

Want to Deliver an Unforgettable Presentation? Use These 4 Proven Strategies From TED Talks

'Death by PowerPoint' needs to stop. Here's a rescue plan.

By [Glenn Leibowitz](#)

Jargon-loaded bullet points, cheesy clip art, mind-numbingly dull charts: What's not to hate about today's [business presentations](#)?

Let's face it, there's an epidemic that's spreading through corporate boardrooms, an epidemic that is even infiltrating the hip hangouts of the hot startups of the day: The slide-driven presentation.

Slides may have been cool once. Like in 1998. Today, they've morphed into a crutch for the speaker, and a distraction for the audience.

But there is a [better way to present](#). And it has been proven to work extremely well at delivering complex and compelling ideas to millions of people.

I'm talking about [TED Talks](#).

Since the first TED conference in 1984, thousands of TED Talks with "ideas worth spreading" have inspired and educated millions of people around the world.

Done well, a TED Talk has the power to provoke deep thinking around topics that matter. They might even motivate you to make decisions that

will change the course of your company forever.

Here are a few ways TED Talks can serve as the perfect cure for "Death by PowerPoint."

1. TED Talkers engage more directly with the audience.

Slides exert a ridiculously high gravitational pull on the eyeballs of the presenter. Many business presenters spend too much time looking at their slides, or looking down at their notes, rather than looking at the audience to whom they are supposedly addressing their message.

TED Talkers don't do this. They usually stand or sit facing the audience, and for most of their presentation, they speak to them. They engage with their audience. Sure, TED Talkers often use a few simple visuals to get their message across. But they never spend more than a few moments to look at them, nor do they try to read text from them.

2. TED Talks are story driven.

Even if you're not really interested in the topic or content of a TED Talk, I dare you to not be interested in the stories TED speakers use to deliver their messages. TED Talkers talk about the moments in their lives that changed them and their world. They are often deeply personal, and for that reason, entirely authentic and compelling.

Business presentations? Snore.

When was the last time you heard a presentation that opened with an interesting story that made you want to hear what happens next? That's what I thought.

Business presenters can borrow basic storytelling elements like the "hero's journey" that describe how the hero (you, the presenter) overcomes an insurmountable challenge and learns something new along the way.

Sound far-fetched? Why not give it a try?

3. There's a hard stop at 18 minutes.

TED Talkers are given a maximum of 18 minutes to present their ideas in the most innovative and engaging ways they can. So why not set a time limit to business presentations? Knowing he has a limited time to deliver his speech should focus the speaker's energy on delivering his message in the most impactful way possible.

4. They won't cost a lot.

Do you know how much your company is spending on preparing slide presentations? Why not invest the time in crafting a compelling story and finding a few killer images to convey your message? Imagine the time your colleagues will save, time they can spend on actually getting real work done.

Now that's an idea worth spreading, isn't it?