people had no idea which model to follow yet). While polls like this one can be effective moments for quickly checking in, the problem is that oftentimes, presenters do not design powerful polls and quickly move on after reporting the results. In other words, they simply ask a question for no apparent reason beyond “getting the audience involved.” Ideally, polls advance the learning and help the presenter achieve their learning objectives.

“Raise Hand” – The “raise hand” function can be used for yes/no questions (or to allow attendees to indicate that they have a question or would like to speak, which we will discuss later). In essence, the presenter asks a quick and simple question like “How many are familiar with this model?” Answers to these quick questions can help presenters adjust in real-time and either spend more time explaining a concept or adding background information or moving on after being reassured that everyone knows what the presenter is referring to. In addition to quick responses, “raise hand” is also an opportunity to use the wisdom of the group. For instance, “Peter, I noticed you raised your hand. Would you be willing to share how the model has changed your work?” *Note that in the introductory remarks at the beginning of your presentation, you may want to indicate how the “raise hand” function will be used, and to confirm that you are using it.*

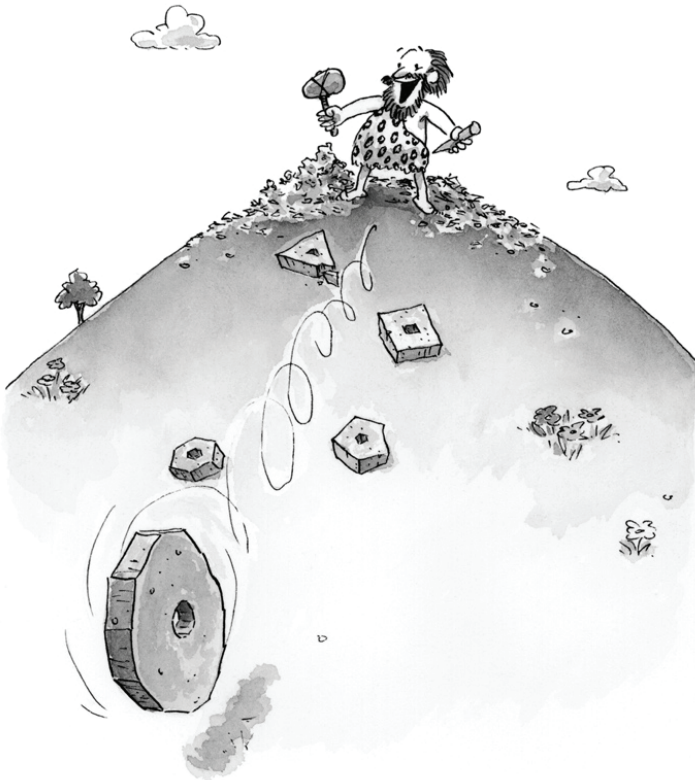
Breakout Rooms/Small Group Dialogue – Small group dialogue provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on the content with others. Similar to polls, we often experience presenters

offering “throwaway” questions, and the breakout is more of a way to switch up the energy versus an activity that advances a learning objective. In addition, there are some important objectives for the breakout sessions that must be considered. The “question” or task you would like the participants to explore needs to be extremely clear; many participants will forget what you asked them to focus on—and will be lost when they are virtually relocated to another room. One option to help participants stay on task is to ask them to take a picture of your screen or write down the question(s) under consideration. Another consideration is time. Timing breakouts in an online presentation differs from a live presentation, so discuss the length with your contact. In our experience, it’s better to provide too little time rather than too much time in the breakout. *Similar to our note about the chat function, we recommend that you include any plans for breakout rooms, discussion, and dialogue into the agenda that you share with participants so they are aware that their engagement will be requested/required at some point.*

Cartoons/Artwork – Scott has a colleague—Ed O’Malley, CEO of the Kansas Leadership Center—who quite effectively uses cartoons as an interactive activity. The cartoon highlighted below in Image 1 was drawn by Pat Byrne and is used when Ed and his team talk about the leadership concept of “Acting Experimentally.” Cartoons are similar to memes in that they communicate a point of view in a quick, often visually appealing manner. As the presenter, you could share a cartoon and then use the chat, a poll, or a breakout to debrief the content. The presenter could also call on a participant to share their viewpoint.

Image 1

Acting Experimentally



Calling on Participants – Open-ended questions that are too vague will result in silence and awkward stares at the screen. “Does anyone have a contribution they would like to share?” or “What are your thoughts on this?” are questions that will often yield little response. “Janelle, would you be willing to share your thoughts on the cartoon? How about you, Joan?” will more likely yield discussion and dialogue. Calling on participants is an important part of the presenter’s options for interaction, particularly if you are familiar with the people with whom you are meeting. Some presenters systematically “go around the room,” while others tap people who have not yet contributed. If you do not know the people to whom you are presenting, your “co-pilot,” or the host of the event, could help you elicit responses by calling on attendees. *Before your planning meetings with the person or organization who hired you, specify some of the ways you would want your audience to participate. You’ll want to ask if it would be ok to call on people, or if you would request that the host/co-pilot assists you with that.*

You’ll want to remember if you choose to call on people that—as we discussed earlier—you cannot control what others are doing on their devices. If a participant is doing something other than focusing on your presentation and does not have an answer to your question or asks you to repeat it, you need to be ready to respond effectively without embarrassing the person.

Shared Google Doc – A nice complement to a breakout room is a shared document where participants have an opportunity to perform a group task, record their group’s answers to guided questions, or brainstorm their solutions to a problem. A shared document keeps participants on track, makes their time in breakout rooms active, and can serve as a nice takeaway for participants and the presenter. If this is the method you’re going to use, have the Google Doc ready and open in a new window, and then copy and paste the link into the chat box so participants can seamlessly transition to the new task.

Reading/Handout – A reading or handout can be an effective tool, particularly if you want your attendees to be prepared with background knowledge and ready to jump into a discussion or to share their questions and comments right away. In education pedagogy, we call this the “flipped classroom” approach. The handout/slide deck can be provided to participants well ahead of the event or in real-time. If you are including a reading in your session, it’s critical to be intentional about how you plan to use it. For example, a 3-minute pause for participants to read a handout with a captive audience may be a nice break from the lecture. Or, your handout could include a section for attendees to take their own notes (either digitally or printed out, if someone prefers handwriting notes). However, be careful—some participants may be on their phone, in their car, on the subway, or in other locations where they do not have access or unable to read the material quickly and easily. Keep accessibility in mind, too (which is why sharing material in advance may be preferred); individuals with visual impairment may need time to enlarge materials on their screens or may use screen readers to have the text read aloud to them, so planned “on demand” reading activities may not align with their reading abilities. On the topic of sharing materials ahead of time, Karen Gilliam, Agency Chief Learning Officer & OD Capability Lead at NASA, shared her preference for that as a way to increase her engagement. She told us, “It’s really nice when I can download the slides and follow along that way.” We agree; some people also learn better when they take their own notes on paper (like Maria, who took notes during all of our interviews for this project, even though the sessions were recorded on Zoom). In fact, Eileen Sheil, Vice President of Communications at Medtronic, essentially made the same comment: “I like to see the slides ahead of time, and then walk me through the deck. If I’m seeing slides for the first time in the meeting, it’s more difficult to digest it all and ask a good question.” These notions, for some learners, may align with your plans to “Design for Stickiness”—if they have handouts in advance and can print them out to write on them, they may be more engaged and remember more.

Activity – An activity or puzzle is an engaging way to introduce a topic or reinforce a point. An “activity” may take up 2 minutes, or 2 hours, depending on presenter objectives. An example of a quick activity is as follows: Scott will often discuss the concept of conceptual blocks, which are “mental barriers that impede an individual’s ability to define or solve a problem.” After providing the definition, he will often share the following puzzle, asking the participants to identify the answer:

“A young boy and his father were out playing football when they were caught at the bottom of a giant pileup. Both were injured and rushed to the hospital. They were wheeled into separate operating rooms and two doctors prepped up to work on them, one doctor for each patient. The doctor operating on the father got started right away, but the doctor assigned to the young boy stared at him in surprise. ‘I can’t operate on him!’ the doctor exclaimed to the staff. ‘That child is my son!’”

Scott then asks participants to digitally raise their hands when they have the answer(s). The story reinforces the concept. In this instance, many people have subconscious rules in their heads that surgeons are “men.”

Admittedly, conducting activities in an online environment is an interesting challenge and we would love to hear your thoughts and ideas. There are a few options, though. These fun little activities catch people’s attention and set a tone of curiosity and wonder.

1. If participants have a common set of supplies, perhaps the presenter tasks them with a universal challenge that requires them to build, draw, or create something.
2. There are several online resources, such as www.mural.co, that allow for visual collaboration. Resources such as Mural allow users to actively participate in ways similar to face-to-face meetings.
3. Task participants with securing a “special object” that represents their passion for the topic being discussed, their family, a hobby, or a concept.
4. Perform a quick demonstration, or some other physical manifestation of your opening point. For instance, Scott has used the **Changing Perspective Activity**⁸ to discuss the importance of perspective. He has also used the **Point North Activity**⁹ to highlight the challenge of getting everyone on the same page (Links to these resources can be found at www.captovation.ai/book).

Video – Similar to face-to-face presentations, video is an important tool that can emphasize a point and aid in participant learning. In an online environment, we have found that it’s best to provide participants with a link in the chat and allow them to watch the video on their own equipment. Streaming a video live on your device for everyone to view through your shared screen is not recommended because you do not have control over the internet connections of participants; so while the video may play clearly on your computer and on the devices of some, others may see a choppy video where the sound skips and the picture freezes. When introducing the video, presenters should ask their host or a participant to provide a “thumbs up” or indicator when the video is complete.

For accessibility purposes, try to obtain or add in captions for any videos that you include in your presentation (and if someone is watching the video on a device where the sound does not work or in an environment where the volume needs to be low, that will be beneficial as well).

Another consideration is an audio clip from a famous speech or interview. The *History Channel* has a wonderful database to choose from. Practice this ahead of time to ensure participants can hear your audio, but this is another way to share information in a unique and different way.

Compelling Images/Graphics – Similar to cartoons, slides that feature striking images are another important feature that can aid in participant interaction and engagement. For instance, the website *Information is Beautiful* provides guests with powerful graphical images of information that can fuel dialogue, or emphasize a key point. There are also interactive websites that allow presenters to share their screen and interact with the data. For example, www.gapminder.org provides a powerful graphical representation of how an increase in income has positively impacted life expectancy.

It bears mentioning again here that you need to be mindful of the variety of devices attendees tune in on; thus, if you are incorporating images and graphics, try to keep them simple and uncluttered. One point

⁸ Bolger, M. *Changing Perspective*. The Safe Zone Project. <https://thesafezoneproject.com/activities/changing-perspective/>

⁹ Reece, R. (2012, May 6). *Management, Leadership, & Followership*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWMH_vXm5BY&t=9s

that Micki Byrnes, Ed Markey, Eileen Sheil, and Larry Oskowski all agreed on was that slides should not be packed with complicated graphics and text. Select or create images and graphics that make it easy for the conversation to move forward, instead of spending time reading what is on the graphic or explaining everything on the image.

Thought-Provoking Question – A well-designed, well-placed, and thoughtful question can be an excellent engagement intervention. In our experience, there’s a couple of important considerations. First, does the question have a little “heat” to it? In other words, is it provocative and will it spark engagement? Second, is the question open-ended and can it be explored from multiple perspectives?

Consistent Breaks – For meetings longer than an hour, it’s critical to build in 5–10-minute breaks so participants can refresh and re-center. Even a quick 5-minute break can help prevent fade and ensure that participants are getting the most of your presentation or workshop. When you signal a break, remind attendees to keep themselves muted and encourage them to turn off their video momentarily, if it is not off already. When they re-enable their video, you will get a sense of when most people have returned and are ready to resume the presentation. At the beginning of the break, you could start a timer and share your screen so you can then take a quick break as well, and so you and the attendees all stay on track with a fixed amount of time.

Design for a Smooth “Day of” Experience

Displaying Expertise Across Platforms

Sharing tips and tricks for each platform is outside the scope of this book. However, whether you are using Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Zoom, GoToMeeting, or other platforms, it’s critical that you display competence. This means that if you are unfamiliar with a new platform, be sure to schedule a time to practice and clearly understand its nuances.

Negotiating the platform is a new reality, so that is why we recommend that you ask which platform you’ll be using during your planning meeting; getting that information early on will give you time to read up, practice, and plan for nuances. “I am not familiar with _____ platform” is not what we want to hear from a presenter. Watch some tutorials on YouTube, read a couple of articles, and most importantly, practice. When you download and create an account for a new platform, there will often be “help” sections or tips that appear as well.

Designate a Co-Pilot

As we briefly mentioned earlier, it can be helpful to have a co-pilot for your presentation. Among other duties, this person monitors the chat function, watches for raised hands (e.g., questions), posts links, conducts the polls, keeps track of time, monitors for engagement, and places people into breakout rooms. The inclusion of the co-pilot, and how useful it can be, was underscored by Larry Oskowski, National Sales Senior Director at GOJO Industries, who told us, “We’ve assigned somebody in certain cases to watch for the questions as they’re coming up.” The co-pilot can also let the presenter know when slight hiccups have occurred (e.g., people cannot see your screen). Designating the role of co-pilot allows you to focus on *delivering* the presentation.

It’s critical to determine *how* you and your co-pilot will communicate during the presentation. Will they simply interrupt and provide you with an update? Will they text you? Private message you? Scott prefers texting because it allows him to quickly glance rather than click on the chat feature while speaking.

One word of warning: The concept of the co-pilot can also diminish your impact if overused. Scott recently received an unsolicited email from Ty McTigue, Director of Enterprise Solution Sales at Acuity Brands, who commented, “The amount of times I cringe when someone on a Teams/Zoom/Skype

meeting says ‘next slide please’ is astronomical! They lose me right at that moment...it’s infuriating almost. Ask for control before you present.” While we certainly acknowledge that everyone is going to have a different opinion about norms and preferences, we include all of these to emphasize the importance of making these choices consciously; if you can have control of your slides, we advocate for that, and suggest that your co-pilot help with chat and Q & A. In some instances (e.g., with multiple presenters), you may not have control of your slides.

Provide a Technology Tour

If participants are unfamiliar with the technology, the host should provide a brief tour of the technology so participants understand the basic functionalities of the software. The host should share the basics and let participants know what they should do if they have technological difficulties.

Announcements

Similar to live performances, the host should share “housekeeping” announcements regarding agenda, norms, timing, and tech support.

Outline Desired Norms

The host should ensure participants understand the norms of behavior for the session. Common norms for the host to cover include:

- *Questions* – “Please post questions in the chat function and we will address them at the end,” or “Feel free to ask questions throughout. Please use the ‘raise hand’ function and the speaker will address your question,” or “The chat box will be enabled, although I will not be able to address anything submitted until the end.”
- *Audio* – “Please ensure that your audio is on mute.”
- *Cameras* – “Please be sure to turn on your screens” or “Please be sure to turn on your video while in the breakout rooms.”
- *Chat Function* – “Feel free to make comments, share resources, or post your feedback in the chat function throughout the session. I will periodically pause the speaker and share what I’m seeing.”

Conclusion—It’s All About Them

Too many presenters slap together a deck with little concern for what they are putting into motion. When Scott coaches executives, physicians, and students, he finds that it is clear when a client has designed without the audience in mind. Some indicators include: long periods of talking, low levels of interaction, a complex and cumbersome slide deck, and lack of structure (e.g., no introduction, no roadmap, and little awareness of the ultimate objective).

Another indicator is a lack of planning for the “day of” experience. When asked even the most basic questions (e.g., “what platform will you be presenting on?”), they don’t have an answer. And the concepts of a practice session and a co-pilot are not even on their radar. Often, these considerations are easy enough to fix, and in the end, they will set up the presenter for success.

Our primary goal with this chapter is to prompt you to adopt the “you view” (which is a prominent viewpoint in Maria’s business communications courses). Instead of viewing your presentations as an opportunity for you to be on the virtual stage and talk about what *you* know, we encourage you to think of your presentations as a chance for the *audience* to learn something important not only from you, but also from themselves as individual participants and perhaps even as a larger group. In short, this chapter reminds you to think about what it would look like to be an audience member before you even begin writing any notes or designing any slides.

Video 1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fuTzJQ8JIs>

Video 2 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v0mW_0tk