

The TRUE impact checklist



Let's take it as a given that the point of your presentation is to have some sort of impact. That might be on what other people do, or what they think (about you or about an external topic).

Otherwise, why make the presentation in the first place?

In that case, it's a good idea for us to make sure our presentations are more likely to have that impact, right? So here's a simple checklist for your presentation: is your presentation **TRUE**?



TRUE isn't a set of specific tools – instead there are almost any number of tools you can use for each letter of the acronym. Hey, this is just a freebie after all! ;)

TRUE stands for:

- Trust** – can your audience *trust* you and do they trust your presentation's content?
- Remember** – do the people in your audience *remember* what they've heard and seen?
- Understand** – did people “*get it*”? And how can you make it more likely that they do?
- Execute** – how do you make it more likely that people *execute* (act) on your presentation's content.

Yes, I could have just said Act, not Execute, but that would have messed up the acronym! 😊

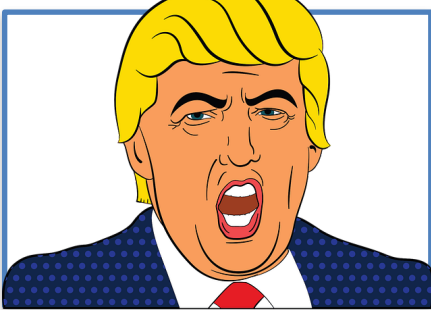
Let's look at each of these in a tiny bit more detail.

Trust in presentations

It's really important to recognise that there are two distinct things your audience needs to trust – **you** and **your content**. I've consciously put them in that order, because you're the medium for the message. If people don't trust the medium they **can't** trust the content. You've only got to think of different newspapers to see what I'm getting at...

Imagine a paper which tends to be on the opposite side of the political spectrum to you. If their headline “XYZ” says you tend to write it off with a “Well they would say that wouldn’t they?!” - particularly if that contradicts what you currently believe.

It’s hard to give much credibility to content from a source you don’t trust.



Letting my politics show for a moment, if Donald Trump started to give a presentation I’d be very inclined to assume the content was, at best, biased and half informed.

All of this means you need to present yourself as credible **before you even begin to give people your content**. If your audience works with you (so they know you

and – presumably – trust you), you can do that before the presentation starts. Otherwise you need to do it in the first few sentences.

([See this blog](#) about doing that by using a Credibility Statement instead of an Introduction.)



Content-level trust is more of a slow burn. For example, references are important but putting those things in your presentation will slow things down. (Besides, people don’t usually remember that kind of thing.) Fortunately, while people **need** to know that your content has been validated and they can find out how if they ask you, but they **don’t** typically need that validation in the presentation itself (beware - this is a generalisation!).

Consider backing up information with case-study examples, not just statistics. If you give statistics, convert them to things people understand not just abstracts. “X million people” means nothing, but “the equivalent of Y” will be powerful - where Y is the city where you’re presenting. Not only will it make your presentation more interesting (well, it should!) but it gives real-world-credibility (see later) which builds trust.

Remembering your presentation

It's hard for people to act on stuff they can't remember. Your aim should be to help people remember things. Simple really. Patterns and other techniques help.

([See this article](#) about how to get more stuff remembered.)



But don't get **too** hung up on people remembering the content.

Sometimes all your audience needs to be able to do is remember that there **was** convincing content.

If you've convinced them to do ABC, it's often *helpful* if they can remember *how* they were convinced, but what they need is to remember that:

- They **were** convinced
- If they want to, they can get the information they need to check out that conviction.

Once you get the hang of that, your presentation will be less of an anxiety-inducing nightmare for both you and the audience.

In the meantime, just go back over your presentation and see what you've done to make things more memorable:

- Patterns?
- Visuals?
- Emotional hooks?
- Case studies and examples (stories)?
- High quality handouts?



Understanding your presentation

Strictly speaking, people don't **need** to understand you if they trust you enough, but it certainly helps!

Again there are a zillion tools for helping people understand things, such as matching the medium to the message but this is just a checklist! Go back over your presentation – does it *really* help people understand? Or is it designed (intentionally or not!) just to give them information? That's very different!

Worse, is your presentation designed to obfuscate¹? Or to make you look good. Are you setting yourself up as the only person who can understand this “very complicated thing” that they can’t understand.



Do the 12 year old test. If you gave your presentation to a bunch of smart 12 year olds, would they get it? If not, take a very hard look at it. You might be presenting to adults but they’re busy and not as fascinated by your topic as you are (otherwise they’d be the ones making the presentation). That means a 12 year old’s brain might be a great thing to aim at!

Executing on your presentation

Everything else has been, to be blunt, a means to an end. The end is getting people to actually **do** something with the results/content of your presentation. The better you’ve done the T R U the easier you’ll find this bit, but there are a couple of specific things to keep in mind here - and mostly they’re taken from work on advertising “calls to action” (C2A).

Your presentation’s C2A should be:

Blatant and obvious - if people aren’t sure what to do, they do nothing.

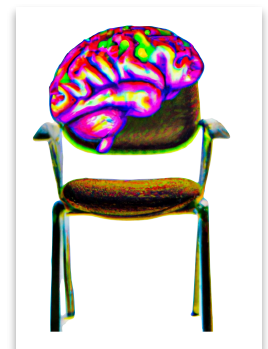
Here’s an embarrassing example. I’m writing this in the run up to Christmas. During my shopping I found a pop-up shop that I’d not seen before and I wanted to support the local traders... but as I peered in I couldn’t see the system. I didn’t know how to pay, or how the stalls were laid out.

I didn’t “get” the place - it looked confusing... and so, rather than look like an idiot by doing the wrong thing, I did nothing. I moved on to a “safer” shop.

Be blatant; be obvious. Don’t say “Get in touch”, say “Call me on this number”.

Simple and one-step - audience brains try to be “lazy” and don’t like working too hard. (Except me, obviously. I’m “efficient”. Honestly!) Not only do they need to know what

¹ Yeah, I’m aware of the irony of using the word “obfuscate” when I could say something “make harder to understand! ;)”



to do it needs to be easy. Don't say "find me on Linked In". Instead, provide them with the link and say "[Click here to find me on Linked In](#)". The first option requires more effort...

You get the idea.



And if you need them to make more than one change, it's obviously even harder. One trick you should consider is to get them to take the first step and then talk about the second. Don't put them off at the start by telling them that it's going to be complex and messy.

I'm not suggesting fibbing to anyone of course, but it's better to have people take one step and get a bit of an improvement than have nobody make any change, even if they'd have made a bigger change if they had done (if you see what I mean.

Reluctant Storyteller and the 69Stories Challenge

I mentioned in the section about trust that you should use case studies and examples. That's sometimes easier said than done of course, so I've put together two resources that will help (probably a lot!).

The **Reluctant Storyteller** is an ebook and set of free video resources that you can [access here](#). It's bit of a zombie offer to be honest? What's a zombie offer? It's our term for a 'no brainer'.

... but knowing how to tell stories isn't much use if you've got no stories to tell!

Enter **69stories**. It's a hybrid of a challenge and training.

By the end of the month - if you can keep up with the challenge - you'll have a library of stories to use... collected, collated, ordered, catalogued and (probably) memorised!

You'll also be much better at telling them too, 'cos of the training elements!

How do you get it? A set of emails with training videos and challenges as well as references to key resources online. Honestly, I wish I'd used this myself ten years ago! [Take a look here](#).

