


# **PUBLIC SPEAKING AND PRESENTATION WORKSHOP**

**TECHBASH — SEPTEMBER 2024**



***“ACCORDING TO MOST STUDIES, PEOPLE'S  
NUMBER ONE FEAR IS PUBLIC SPEAKING.  
NUMBER TWO IS DEATH. [...] THIS MEANS TO THE  
AVERAGE PERSON, IF YOU GO TO A FUNERAL,  
YOU'RE BETTER OFF IN THE CASKET THAN DOING  
THE EULOGY.”***

**— JERRY SEINFELD**



***“I’M NOT A ‘REAL’ EXPERT.”***



***"I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING  
TO SAY THAT MY PEERS  
HAVEN'T HEARD BEFORE."***



***“I’M NOT AN  
EXPERIENCED [ENOUGH]  
PRESENTER.”***



***“TIME SPENT ON A PRESENTATION  
WON’T BE VALUABLE TO MY  
GROWTH, MY TEAM, OR MY  
COMPANY.”***

**PART 1: CHOOSING OR REFINING A TOPIC**

**PART 2: BUILDING YOUR CONTENT**

**PART 3: PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION**

**WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR THIS  
WORKSHOP?**





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# **WHERE WILL YOU BE PRESENTING?**



# **PART 1: CHOOSING OR REFINING A TOPIC**



# ***EARLY CONSIDERATIONS***



**NOT EVERYONE KNOWS WHAT YOU  
KNOW**



**YOUR AUDIENCE WANTS TO BE  
INSPIRED**



**PEOPLE CAN LEARN *GENERAL* LESSONS  
FROM YOUR *SPECIFIC* EXPERIENCE**



***FIND THE RIGHT  
COMBINATION OF  
CONFIDENCE & INTEREST***



**BE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR  
TOPIC**







**TELL YOUR FAVORITE STORY**



**CHOOSE A TOPIC YOU KNOW A LOT  
ABOUT**



**CHOOSE A TOPIC YOU'RE EXCITED  
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT**



**WHAT'S THE ONE PART OF YOUR JOB YOU'D DO 100% OF THE TIME, IF YOU COULD?**

**WHAT WAS A DEFINING MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER?**

**WHAT'S YOUR MOST CONTROVERSIAL WORK TAKE?**

**WHAT'S SOMETHING YOU THINK IS TOTALLY BROKEN IN YOUR LINE OF WORK?**



**ASK YOUR COLLEAGUES**

**QUESTIONS?**

**WHAT ARE SOME INTERESTING  
PRESENTATIONS YOU'VE  
ATTENDED?**

# **BRAINSTORM AND DISCUSSION**



# **PART 2: BUILDING YOUR CONTENT**



***WRITE A GOOD ABSTRACT  
OR SUMMARY***



# **1. RELEVANCE**

**WHY SHOULD YOUR AUDIENCE CARE?**

Think about the best engineer you've worked with. Did they have a computer science degree? Was all of their professional work experience in tech? Were their technical skills the most important of their abilities? It's likely your answer to some – or all – of those questions is "no." It's also highly likely that the talented engineer you thought of learned some of their most valuable skills and lessons through other means: advanced studies in another discipline, work experience in a different field, or outside mentorship and coaching.

Successful engineers rarely demonstrate technical skill or experience only, and yet it is the quality we most frequently discuss in resume reviews, evaluate in interviews, and focus on in career development conversations. Skills derived from education and experience in other areas are rarely framed as desirable traits, and thus we're tempted (and even encouraged) to leave them in the past – but they are tremendously valuable when properly translated to technical roles.



## **2. KEY POINTS**

**WHAT WILL YOU ACTUALLY TALK ABOUT?**

In this talk, we'll discuss how you can leverage non-technical skills or a "non-traditional" background to excel in an engineering role, using my own experience changing careers – from classical music performance to software engineering – as an example. I'll walk you through the lessons my music background taught me: how to give and receive feedback, how to deal with rejection and failure, how to move past mistakes, how to practice, and more – and we'll review strategies for applying these types of lessons as a software engineer. We'll also discuss how you can advocate for the value of diverse career experiences, both personally, and on behalf of other members of your team.



# **3. OUTCOME**

**BY THE END, YOUR AUDIENCE WILL...**

You'll walk away with a new perspective on the value of every unique career path – and the confidence to champion that value.



**LET'S WORKSHOP THIS...**




***GATHER INFORMATION***



**DO RESEARCH**  
**(EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU DON'T NEED TO)**



**SKETCH OUT YOUR EXAMPLES**



**CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE**

**LET'S WORKSHOP THIS...**



# ***STRUCTURE YOUR CONTENT***



**WRITE A FIRST DRAFT**  
**AND LET IT BE TERRIBLE**





# **REFINE YOUR INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE**



**KEEP IT SIMPLE**



**GET COMFORTABLE TALKING TO  
YOURSELF**




***SUPPORT WHAT YOU  
WANT TO SAY***



**KEEP THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION**



**ENSURE YOUR PRESENTATION AIDS  
SUPPORT *YOU***



**...RELATEDLY, DON'T BE AFRAID TO  
PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS**



**FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE  
SPEAKER NOTES WORK FOR YOU**



# **PART 3: PREPARING FOR YOUR PRESENTATION**



***REFINE YOUR TALK***



**CHOOSE A GREAT OPENER**

**LET'S WORKSHOP THIS...**



**HAVE A STRONG CONCLUSION**



***PREPARE AND REHEARSE***



***GET EXCITED***



**DO REAL RUN-THROUGHS**





**TIME YOURSELF (AND CREATE  
FALLBACK OPTIONS)**



**GIVE EQUAL ATTENTION TO EACH  
PART OF YOUR PRESENTATION**



**PREPARE FOR THE SETTING AND  
USE THE SPACE**

**LET'S PRACTICE...**

**WRAP UP / QUESTIONS**

**THANK YOU!**