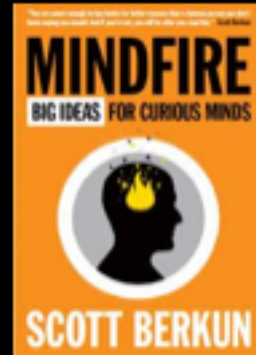




When The Dog Eats Your Slides: Overcoming Tough Presentation Situations

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5 popular books written over ten years. Free chapters for the curious, blurbs for the impressionable.

FREE THING #1: Checklist

HOW TO PREPARE:
Checklist for Great Talks by Scott Berkun

1 BEFORE THE EVENT

- ☐ Ask yourself these questions:
Who is the audience? Why are they coming?
Can organizer provide demographics?
Can you look at last year's programs? Were there reviews of the event on blogs?
What are other speakers speaking about?
Will this be a keynote lecture (more scripted) or small (more interactive)?
- ☐ Create a list of questions audience will want answered in the talk.
- ☐ Prioritize the list and sketch out stories / ideas / points
- ☐ Budget at least 10x time to prepare (1 hour talk will take roughly 10 hours of preparation)
- ☐ Develop ten minutes of rough draft material
- ☐ Practice the ten minutes. Do not procrastinate.
- ☐ Revise material when it doesn't work, then practice again from beginning. Repeat as necessary.
- ☐ Do a test run in front of people who will give honest feedback (Or videotape and watch)
- ☐ Practice with a clock with goal to end reliably with an extra 5 minutes
- ☐ Ask for emergency contact cell phone number, give organizer yours
- ☐ Get directions to the venue, including office-park insanity, and within building insanity
- ☐ If appropriate, post slides to web, include URL at end of talk

2 LEAVING FOR THE EVENT

- ☐ Get an hour of exercise that morning or night before
- ☐ Check laptop: do you have all cables? Is it working fine? Are slides on it? Battery charged?
- ☐ Bring backup slides on flash drive / Extra-backup online somewhere / Print back-up of slides
- ☐ Bring remote control: Check battery
- ☐ Shower, shave, prune, scrub, brush, deodorize
- ☐ Ensure you avoid all avoidable stress (get there early no matter what)

3 AT THE EVENT

- ☐ Register and let organizer know you've arrived
- ☐ Find your room and watch another speaker speak in it. Notice anything?
- ☐ If time allows, mingle and meet people who might be in your audience
- ☐ Return to room to catch (at least) tail end of last speaker before you – maximize time to set up.
- ☐ Get laptop hooked up to projector immediately. Most problems occur here.
- ☐ Find tech person, or call organizer. You'll need their help to get microphone set up or for tech issues.
- ☐ Test remote and fancy videos.
- ☐ Walk the stage and get comfortable. Ask someone to look at you and your slides to flag any issues.
- ☐ Make sure you have a glass of water or preferred beverage at the lectern.
- ☐ Sit in the back row and imagine yourself on stage. Check that the text on your slides is readable.
- ☐ Relax. You're prepared and all set. Nothing you do now will change anything. Enjoy the ride.
- ☐ If needed, distract yourself by going for a walk or other physical activity

4 AFTER THE EVENT

- ☐ If there is another scheduled speaker, get out of their way so they can get set up
- ☐ Make yourself visible so people can find you to ask questions about your talk
- ☐ Write questions from attendees on their business cards so you can answer in email later
- ☐ Post slides online or to Slideshare if appropriate
- ☐ Email people who gave you their cards, answering their questions
- ☐ Thank the organizer and ask for any feedback (positive/negative)
- ☐ If your talk was videotaped, ask for a copy so you can watch and improve.
- ☐ Have a beer

<http://bit.ly/speakchecklist>

Covers all the basics in an easy to use, printable format

FREE THING #2: Chapter from Confessions of a Public Speaker



<http://bit.ly/speakingfear>

FREE THING #3: The 6 big lessons from the book



<http://bit.ly/confesstalk>

Basic advice, quickly (Chp 13)

- Practice, but don't rehearse
- Answer the 5 common questions for audience
- Provide a rhythm the audience can follow
- Take an interesting angle (title should define it)
- Create slides late in the process
- Find a way to enjoy yourself

Craft thoughtful titles

Bad:

- Intro to Basket Weaving
- Panel on intermediate sandwich making
- Nuclear weapon carnage analysis

Good:

- 5 weaving skills you can learn today
- The most important questions about sandwiches
- Lessons learned from mass destruction

List of common speaking situations (Chp 15)

- My toughest moment is when I realize my talk is not tailored for the audience.
- You're being heckled
- Everyone is staring at their laptops / phones
- Your time slot gets cut from 45 to 10 minutes
- Everyone in the room hates you
- One guy won't stop asking questions
- There is a rambling question that makes no sense
- You are asked an impossible question
- The microphone breaks
- Your laptop explodes
- There is a typo on your slide (nooooooooo!)
- You're late for you're own talk
- You feel sick
- You're running out of time
- You left your slides at home
- Your hosts are control freaks
- You have a wardrobe malfunction
- There are only 5 people in the audience

“You’re late for your own talk”

- **You suck.**
- Let the organizer know immediately. Give them a chance to reorganize or take an extra break.
- Once you arrive and get set, take a long deep breath. Rushing won’t help anyone.
- Apologize to everyone, once.
- Do a shortened version.



“Everyone is staring at their laptop”

- Maybe they're on twitter talking about how awesome you are? Or taking notes?
- Pay more attention to people who are giving you theirs. Smile at them. Thank them.
- Stop halfway - ask a volunteer on twitter/chat to ask questions from the backchannel

“My toughest moment is when I realize my talk is not tailored for the audience.”

- **Checklist:** ask organizer for demographics about the audience and level of expertise.
- Poll the audience yourself early on: “How many of you have never done X? Have done it twice? Do it every day?”
- Shorten each section to get to Q&A sooner. The sooner you let the audience drive, the better.

“I wait too long to put together the presentation and I work on the presentation during other sessions.”

- **You suck**
- You are disrespecting the audience
- If your brain surgeon said to you “I waited too long to plan your operation... but ‘here goes!’” you’d be livid. Don’t do this to people.
- See Chapter 5 “Do Not Eat The Microphone”



“I obsess about not making a mistake, which magnifies in my head until I turn into a rambling, panicky pile of goo.”

- No one knows what you planned to say. You're not doing Shakespeare.
- Practice > Rehearsal. Aim for comfort, not perfection.
- Amygdala = primal fear. An hour of exercise before a talk works wonders.



CES 2014

Michael Bay
DIRECTOR

“I have to give a lecture during dinner”

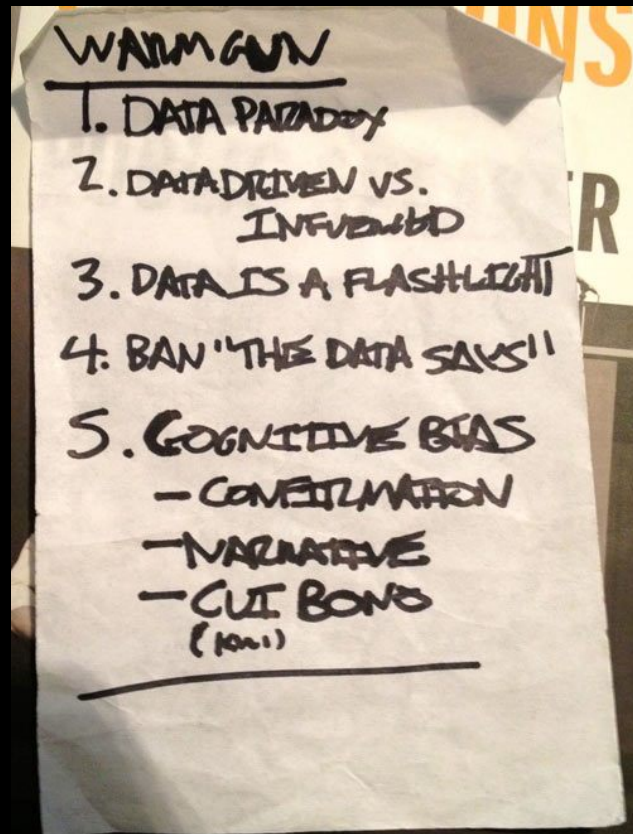
- Avoid this - it's unfair to everyone.
- Make it shorter and simpler.
- Ask about the quality of audio system (will they hear you easily over meal noise?)
- Can you speak at end of meal? (Will help convince organizer to keep it short)
- Style should be less formal.

“Bono’s talk was amazing and I’m next”

- People switch channels on TV/web often. You will be a switch in energy. Stick to your plan.
- It’s good to start talks without intros: tell an opening story. We have narrative brains.
- On video no one will know.
- Star comedians and bands always have a warm up act to energize the crowd. Following a good lecture means the room is warm.

“The laptop / projector / microphone explodes”

- Prevention: Ask for a test run early in the day / Get there early.
- Don't make the audience watch you do tech troubleshooting. After 7 minutes, give up.
- Structure your talk around 5 main points. Have them written down. At worst you can present a mini-version.



How To Present Without Slides
<http://bit.ly/slidesfree>

“You’re being heckled”

- No one is rooting for the heckler. They came to hear you.
- You have all the power (microphone)
- Politely ask them to hold questions and comments until the end. Then continue.
- If they persist ask the host to remove them (you will likely get applause).
- Hecklers are **RARE**.

“There is a rambling question that makes no sense and takes 3 minutes to ask”

- Realize the audience hates these people.
- Interrupting them is fine after 45 seconds.
- Reform their ‘question’ into something simpler
- Offer to them to email you later if they come up with a revised version

“You are asked an impossible question”

- Learn to say three words: “I don’t know”. They are easy to say.
- Always offer your business card and offer to answer on email when you have time to think it over (and can do research).
- Offer the question to the audience. The asker doesn’t care **who** solves their problem.

“During a webcast on public speaking you don’t cover every possible situation in the universe and people yell in horror ‘he didn’t cover X! OMG!’”

Always save time for Q&A.

Photo credits

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- Stage: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jkroll/6479906635/>
- Laptop class: <http://blog.chron.com/techblog/2011/05/with-chromebooks-googles-hitting-apple-microsoft-where-they-live/>

Thanks. Questions?

@berkun / scottberkun.com (1600+ posts)

Checklist: <http://bit.ly/speakchecklist>

Overcoming fear: <http://bit.ly/speakingfear>

6 best tips (video): <http://bit.ly/confesstalk>

Present without slides: <http://bit.ly/slidefree>

