



# Reading: Business intelligence presentation examples

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In this part of the certificate program, you started thinking about how to present your insights to stakeholders. Slide decks are a common tool that you can use to present to your stakeholders and even showcase and explain your dashboards. This reading will provide you with some tips and tricks for designing slide presentations. For more resources, you can also check out **the Google Data Analytics Certificate content about developing presentations and slideshows**.

## Tips for building a presentation

Use the following tips and sample layout to build your own presentation.

### Tip 1: Always remember audience and purpose

To develop an effective presentation that communicates your point, it's important to keep your audience in mind. Ask yourself these two questions to help you define the overall flow and build out your presentation:

#### Who is my audience?

- If your intended audience is primarily high-level executives, your presentation should be kept at a high level. Executives tend to focus on main takeaways that encourage improving, correcting, or inventing things. Keep your presentation brief and spend most of your time on results and recommendations, or provide a walkthrough of how they can best use the tools you've created. It can be useful to create an executive summary slide that synthesizes the whole presentation in one slide.
- If your intended audience is comprised of stakeholders and managers, they might have more time to learn about new processes, how you developed the right tools, and ask more technical questions. Be prepared to provide more details with this audience!
- If your intended audience is comprised of analysts and individual contributors, you will have the most freedom—and perhaps the most time—to go in to more detail about the data, processes, and results.
- Support all members of your audience by making your content accessible to audience members with diverse abilities, experiences, and backgrounds.

#### What is the purpose of my presentation?

- If the goal of your presentation is to request or recommend something at the end, like a sales pitch, you can have each slide work toward the recommendations at the end.
- If the goal of your presentation is to focus on the results of your analysis, each slide can help mark the path to the results. Be sure to include plenty of views of the data analysis steps to demonstrate the path you took with the data.

- If the goal of your presentation is to provide a report on the data analysis, your slides should clearly summarize your data and key findings. In this case, it is alright to simply offer the data on its own.
- If the goal of your presentation is to showcase how to use new business intelligence tools, your slides should clearly showcase what your audience needs to understand to start using the tool themselves.

## **Tip 2: Prepare talking points and limit text on slides**

As you create each slide in your presentation, prepare **talking points** (also called **speaker notes**) on what you will say.

Don't forget that you will be talking at the same time that your audience is reading your slides. If your slides start becoming more like documents, you should rethink what you will say so that you can remove some text from the slides. Make it easy for your audience to skim-read the slides while still paying attention to what you are saying. In general, follow the five-second rule. Your audience should not be spending more than five seconds reading any block of text on a slide.

Knowing exactly what you will say throughout your presentation creates a natural flow to your story, and helps avoid awkward pauses between topics. Slides that summarize data can also be repetitive; if you prepare a variety of interesting talking points about the data, you can keep your audience alert and paying attention.

## **Tip 3: End with your recommendations**

Ending your presentation with recommendations and key takeaways brings the presentation to a natural close, reminds your audience of the key points, and allows them to leave with a strong impression of your recommendations. Use one slide for your recommendations at the end, and make them clear and concise. And, if you are recommending that something be done, provide the next steps and describe what you would consider a successful outcome.

## **Tip 4: Allow enough time for the presentation and questions**

Assume that everyone in your audience is busy. Keep your presentation on topic and as short as possible by:

- Being aware of your timing. This applies to the total number of slides and the time you spend on each slide. A good starting point is to spend 1-2 minutes on summary slides and 3-5 minutes on slides that generate discussion.
- Presenting your data efficiently. Make sure that every slide tells a unique and important part of your data story. If a slide isn't that unique, you might think about combining the information on that slide with another slide.
- Saving enough time for questions at the end or allowing enough time to answer questions throughout your presentation.

## Putting it all together: Your slide deck layout

This section will cover how to put everything together in a sample slide deck layout. This is just one way you can format your slide presentations—you may find that other layouts work better for you and your presentation style. That's great! But this is a clear and concise starting point you can use to develop clear and effective slide decks.

### First slide: Agenda

Provide a high-level bulleted list of the topics you will cover and the amount of time you will spend on each. Every company's practices are different, but in general, most presentations run from 30 minutes to an hour at most. Here is an example of a 30-minute agenda:

- Introductions (4 minutes)
- Project overview and goals (5 minutes)
- Data and analysis (10 minutes)
- Recommendations (3 minutes)
- Actionable steps (3 minutes)
- Questions (5 minutes)

### Second slide: Purpose

Not everyone in your audience is familiar with your project or knows why it is important. They didn't spend the last couple of weeks thinking through the BI processes and tools for your project like you did. This slide summarizes the purpose of the project for your audience and why it is important to the business.

Here is an example of a purpose statement:

*Service center consolidation is an important cost-saving initiative. The aim of this project is to monitor the impact of service center consolidation on customer response times for continued improvement.*

### Third slide: Data/Analysis

When discussing the data, the BI processes and tools, and how your audience can use them, be sure to include the following:

- Slides typically have a logical order (beginning, middle, and end) to fully build the story.
- Each slide should logically introduce the slide that follows it. Visual cues from the slides or verbal cues from your talking points should let the audience know when you will go on to the next slide.
- Remember not to use too much text on the slides. When in doubt, refer back to the second tip on preparing talking points and limiting the text on slides.
- The high-level information that people read from the slides shouldn't be the same as the information you provide in your talking points. There should be a nice balance between the two to tell a good story. You don't want to simply read or say the words on the slides.

For extra visuals on the slides, use animations. For example, you can:

- Fade in one bullet point at a time as you discuss each on a slide.
- Only display the visual that is relevant to what you are talking about (fade out non-relevant visuals).
- Use arrows or callouts to point to a specific area of a visual that you are using.

## **Fourth slide: Recommendations**

If you have been telling your story well in the previous slides, the recommendations will be obvious to your audience. This is when you might get a lot of questions about how your data supports your recommendations. Be ready to communicate how your data backs up your conclusion or recommendations in different ways. Having multiple words to state the same thing also helps if someone is having difficulty with one particular explanation.

## **Fifth slide: Call to action**

Sometimes the call to action can be combined with the recommendations slide. If there are multiple actions or activities recommended, a separate slide is best.

Recall our example of a purpose statement: *Service center consolidation is an important cost-savings initiative. The aim of this project is to monitor the impact of service center consolidation on customer response times for continued improvement.*

Suppose the monitoring reports showed that service center consolidation negatively impacted customer response times. A call to action might be to examine if processes need to change to bring customer response times back to what they were before the consolidation.

## **Wrapping it up: Getting feedback**

After you present to your audience, think about how you told your data story and how you can get feedback for improvement. Consider asking your manager or a colleague for candid thoughts about your storytelling and presentation overall. Feedback is great to help you improve. Just like most of the work you'll do as a BI professional, presentations are an iterative process!

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