



9 Steps to Create a Kick-Ass Presentation from Scratch

So, you've been tasked to do a presentation for school or work, and you don't know where to start?

These 9 steps will guide you through the process of creating a kick-ass presentation from scratch, whether it be in PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides, Prezi or any other presentation software of your choice.

This guide is designed to mitigate feeling overwhelmed during the creation process, whilst maximising the impact of your information. In addition, through this process, you become intimately aware of your material which will make it a lot easier to present in front of an audience.

For more information, visit www.purplestickystar.com.

Best of luck and make this process as much fun as possible!

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HESTER #



Step 1:
Set the
presentation's
function and
foundation

Before you start creating your presentation, it is essential to define the necessary parameters helping you to focus on the successful outcome of the presentation. Additionally, by setting the foundation of your presentation, you will have a starting point to build the presentation from.

You do this by answering the following questions: Why? Who? What? How?

Why?

Define the purpose of your presentation.

Why are you giving this presentation and what do you hope to achieve? What action should the audience take?

- The purpose is the reason for creating your presentation. It will help you focus on what is important and what the best solution would be to reach that goal. Whenever you feel lost or confused during this process, reflect on your presentation's purpose and use it to bring yourself back on track.
- When you communicate the purpose of your presentation to your audience, it provides them with deeper understanding.

Who?

Define your audience.

Who are you talking to? What is important to them? What do they value? How do they process information? How much detail do they require?

- Have a clear understanding of who your audience is and how to connect with them. Creating a presentation from your audience's perspective will ensure that you craft a message best received by them. You'll know what to include and what approach to take.
- As you go through this process, keep reflecting on your target audience and use it to sense check your presentation.

What?

Set your presentation boundaries.

What do you need to deliver? Is a presentation your best option? Will it be displayed on a big screen, on your laptop or on a tablet? Do you need to provide a handout?

- How much time do you have to present? Keeping in mind that you need time before and after your presentation for general introductions and to answer any questions. This will determine how many slides you can create and how much time you have for each slide.

How?

What could be the best way to reach your goal.

Do not worry if you don't have clarity at this stage yet. Focus on what you do know, and start thinking of what you could include. As you proceed through the following steps, you'll start gaining better clarity and understanding.

- Start with a brain dump - write down everything you know about the topic, what you think could be the best way to convey your message to the audience, and all the information you could include in the presentation.



<< Tip: Write the answers to these crucial questions down and refer to them whenever you feel lost or have to make a pivotal decision. **>>**

Step 2: Collect the information

What information do you need to collect in order for you to achieve your presentation goal?

- Use your brain dump as a starting point. If your knowledge is lacking, do re-search.
- Collect as much information as possible - and don't worry about how it all fits in. It is better to develop a wider understanding of your topic and then eliminate the unnecessary information as you go along.
- Next, assimilate the information - read it all and start forming an understanding of your source material.



<< Tip: *It's easier to assimilate information when it's collected in one space, such as Word, Evernote or a note book. And remember to include your sources. >>*

Step 3: Simplify

In this step you are going to take the large amount of information that you have collected, and simplify it in a way that makes it easier for you to grasp the information as a whole.

- When you assimilate the information you collected, start noticing and finding similarities.
- Group your information into similar:
 - Themes
 - Ideas
 - Insights
 - Concepts
- Give each group a name or a short description.
- These are your **Concept Groups**. Note that some of these Concept Groups might comprise of a their own set of sub-groups.

Step 4: Gain an overview

Get an overview of your information by looking at all these simplified Concept Groups as a whole, in one space.

- Write down all your Concept Groups names/descriptions in one space. Some ideas to do this:
 - List them; or
 - Write it in a mindmap format; or
 - Write each Concept Group name/description on separate post-it notes and stick it on a big piece of paper; or
 - Type each Concept Group name/description as headings on separate slides in PowerPoint*, and select the "Slide Sorter" view option to see them all. (*Technically we do this in Step 6, but it can be easier for some to start using it in this step).
- When you look at all the Concept Groups in one space, what connections are you starting to notice between these groups. Shuffle them around and play with the flow until a "story" is revealed.
- This is your **"Presentation Structure"**.



<< Tip: *The post-it notes and PowerPoint "Slide Sorter" view techniques are useful here as you can physically move the Concept Groups around into a noticeable slide structure. >>*



Step 5:
Refine your
Presentation
Structure

- Is there a logical flow of reasoning in your information?
- Does it reveal a story?
- Structure the information from a broad/“big picture” perspective to detail perspective. Provide meaning or context before jumping into detail.
- Include any missing and remove unnecessary information.
- Test the flow of your Presentation Structure out loud a few times. How does it flow? Is everything making sense? Are you within your allotted time to give the presentation? Make adjustments as you go along.

Step 6:
Put it down into
PowerPoint*

Add your Concept Groups in the Presentation Structure order as headings on slides - one Concept Group per slide. (Unless you’ve done this in Step 4 already).

- At this stage, decide on a visual theme for the design elements you’ll be using in your presentation. Remember that too many design elements might subtract from the impact you are trying to make, so it is better to keep it to as few as possible. You can input many of these elements as part of your “Master Slide” to avoid having to format each individual slide.
 - Slide background image/colour
 - Fonts (2 kinds at most)
 - Type of shapes (e.g. circles, squares, call out signs, triangles, etc.)
 - Effects (e.g. drop shadows, outer glow, etc. - 1 at most)
 - Animation / Slide Transitions (1 at most)
 - Colours (3 at most)
 - Types of images (e.g. sepia, illustrations, cartoons, photos, etc.)
- These can all be tweaked in the future

* Or any other presentation software you use.

Step 7:
Expand on each
slide

Now that you have defined your Presentation Structure, you can expand on each slide with relevant data, visual representation or proof.

- Refer to your source material for ideas or facts that you can use for this purpose.
- For each slide, ask: What is the purpose of this slide? What is it trying to communicate? What is the best way to illustrate it?
- Utilise visual storytelling

**Tips on Visual
Storytelling**

- Relies on a visual way to illustrate your concept - think of graphs, shapes and infographics.
- Avoid text-heavy slides and too many bullet-points.
- Find ways to illustrate patterns.
- Use metaphors or comparisons to provide context.
- Short clips
- Due to the Picture Superiority Effect principle, combining images or visuals with text increases audience retention.



Step 8:
Add auxiliary
slides and clean
up design

- Add all your supplementary slides - e.g. Title slide, Agenda slide, Objective slide, Sub-Section Title slides, Closing slide, etc.
- In some instances you might note a common theme in your presentation that you'd like to illustrate using your design elements. Incorporate this theme into all your slides if it contributes to the overall experience of your presentation.
- Finalise the design of each slide.
- Look more professional by:
 - “aligning” and distributing items evenly,
 - ensuring that all your images are displaying correctly and are not pixelated,
 - do a final quality check.

Step 9:
Practise and Test
your Presentation

- Do this out loud - like a dry run.
- In front of the mirror or someone you trust.
- Refine your presentation as you practise.
- Are you keeping within the allocated time limit? Adjust your presentation until you do.

Present

Well done - now you can go and present your information!

Need help?

Creating beautiful presentations take skill and time to develop, so don't stress if at first you struggle to apply this process. If you are ever in a Presentation Pinch - here's how I can help you:

Presentation Coaching

Creating a presentation and you don't know where to start or what to do? Let me coach you through the 9 Step Process.

Presentation Diagnosis

Unsure if your presentation is hitting the mark? Let me diagnose it and provide you with valuable actionable input.

Presentation Design

Increase the WOW-factor of your presentation with beautiful impactful design.

My vision is to create awesomeness with information, and I am open to projects that will help me achieve this.

Stay in touch by subscribing to my newsletter where I share more musings, teachings and creative thinking around presentations and information design.

