



The 5 Metrics You Need to Know to Give a Great Presentation

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Prezi Blog in Noah Zandan, Prezi for Business

Here are Noah Zandan's five essential metrics to give a presentation that engages the audience and drives results:

1. 15 seconds—the amount of time you have to make a positive first impression on your audience.

From the moment you step on stage, your audience will make an assessment of you and then look for evidence to confirm their first impressions. This subconscious phenomena is called thin slicing - and we all do it. Research shows that the first fifteen seconds of a presentation are the most important because 90% of your audience's initial judgments remain the same even after you've given your presentation. Knowing this, you want to do everything in your power to make a positive first impression to ensure that initial judgment swing in your favor. How? Dress for success, be prepared, know your audience and don't forget to smile.

2. 5 minutes—the average audience attention span.

Our attention spans have decreased from 12 to 5 minutes in the past ten years. Blame Twitter, blame Facebook—point your finger wherever you'd like, but the truth is, we just don't pay attention like we used to. In fact, in one 24 hour period, the average working American checks her phone up to 150 times and is exposed to over 34GB of content—that's the equivalent of 38.7 hours (or 1.6 days) of HD video on YouTube! With all this competition for your audience's attention, engagement has never been more important.

The nemesis of audience engagement is boredom, so you must keep your presentation interesting. Incorporate unique visual aids [Prezis], brief anecdotes, jokes, quantitative and qualitative examples into your talk, and use your voice as a communication tool by changing your tone and volume to enhance your message. And, whatever you do, never turn off the lights!

3. 10%—Get to the point! The percentage of your speech dedicated to your introduction.

This metric is especially important given the short attention span of your audience. The average professional tunes out of a presentation within the first 60 seconds, so make sure you cut to the chase. Start with a bang—the first words out of your mouth should instantly pique the interest of your audience. Then, once you have their attention, give them a reason to stay focused—tell them what they will learn if they pay attention, or tantalize them with a sneak peek of the exciting information you're about to deliver.

4. 12 words—the maximum number of words that should be projected on your screen at a time.

When we learn, there's a limit to how much information we can absorb at once. So judge your slides like a marketing director—your projected information should function like a billboard. The audience should be able to quickly understand the visual aid before turning their attention back to you—so cut the text and crank up the images. Luckily, tools like Prezi are perfect for this.

Studies show that people absorb more information when narration is accompanied by visual aids, as opposed to text. If your audience is too busy reading your slides they're not focusing on what you have to say! Remember, you're the star of the show and your visual aids are your backup dancers.

5. 100% of your audience will appreciate your speech ending on time

Audiences are selfish. Your audience comes to your presentation with very clear expectations for how much time they've taken out of their busy days to listen to you. If you violate those expectations, you run the risk of being remembered not as a fantastic speaker but rather as the speaker who didn't stop talking. When you're speaking, you want your audience to feel like time just flew by – and, most importantly, you want to leave your audience hungry for more.

Noah Zandan is the co-founder and CEO of [Quantified Impressions](http://www.quantifiedimpressions.com), the leading global provider of personal, professional, and organizational communication analytics. Noah and his team analyze presentations to provide public speakers with feedback on how to become more effective. This Article originally appeared on Prezi (<http://blog.prezi.com/>).

