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ACT I

Create the Story

Creating the story, the plot, is the first step to selling your ideas with power, persuasion, and charisma. Succeeding at this step separates mediocre communicators from extraordinary ones. Most people fail to think through their story. Effective communicators plan effectively, develop compelling messages and headlines, make it easy for their listeners to follow the narrative, and introduce a common enemy to build the drama. The seven chapters—or scenes—in Act 1 will help set the foundation for presentation success. Each scene will be followed by a short summary of specific and tangible lessons you can easily apply today. Let's review the scenes here:

- **SCENE 1: "Plan in Analog."** In this chapter, you will learn how truly great presenters such as Steve Jobs visualize, plan, and create ideas well before they open the presentation software.
- **SCENE 2: "Answer the One Question That Matters Most."** Your listeners are asking themselves one question and one question only: "Why should I care?" Disregard this question, and your audience will dismiss you.
- **SCENE 3: "Develop a Messianic Sense of Purpose."** Steve Jobs was worth more than $100 million by the time he was

twenty-five, and it didn't matter to him. Understanding this one fact will help you unlock the secret behind Jobs's extraordinary charisma.

- **SCENE 4: "Create Twitter-Like Headlines."** The social networking site has changed the way we communicate. Developing headlines that fit into 140-character sentences will help you sell your ideas more persuasively.
- **SCENE 5: "Draw a Road Map."** Steve Jobs makes his argument easy to follow by adopting one of the most powerful principles of persuasion: the rule of three.
- **SCENE 6: "Introduce the Antagonist."** Every great Steve Jobs presentation introduces a common villain that the audience can turn against. Once he introduces an enemy, the stage is set for the next scene.
- **SCENE 7: "Reveal the Conquering Hero."** Every great Steve Jobs presentation introduces a hero the audience can rally around. The hero offers a better way of doing something, breaks from the status quo, and inspires people to embrace innovation.

SCENE 1

Plan in Analog

Marketing is really theater.
It's like staging a performance.

—JOHN SCULLEY

Steve Jobs has built a reputation in the digital world of bits and bytes, but he creates stories in the very old-world tradition of pen and paper. His presentations are theatrical events intended to generate maximum publicity, buzz, and awe. They contain all of the elements of great plays or movies: conflict, resolution, villains, and heroes. And, in line with all great movie directors, Jobs storyboards the plot before picking up a "camera" (i.e., opening the presentation software). It's marketing theater unlike any other.

Jobs is closely involved in every detail of a presentation: writing descriptive taglines, creating slides, practicing demos, and making sure the lighting is just right. Jobs takes nothing for granted. He does what most top presentation designers recommend: he starts on paper. "There's just something about paper and pen and sketching out rough ideas in the 'analog world' in the early stages that seems to lead to more clarity and better, more creative results when we finally get down to representing our ideas digitally," writes Garr Reynolds in *Presentation Zen*.[1]

Design experts, including those who create presentations for Apple, recommend that presenters spend the majority of their time thinking, sketching, and scripting. Nancy Duarte is the genius behind Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. Duarte suggests that a presenter spend up to ninety hours to create an hour-long presentation that contains thirty slides. However, only one-

third of that time should be dedicated to *building* the slides, says Duarte.[2] The first twenty-seven hours are dedicated to researching the topic, collecting input from experts, organizing ideas, collaborating with colleagues, and sketching the structure of the story.

Bullets Kill

Think about what happens when you open PowerPoint. A blank-format slide appears that contains space for words—a title and subtitle. This presents a problem. There are very few words in a Steve Jobs presentation. Now think about the first thing you see in the drop-down menu under Format: Bullets & Numbering. This leads to the second problem. There are no bullet points in a Steve Jobs presentation. The software itself forces you to create a template that represents the exact opposite of what you need to speak like Steve! In fact, as you will learn in later scenes, texts and bullets are the *least* effective way to deliver information intended to be recalled and acted upon. Save your bullet points for grocery lists.

Visually engaging presentations will inspire your audience. And yes, they require a bit of work, especially in the planning phase. As a communications coach, I work with CEOs and other top executives on their media, presentation, and public speaking skills. One of my clients, a start-up entrepreneur, had spent sixty straight days in Bentonville, Arkansas, to score an appointment with Wal-Mart. His technology intrigued company executives, who agreed to a beta test, a trial run. Wal-Mart asked him to present the information to a group of advertisers and top executives. I met with my client over a period of days at the offices of the Silicon Valley venture capital firm that invested in his company. For the first day, we did nothing but sketch the story. No computer and no PowerPoint—just pen and paper (whiteboard, in this case). Eventually we turned the sketches into slide ideas. We needed only five slides for a fifteen-minute presentation. Creating the slides did not take as much time as developing the story. Once we wrote the narrative,

designing the slides was easy. Remember, it's the story, *not the slides*, that will capture the imagination of your audience.

The Napkin Test

A picture is the most powerful method for conveying an idea. Instead of booting up your computer, take out a napkin. Some of the most successful business ideas have been sketched on the back of a napkin. One could argue that the napkin has been more important to the world of business ideas than PowerPoint. I used to think that "napkin stories" were just that—stories, from the imagination of journalists. That is until I met Richard Tait, the founder of Cranium. I prepared him for an interview on CNBC. He told me that during a cross-country flight from New York to Seattle, he took out a small cocktail napkin and sketched the idea of a board game in which everyone had a chance to excel in at least one category, a game that would give everyone a chance to shine. Cranium became a worldwide sensation and was later purchased by Hasbro. The original concept was simple enough to write on a tiny airline napkin.

One of the most famous corporate napkin stories involves Southwest Airlines. A lawyer at the time, Herb Kelleher met with one of his clients, Rollin King, at the St. Anthony's Club, in San Antonio. King owned a small charter airline. He wanted to start a low-cost commuter airline that avoided the major hubs and instead served Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio. King sketched three circles, wrote the names of the cities inside, and connected the three—a strikingly simple vision. Kelleher understood immediately. Kelleher signed on as legal counsel (he later became CEO), and the two men founded Southwest Airlines in 1967. King and Kelleher would go on to reinvent airline travel in the United States and build a corporate culture that would earn Southwest's place among the most admired companies in the world. Never underestimate the power of a vision so simple that it can fit on a napkin!

The Story Takes Center Stage

In *Beyond Bullet Points*, Cliff Atkinson stresses, "The single most important thing you can do to dramatically improve your presentations is to have a story to tell *before* you work on your PowerPoint file."[3] Atkinson advocates a three-step storyboard approach to creating presentations:

Writing → Sketching → Producing

Only after writing—scripting—the scenes does he advocate thinking visually about how the slides will look. "To write a script, you need to momentarily set aside PowerPoint design issues like fonts, colors, backgrounds, and slide transitions. Although it might sound counterintuitive, when you write a script first, you actually expand your visual possibilities, because writing defines your purpose before you start designing. A script unlocks the undiscovered power of PowerPoint as a visual storytelling tool in ways that might surprise and delight you and your audiences."[4] With a completed script in hand, you'll be ready to sketch and "produce" the experience. The script, however, must come first.

Nine Elements of Great Presentations

Persuasive presentation scripts contain nine common elements. Think about incorporating each of these components before you open the presentation program, whether you work in PowerPoint, Keynote, or any other design software. Some of these concepts will be explored in more detail later, but for now keep them in mind as you develop your ideas.

HEADLINE

What is the one big idea you want to leave with your audience? It should be short (140 characters or less), memorable, and written in the subject-verb-object sequence. When Steve Jobs unveiled the iPhone, he exclaimed, "Today Apple reinvents the

phone!"[5] That's a headline. Headlines grab the attention of your audience and give people a reason to listen. Read *USA Today* for ideas. Here are some examples from America's most popular daily newspaper:

- "Apple's Skinny MacBook Is Fat with Features"
- "Apple Unleashes Leopard Operating System"
- "Apple Shrinks iPod"

PASSION STATEMENT

Aristotle, the father of public speaking, believed that successful speakers must have "pathos," or passion for their subject. Very few communicators express a sense of excitement about their topic. Steve Jobs exudes an almost giddy enthusiasm every time he presents. Former employees and even some journalists have claimed that they found his energy and enthusiasm completely mesmerizing. Spend a few minutes developing a passion statement by filling in the following sentence: "I'm excited about this product [company, initiative, feature, etc.] because it _____ ." Once you have identified the passion statement, don't be bashful—share it.

THREE KEY MESSAGES

Now that you have decided on your headline and passion statement, write out the three messages you want your audience to receive. They should be easily recalled without the necessity of looking at notes. Although Scene 5 is dedicated to this subject, for now keep in mind that your listeners can recall only three or four points in short-term memory. Each of the key messages will be followed by supporting points.

METAPHORS AND ANALOGIES

As you develop key messages and supporting points, decide on which rhetorical devices will make your narrative more engaging. According to Aristotle, metaphor is "the most important thing by far." A metaphor—a word or phrase that denotes one

thing and is used to designate another for purposes of comparison—is a persuasive tool in the best marketing, advertising, and public relations campaigns. Jobs uses metaphors in conversations and presentations. In one famous interview, Jobs said, "What a computer is to me is the most remarkable tool that we have ever come up with. It's the equivalent of a bicycle for our minds."[6]

Sales professionals are fond of sports metaphors: "We're all playing for the same team"; "This isn't a scrimmage; it's for real"; or "We're batting a thousand; let's keep it up." While sports metaphors work fine, challenge yourself to break away from what your audience expects. I came across an interesting metaphor for a new antivirus suite of applications from Kaspersky. The company ran full-page ads (the one I saw was in *USA Today*) that showed a dejected medieval soldier in a full suit of armor walking away, with his back toward the reader. The headline read, "Don't be so sad. You were very good once upon a time." The metaphor compared today's Internet security technologies (Kaspersky's competitors) to slow, cumbersome medieval armor, which of course is no match for today's military technology. The company extended the metaphor to the website with an image of a suit of armor and the same tagline. The metaphor was consistent throughout the company's marketing material.

Analogies are close cousins of metaphors and also are very effective. An analogy is a comparison between two different things in order to highlight some area of similarity. Analogies help us understand concepts that might be foreign to us. "The microprocessor is the brain of your computer" is an analogy that works well for companies such as Intel. In many ways, the chip serves the same function in the computer as a brain serves in a human. The chip and the brain are two different things with like features. This particular analogy is so useful that it is widely picked up by the media. When you find a strong analogy that works, stick with it and make it consistent across your presentations, website, and marketing material. Jobs likes to have fun with analogies, especially if they can be applied to Microsoft. During an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*'s Walt Mossberg,

Jobs pointed out that many people say iTunes is their favorite application for Windows. "It's like giving a glass of ice water to someone in hell!"[7]

DEMONSTRATIONS

Jobs shares the spotlight with employees, partners, and products. Demos make up a large part of his presentations. When Jobs unveiled a new version of the OS X operating system, codenamed Leopard, at Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference (commonly abbreviated WWDC, the annual conference is an Apple event to showcase new software and technologies) in June 2007, he said Leopard had three hundred new features. He chose ten to discuss and demonstrate, including Time Machine (automated backup), Boot Camp (runs Windows XP and Vista on Mac), and Stacks (file organization). Instead of simply listing the features on a slide and explaining them, he sat down and showed the audience how they worked. He also chose the features *he* wanted the press to highlight. Why leave it to the media to decide which of three hundred new features were the most compelling? He would tell them.

Does your product lend itself to a demonstration? If so, script it into the presentation. Your audience wants to see, touch, and experience your product or service. Bring it to life.

I worked with Goldman Sachs investors to prepare the CEO of a Silicon Valley semiconductor start-up that was about to go public. The company shrinks chips that create audio sound for mobile computers. As we were planning the investor presentation, the CEO pulled out a chip the size of a fingernail and said, "You wouldn't believe the sound that this generates. Listen to this." He turned up the volume on his laptop and played music that impressed those of us who were in the room. It was a no-brainer to use the same demonstration (with a more dramatic buildup) when the executive pitched the company to investors. The IPO went on to become a huge success. An investor who had underwritten the company later called me and said, "I don't know what you did, but the CEO was a hit." I didn't have the heart to say that I stole the idea from the Steve Jobs playbook.

PARTNERS

Jobs shares the stage with key partners as well as his products. In September 2005, Jobs announced that all of Madonna's albums would be available on iTunes. The pop star herself suddenly appeared via webcam and joked with Jobs that she had tried to hold out as long as possible but got tired of not being able to download her own songs. Whether it's an artist or an industry partner like the CEOs of Intel, Fox, or Sony, Jobs often shares the stage with people who contribute to Apple's success.

CUSTOMER EVIDENCE AND THIRD-PARTY ENDORSEMENTS

Offering "customer evidence" or testimonials is an important part of the selling cycle. Few customers want to be pioneers, especially when budgets are tight. Just as recruiters ask for references, your customers want to hear success stories. This is especially critical for small companies. Your sales and marketing collateral might look great in that glossy four-color brochure, but it will be met with a healthy degree of skepticism. The number one influencer is word of mouth. Successful product launches usually have several customers who were involved in the beta and who can vouch for the product. Incorporate customer evidence into your pitch. Including a quote is simple enough, but try going one step further by recording a short testimonial and embedding the video on your site and in your presentation. Even better, invite a customer to join you in person (or via webcam) at a presentation or an important sales meeting.

Do you have third-party reviews of your product? Always use third-party endorsements when available. Word of mouth is one of the most effective marketing tools available, and when your customers see an endorsement from a publication or an individual they respect, it will make them feel more comfortable about their purchasing decisions.

VIDEO CLIPS

Very few presenters incorporate video into their presentations. Jobs plays video clips very often. Sometimes he shows video of employees talking about how much they enjoyed working

on a product. Jobs is also fond of showing Apple's most recent television ads. He does so in nearly every major new product announcement and has been doing so since the launch of the famous Macintosh 1984 Super Bowl ad. He's been known to enjoy some ads so much that he showed them twice. Near the end of his presentation at Apple's WWDC in June 2008, Jobs announced the new iPhone 3G, which connects to higher-speed data networks and costs less than the iPhone that was currently on the market. He showed a television ad with the tagline "It's finally here. The first phone to beat the iPhone." When the thirty-second spot ended, a beaming Jobs said, "Isn't that nice? Want to see it again? Let's roll that again. I love this ad."[8]

Including video clips in your presentation will help you stand out. You can show ads, employee testimonials, scenes of the product or of people using the product, and even customer endorsements. What could be more persuasive than hearing directly from a satisfied customer—if not in person, then through a short video clip embedded in your presentation? You can easily encode video into digital formats such as MPEG 1, Windows Media, or Quicktime files, all of which will work for most presentations. Keep in mind that the average viewed clip on YouTube is 2.5 minutes. Our attention spans are shrinking, and video, while providing a great way to keep the audience engaged, can be overused if left to run too long. Use video clips in your presentations, but avoid clips that run much longer than two to three minutes.

Video is a terrific tool for even the most nontechnical of presentations. I was helping the California Strawberry Commission prepare for a series of presentations set to take place on the East Coast. Commission members showed me a short video of strawberry growers expressing their love of the land and the fruit. The images of strawberry fields were gorgeous, and I suggested they create a digital file of the video clip and embed it in the presentation. In the presentation itself, they introduced the video by saying something like this: "We realize that you probably have never visited a California strawberry field, so we decided to bring the farmers to you." The video clip was the

most memorable part of the presentation, and the East Coast editors loved it.

FLIP CHARTS, PROPS, AND SHOW-AND-TELL

There are three types of learners: visual (the majority of people fall into this category), auditory (listeners), and kinesthetic (people who like to feel and touch). Find ways to appeal to everyone. A presentation should comprise more than just slides. Use whiteboards, flip charts, or the high-tech flip chart—a tablet PC. Bring "props" such as physical products for people to see, use, and touch. In Scene 12, you'll learn much more about reaching the three types of learners.

Most communicators get so caught up in the slides: Which font should I use? Should I use bullets or dashes? Should I include a graph here? How about a picture there? These are the wrong questions to be asking in the planning stage. If you have a tangible product, find other ways outside of the slide deck to show it off. On October 14, 2008, Steve introduced a new line of MacBooks carved out of one piece of aluminum, a "unibody enclosure." After Jobs discussed the manufacturing process, Apple employees handed out examples of the new frame so audience members could see it and touch it for themselves.

Incorporating all of these elements in a presentation will help you tell a story worth listening to. Slides don't tell stories; you do. Slides complement the story. This book is software agnostic; it avoids a direct comparison between PowerPoint and Keynote because the software is not the main character in an effective presentation—the speaker is. Jobs himself started using Apple's Keynote software in 2002, so what are we to make of the extraordinary presentations Jobs gave dating back to 1984? The software is not the answer. The fact that Steve Jobs uses Keynote instead of PowerPoint does not mean your presentation will look more like his if you make the switch. You will, however, win over your audience by spending more time creating the plot than producing the slides.

Use a notepad or whiteboard to script your ideas. It will help you visualize the story and simplify its components. When Jobs

Aristotle's Outline for Persuasive Arguments

A Steve Jobs presentation follows Aristotle's classic five-point plan to create a persuasive argument:

1. Deliver a story or statement that arouses the audience's interest.
2. Pose a problem or question that has to be solved or answered.
3. Offer a solution to the problem you raised.
4. Describe specific benefits for adopting the course of action set forth in your solution.
5. State a call to action. For Steve, it's as simple as saying, "Now go out and buy one!"

returned to Apple in 1996, taking over for ousted Gil Amelio, he found a company with more than forty different products, which confused the customer. In a bold move, he radically simplified the product pipeline. In *Inside Steve's Brain*, Leander Kahney writes that Jobs called senior management into his office. "Jobs drew a very simple two-by-two grid on the whiteboard. Across the top he wrote 'Consumer' and 'Professional,' and down the side, 'Portable' and 'Desktop.' "[9] Under Jobs, Apple would offer just four computers—two notebooks and two desktops—aimed at consumer and professional users. This is one of many stories in which we learn that Jobs does his best thinking when he's thinking visually. Whether you plan best on a whiteboard, a yellow legal pad, or Post-it notes, spend time in analog before jumping to digital. Your ultimate presentation will be far more interesting, engaging, and relevant.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Start planning before you open the presentation software. Sketch ideas on paper or whiteboards.
- Incorporate some, if not all, of the following nine elements to make your presentation come alive: headline, passion statement, three key messages, analogies, demonstrations, partner showcase, customer evidence, video clips, and props.
- Speaking like Jobs has little to do with the type of presentation software you use (PowerPoint, Keynote, etc.) and everything to do with how you craft and deliver the story.

SCENE 2

Answer the One Question That Matters Most

You've got to start with the customer experience and work back toward the technology—not the other way around.

—STEVE JOBS, MAY 25, 1997, WORLDWIDE DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

In May 1998, Apple launched a splashy new product aimed at shoring up its dwindling share of the computer market, which had sunk to under 4 percent. When Jobs unveiled the new translucent iMac, he described the reason for building the computer, the target market, and the benefit customers would see from buying the new system:

> Even though this is a full-blown Macintosh, we are targeting this for the number one use consumers tell us they want a computer for, which is to get on the Internet simply and fast. We're also targeting this for education. They want to buy these. It's perfect for most of the things they do in instruction . . . We went out and looked at all of the consumer products out there. We noticed some things about them pretty much universally. The first is they are very slow. They are all using last year's processor. Secondly, they all have pretty crummy displays on them . . . likely no networking on them . . . old-generation I/O devices, and what that means is they are

> lower performance and harder to use . . . and these things are uuugly! So, let me tell you about iMac.[1]

After describing the weaknesses of current products in the preceding excerpt, Jobs drew a verbal road map for his audience, listing the features he would explain in more detail. (Learn more about drawing a road map in Scene 5.) The audience learned that the new iMac was fast ("it screams") and that it had a "gorgeous" fifteen-inch display, a large amount of built-in memory, and components that would make accessing a network easier for students and home users. In one of his typical surprise moments, Jobs then walked to the center of the stage and pulled the cover off the new computer.

Your audience wants to be informed, educated, and entertained: informed about your product, educated on how it works, and entertained while learning about it. Above all, people want to know the answer to one question: Why should I care? Let's take a closer look at that iMac excerpt. Jobs told the audience, "what that means is . . ." Jobs connects the dots for his listeners. Although he might leave the industry in the dark about future Apple releases, he never leaves his audience guessing when the product is finally introduced. Why should you care about Apple's new computer, MP3 player, phone, or gadget? Don't worry. Jobs will tell you.

The Rumors Are True

For years, Apple had a rivalry with Intel—even setting fire to an Intel bunny man in a 1996 TV spot. One decade later, Apple put its rivalry to rest and announced that Intel processors would power its new Macintosh systems, replacing IBM's PowerPC chips. On June 6, 2005, Jobs announced the switch at Apple's Worldwide Developers Conference in San Francisco.

Rumors of the switch had been floating around for months, and many observers expressed concern about the transition. Reporters for *eWeek* magazine found it difficult to believe Apple would swap the PowerPC for Intel, since the PowerPC had worked well for the brand. Developers were grumbling. Jobs had

to convince the audience that the switch was the right thing to do. His presentation was enormously persuasive in changing people's opinions because, using plain and direct language, he answered the one question that mattered most: Why should Apple's customers and developers care?

> Yes, it's true. We are going to begin the transition from PowerPC to Intel processors. Now, why are we going to do this? Didn't we just get through going from OS 9 to OS X? Isn't the business great right now? Because we want to make the best computers for our customers looking forward. Now, I stood up here two years ago and promised you this [slide shows desktop computer with 3 GHz], and we haven't been able to deliver it to you. I think a lot of you would like a G5 in your PowerBook, and we haven't been able to deliver it. But these aren't even the most important reasons. As we look ahead, though we have some great products now, we can envision some amazing products we want to build for you, and we don't know how to build them with the future PowerPC road map. That's why we're going to do this.[2]

Jobs articulated the argument so convincingly that few people in the audience that day left without a high degree of confidence that the transition had been the right thing for Apple, its developers, and its customers.

Why Should I Care?

During the planning phase of your presentation, always remember that it's not about you. It's about them. The listeners in your audience are asking themselves one question—"Why should I care?" Answering that one question right out of the gate will grab people's attention and keep them engaged.

I was preparing a CEO for a major analyst presentation and asked how he planned to kick it off. He offered this dry, boring, and confusing introduction: "Our company is a premier developer of intelligent semiconductor intellectual property solutions that dramatically accelerate complex system-on-a-chip designs while

Channel Your Best Steve Jobs Impression

In the summer of 2006, Intel released a processor branded Core 2 Duo. The "duo" stood for dual-core, meaning there were two cores, or brains, on each microprocessor. That may not sound exciting, but if you answer the *one* question that matters—Why should I care?—it becomes very interesting.

Take two scenarios: In both scenarios, a customer walks into a computer store and asks the salesperson for information about notebook computers. The sales professional in the first scenario has not read this book and fails to answer the one question that matters. The salesperson in the second scenario is more likely to win the sale, by virtue of channeling his or her inner Steve Jobs and answering the one question on the mind of the customer: Why should I care?

Scenario One

CUSTOMER: Hi, I'm looking for a notebook computer that is light and fast and includes a DVD.

SALESPERSON: You should look for an Intel Core 2 Duo.

CUSTOMER: OK. I didn't know Intel makes computers.

SALESPERSON: They don't.

CUSTOMER: Can you tell me more?

SALESPERSON: An Intel dual-core processor has two performance engines that simultaneously process data at a faster rate.

CUSTOMER: Oh. Maybe I should look somewhere else.

Of course the customer in this scenario will look somewhere else. Although the salesperson was technically accurate, the customer had to work far too hard to figure out how the new system would make the person's life better. It took too much brainpower, and as you'll learn, the brain is a lazy piece of meat that tries to preserve energy. Make the brain work too hard, and you'll lose your audience. The customer had one question in mind and one question only. The salesperson failed to answer it and seemed indifferent, even arrogant. Let's

try it again. This time, the salesperson will do a stellar Steve Jobs impression.

Scenario Two

SALESPERSON: Hi, can I help you find something?

CUSTOMER: Sure. I'm looking for a notebook computer. One that is light and fast and includes a DVD.

SALESPERSON: You've come to the right place. We have a huge selection of small notebooks that are blazingly fast. Have you considered a system with an Intel Core 2 Duo?

CUSTOMER: Not really. What's that?

SALESPERSON: Think of the microprocessor as the brain of your computer. Now, with these Intel chips, you get two brains in one computer. *What that means to you* is that you can do a lot of fun and productive stuff at the same time. For example, you can download music while your computer is running a full virus scan in the background, and it won't slow down the system at all. Your productivity applications will load much faster, you can work on multiple documents at the same time, your DVDs will play much better, and you get much longer battery life on top of it! And that's not all: the displays are gorgeous.

CUSTOMER: Great. Please show me those computers!

In this scenario, the salesperson spoke in plain English, used tangible examples to make the product relevant, and answered the only question that really mattered to the customer: Why should I care about the processor? Retailers who train their sales staffs to describe products in this way will stand out from the competition. Come to think of it, there is a retailer that does exactly that—Apple. Walk into most any Apple store, and you will be greeted by enthusiastic men and women who are eager to explain how Apple products will make your life better.

minimizing risk." I was dumbfounded and suggested he take a page from the Steve Jobs playbook, eliminating all of the buzzwords such as *intelligent* and *solutions* and simply answering one question: Why should your customers care about your product?

The CEO revised his introduction. He decided to walk onstage and ask everyone to take out his or her cell phone. He said, "Our company creates software that is used to build the chips inside many of the phones you're holding up. As those chips get smaller and cheaper, your phones will get smaller, last longer on a single charge, and play music and video, all thanks to our technology working behind the scenes."

Which introduction would be more effective in grabbing your attention? The second one, of course. It is free of jargon and, by answering the *one* question that matters, gives the audience a reason to listen.

Reporters are skilled at answering the one question for their readers. Pay attention to product descriptions in the *New York Times* or *USA Today*. Articles are written to be followed and understood. For example, on January 20, 2009, Cisco Systems announced that it planned a big push into the server market, a category dominated by IBM, HP, and Dell. The product would be a server with virtualization software. Now, virtualization is one of the most complicated concepts to explain. Wikipedia defines server virtualization as "a method of partitioning a physical server computer into multiple servers such that each has the appearance and capabilities of running on its own dedicated machine."[3] Got it? Didn't think so. The *New York Times*' Ashlee Vance took a different approach: "Virtualization products let companies run numerous business applications, rather than just one, on each physical server, allowing them to save electricity and get more out of their hardware purchases."[4]

The difference, of course, is that Vance answered the one question on the minds of her readers—What does "virtualization" mean to me? In this case, she identified her audience as investors, IT decision makers, and business leaders who would care about such things.

Your listeners are asking themselves, "Why should I care?" If your product will help your customers make money, tell them. If it helps them save money, tell them. If it makes it easier or more enjoyable for them to perform a particular task, tell them. Tell them early, often, and clearly. Jobs doesn't leave people guessing. Well before he explains the technology behind a new product or feature, he explains how it will improve the experience people have with their computers, music players, or gadgets.

Table 2.1 offers a review of some other examples of how Jobs sells the benefit behind a new product or feature.

TABLE 2.1 JOBS SELLING THE BENEFIT

DATE/PRODUCT	BENEFIT
January 7, 2003 Keynote presentation software	"Using Keynote is like having a professional graphics department to create your slides. This is the application to use when your presentation really counts."[5]
September 12, 2006 iPod nano	"The all-new iPod nano gives music fans more of what they love in their iPods—twice the storage capacity at the same price, an incredible twenty-four-hour battery life, and a gorgeous aluminum design in five brilliant colors."[6]
January 15, 2008 Time Capsule backup service for Macs running Leopard OS	"With Time Capsule, all your irreplaceable photos, movies, and documents are automatically protected and incredibly easy to retrieve if they are ever lost."[7]
June 9, 2008 iPhone 3G	"Just one year after launching the iPhone, we're launching the new iPhone 3G. It's twice as fast at half the price."[8]
September 9, 2008 Genius feature for iTunes	"Genius lets you automatically create playlists from songs in your music library that go great together, with just one click."[9]

Avoid Self-Indulgent, Buzzword-Filled Wastes of Time

Answer the one question in all of your marketing materials: website, presentation slides, and press releases. The people who should know better—public relations professionals—are often the worst violators of this rule. The majority of press releases are usually self-indulgent, buzzword-filled wastes of time. Few members of the press even read press releases, because the documents fail to answer the *one* question that matters most to a reporter—Why should my readers care? As a journalist, I've seen thousands of press releases and rarely, if ever, covered a story based on one. Most other journalists would concur. Far too many press releases focus on corporate changes (management appointments, new logos, new offices, etc.) that nobody cares about, and if people should happen to care, the information is far from clear. Read press releases issued on any given day, and you will go numb trying to figure out why anyone would care about the information.

For fun, I took a few samples from press releases issued within hours of one another. The date does not matter. The majority of all press releases violate the same fundamental principles of persuasion:

> "_____ Industries announced today that it has signed an exclusive distribution agreement with _____ . Under terms of the agreement, _____ will be the exclusive national distributor of _____ 's diesel exhaust fluid." Now, seriously, who cares? I wish I could tell you how the new distribution agreement benefits anyone, even shareholders. I can't, because the rest of the press release never answers the question directly.

> "_____ has been named 2008 Pizza Chain of the Year by *Pizza Marketplace*." The press

release said this honor comes after the chain delivered consistent profits, six quarters of same-store sales increases, and a new management team. Now, if the chain offered its customers a special discount to celebrate this honor, it would be newsworthy, but the press release mentions nothing that distinguishes this pizza chain from the thousands of other pizza parlors. This type of release falls under the "look at us" category—announcements that are largely meaningless to anyone outside the executive suites.

"_____ has announced the addition of the 'Annual Report on China's Steel Market in 2008 and the Outlook for 2009' report to their offering." Really? I'm sure millions of people around the world were waiting for this new report! Just kidding. This is another example of a wasted opportunity. If this release had started with one new, eye-opening piece of information from the new report, I might have been slightly more interested. However, that would have meant putting the reader first, and, sadly, most PR pros who write press releases intended for journalists have never been trained as journalists themselves.

Here's another gem, courtesy of an electric company in Hawaii:

"_____ today announced that _____ has been named president and CEO, effective January 1, 2009. _____ replaces _____ , who stepped down as president and CEO in August of this year." We also learned that the new CEO has thirty-two years of experience in the utilities industry and has lived on the big island for twenty years. Isn't that wonderful? Doesn't it give you a warm feeling? Again, this press release represents a lost opportunity to connect with the company's investors

and customers. If the release had started with one thing that the new CEO planned to do immediately to improve service, it would have been far more interesting and newsworthy.

For the most part, press releases fail miserably at generating interest because they don't answer the one question that matters most to the reader. Do not make the same mistake in your presentation, publicity, and marketing material.

Nobody has time to listen to a pitch or presentation that holds no benefit. If you pay close attention to Jobs, you will see that he doesn't "sell" products; he sells the dream of a better future. When Apple launched the iPhone in early 2007, CNBC reporter Jim Goldman asked Jobs, "Why is the iPhone so important to Apple?" Jobs avoided a discussion of shareholder value or market share; instead, he offered the vision of a better experience: "I think the iPhone may change the whole phone industry and give us something that is vastly more powerful in terms of making phone calls and keeping your contacts. We have the best iPod we've ever made fully integrated into it. And it has the Internet in your pocket with a real browser, real e-mail, and the best implementation of Google Maps on the planet. iPhone brings all this stuff in your pocket, and it's ten times easier to use."[10] Jobs explains the "why" before the "how."

Your audience doesn't care about your product. People care about themselves. According to former Apple employee and Mac evangelist Guy Kawasaki, "The essence of evangelism is to passionately show people how you can make history together. Evangelism has little to do with cash flow, the bottom line, or co-marketing. It is the purest and most passionate form of sales because you are selling a dream, not a tangible object."[11] Sell dreams, not products.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Ask yourself, "Why should my listener care about this idea/information/product/service?" If there is only one thing that you want your listener to take away from the conversation, what would it be? Focus on selling the benefit behind the product.
- Make the *one thing* as clear as possible, repeating it at least twice in the conversation or presentation. Eliminate buzzwords and jargon to enhance the clarity of your message.
- Make sure the *one thing* is consistent across all of your marketing collateral, including press releases, website pages, and presentations.

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SCENE 3

Develop a Messianic Sense of Purpose

We're here to put a dent in the universe.

—STEVE JOBS

New York's luxury, Upper West Side apartment building, the San Remo, is located on Seventy-Fifth Street with commanding views of Central Park. Its most famous residents read like a who's who of contemporary culture: Tiger Woods, Demi Moore, Dustin Hoffman, Bono, and, at one time, a young man on a mission—Steve Jobs.

In 1983, Jobs was aggressively courting then PepsiCo president John Sculley. Apple desperately wanted to bring in someone with Sculley's marketing and managing experience, but despite Steve's charm, Sculley failed to budge. The position would require that Sculley relocate his family to the West Coast, and it paid less than he wanted. One sentence would change everything. One sentence that would transform Apple, shift the trajectory of Sculley's career, and begin Jobs's amazing path from whiz kid to failure to hero and, finally, to legend. In his book *Odyssey*, Sculley recounts the conversation that would lead to his decision to take the job. The conversation

also provided one of the most famous quotes in the history of corporate America.

According to Sculley, "We were on the balcony's west side, facing the Hudson River, when he [Jobs] finally asked me directly: 'Are you going to come to Apple?' 'Steve,' I said, 'I really love what you're doing. I'm excited by it; how could anyone not be captivated? But it just doesn't make sense. Steve, I'd love to be an adviser to you, to help you in any way. But I don't think I can come to Apple.' "

Sculley said Jobs's head dropped; he paused and stared at the ground. Jobs then looked up and issued a challenge to Sculley that would "haunt" him. Jobs said, "Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugared water or do you want a chance to change the world?"[1] Sculley said it was as if someone delivered a stiff blow to his stomach.

The Reality Distortion Field

Sculley had witnessed what Apple's vice president Bud Tribble once described as Jobs's "reality distortion field": an ability to convince anyone of practically anything. Many people cannot resist this magnetic pull and are willing to follow Jobs to the promised land (or at least to the next cool iPod).

Few people can escape the Jobs charisma, a magnetism steeped in passion for his products. Observers have said that there is something about the way Jobs talks, the enthusiasm that he conveys, that grabs everyone in the room and doesn't let go. Even journalists who should have built up an immunity to such gravitational forces cannot escape the influence. Wired .com editor Leander Kahney interviewed Jobs biographer Alan Deutschman, who described a meeting with Jobs: "He uses your first name very often. He looks directly in your eyes with that laser-like stare. He has these movie-star eyes that are very hypnotic. But what really gets you is the way he talks—there's something about the rhythm of his speech and the incredible enthusiasm he conveys for whatever it is he's talking about that is just infectious."[2]

Do What You Love

Deutschman said the Steve Jobs "X" factor is "the way he talks." But what exactly is it about the way he talks that pulls you in? Jobs speaks with passion, enthusiasm, and energy. Jobs himself tells us where his passion comes from: "You've got to find what you love. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle."[3]

We all have a unique purpose. Some people, such as Jobs, identify that purpose from an early age; others never do, because they are caught up in catching up with the Joneses. One sure way to lose sight of your purpose is to chase money for the sake of chasing money. Jobs is a billionaire and an extraordinary communicator precisely because he followed his heart, his passion. The money, he most certainly knew, would come.

FINDING YOUR CORE PURPOSE

What is your core purpose? Once you find it, express it enthusiastically. One of the most profound experiences of my journalism career happened during an interview with Chris Gardner. Actor Will Smith played Gardner in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*.

In That Craziness, We See Genius

> *I think you always had to be a little different to buy an Apple computer. I think the people who do buy them are the creative spirits in this world. They are the people who are not out just to get a job done; they're out to change the world. We make tools for those kinds of people . . . We are going to serve the people who have been buying our products since the beginning. A lot of times, people think they're crazy. But in that craziness, we see genius. And those are the people we're making tools for.*[4]
>
> —STEVE JOBS

In the eighties, the real-life Gardner pursued an unpaid internship to become a stockbroker. He was homeless at the time, spending nights in the bathroom of an Oakland, California, subway station. To make the situation even harder, Gardner took care of his two-year-old son. The two slept together on the bathroom floor. Every morning, Gardner would put on the one suit he had, drop his son off at a very questionable day care, and take his classes. Gardner finished top of his class, became a stockbroker, and earned many millions of dollars. For a *BusinessWeek* column, I asked him, "Mr. Gardner, how did you find the strength to keep going?" His answer was so profound that I remember it to this day: "Find something you love to do so much, you can't wait for the sun to rise to do it all over again."[5]

In *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras studied eighteen leading companies. Their conclusion: individuals are inspired by "core values and a sense of purpose beyond just making money."[6] From his earliest interviews, it becomes clear that Jobs was more motivated by creating great products than by calculating how much money he would make at building those products.

In a PBS documentary, *Triumph of the Nerds*, Jobs said, "I was worth over a million dollars when I was twenty-three, and over ten million dollars when I was twenty-four, and over a hundred million dollars when I was twenty-five, and it wasn't that important, because I never did it for the money."[7] *I never did it for the money.* This phrase holds the secret between becoming an extraordinary presenter and one mired in mediocrity for the rest of your life. Jobs once said that being "the richest man in the cemetery" didn't matter to him; rather, "going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful, that's what matters to me."[8] Great presenters are passionate, because they follow their hearts. Their conversations become platforms to share that passion.

Malcolm Gladwell shares a fascinating observation in *Outliers*. He argues that most of the leaders who are responsible for the personal computing revolution were born in 1955. That's the magic year, he says. According to Gladwell, the chronology makes sense because the first "minicomputer," the Altair,

was introduced in 1975, marking one of the most important developments in the history of personal computers. He states: "If you were more than a few years out of college in 1975, then you belonged to the old paradigm. You had just bought a house. You're married. A baby is on the way. You're in no position to give up a good job and pension for some pie-in-the-sky $397 computer kit."[9] Likewise, if you were too young, you would not be mature enough to participate in the revolution.

Gladwell speculates that the ideal age of tech industry titans was around twenty or twenty-one, those born in 1954 or 1955. Steve Jobs was born on February 24, 1955. He was born at the right time and in the right neighborhood to take advantage of the moment. Gladwell points out that Jobs is one of an amazing number of technology leaders born in 1954 and 1955 (including Bill Gates, Paul Allen, Steve Ballmer, Eric Schmidt, Scott McNealy, and others). Gladwell's conclusion is that these men became successful precisely because computers were not big moneymakers at the time. They were cool, and these men loved to tinker. The message, claims Gladwell, is: to achieve success, do what you find interesting. Do what you love, and follow your core purpose. As Jobs has said, your heart knows where it wants to be.

THE LUCKIEST GUYS ON THE PLANET

On May 30, 2007, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates shared the stage in a rare joint appearance at the technology conference D: All Things

Lust for It

In a *New York Times* article after the launch of the MacBook Air, John Markoff wrote about witnessing Steve's enthusiasm in person. Markoff spent thirty minutes with Jobs after the conference and noted that Jobs's passion for personal computing came across even more so than it did when he was performing onstage. Jobs excitedly told Markoff, "I'm going to be the first one in line to buy one of these. I've been lusting after this."[10]

Digital. *Wall Street Journal* columnists Walt Mossberg and Kara Swisher covered a variety of topics with the two tech titans. In response to a question about Bill Gates's "second act" as a philanthropist, Jobs credited Gates for making the world a better place because Gates's goal wasn't to be the richest guy in the cemetery.

> You know, I'm sure Bill was like me in this way. I mean, I grew up fairly middle-class, lower middle-class, and I never really cared much about money. And Apple was so successful early on in life that I was very lucky that I didn't have to care about money then. And so I've been able to focus on work and then later on, my family. And I sort of look at us as two of the luckiest guys on the planet because we found what we loved to do, we were at the right place at the right time, and we've gotten to go to work every day with superbright people for thirty years and do what we love doing. And so it's hard to be happier than that. And so I don't think about legacy much. I just think about being able to get up every day and go in and hang around these great people and hopefully create something that other people will love as much as we do. And if we can do that, that's great.[11]

Nowhere in that quote do you hear Jobs speak of wealth, stock options, or private planes. Those things are nice, but they don't motivate Jobs. His drive comes from doing what he loves—designing great products that people enjoy.

Rally People to a Better Future

Donald Trump once remarked, "If you don't have passion, you have no energy, and if you don't have energy, you have nothing." It all starts with passion. Passion stirs the emotions of your listeners when you use it to paint a picture of a more meaningful world, a world that your customers or employees can play a part in creating.

Marcus Buckingham interviewed thousands of employees who excelled at their jobs during his seventeen years at the

Oprah Shares Jobs's Secret to Success

> *Follow your passion. Do what you love, and the money will follow. Most people don't believe it, but it's true.*[12]
>
> —OPRAH WINFREY

Gallup organization. After interviewing thousands of peak performers, he arrived at what he considers the single best definition of leadership: "Great leaders rally people to a better future," he writes in *The One Thing You Need to Know*.[13]

According to Buckingham, a leader carries a vivid image in his or her head of what a future could be. "Leaders are fascinated by the future. You are a leader if, and only if, you are restless for change, impatient for progress, and deeply dissatisfied with the status quo." He explains, "As a leader, you are never satisfied with the present, because in your head you can see a better future, and the friction between 'what is' and 'what could be' burns you, stirs you up, propels you forward. This is leadership."[14] Jobs's vision must have certainly burned him, stirred him, and propelled him forward. Jobs once told John Sculley he dreamed that every person in the world would own an Apple computer. But Jobs did not stop there. He shared that dream with all who would listen.

True evangelists are driven by a messianic zeal to create new experiences. "It was characteristic of Steve to speak in both vivid and sweeping language," writes Sculley. " 'What we want to do,' he [Steve Jobs] explained, 'is to change the way people use computers in the world. We've got some incredible ideas that will revolutionize the way people use computers. Apple is going to be the most important computer company in the world, far more important than IBM.' "[15] Jobs was never motivated to build computers. Instead, he had a burning desire to create tools to unleash human potential. Once you understand the difference, you'll understand what sparked his famous reality distortion field.

An Incredible Journey

> *Apple was this incredible journey. I mean, we did some amazing things there. The thing that bound us together at Apple was the ability to make things that were going to change the world. That was very important. We were all pretty young. The average age in the company was mid to late twenties. Hardly anybody had families at the beginning, and we all worked like maniacs, and the greatest joy was that we felt we were fashioning collective works of art much like twentieth-century physics. Something important that would last, that people contributed to and then could give to more people; the amplification factor was very large.*[16]
>
> —STEVE JOBS

What Computers and Coffee Have in Common

Lee Clow, chairman of TBWA/Chiat/Day, the agency behind some of Apple's most notable ad campaigns, once said of Jobs, "From the time he was a kid, Steve thought his products could change the world."[17] That's the key to understanding Jobs. His charisma is a result of a grand but strikingly simple vision—to make the world a better place.

Jobs convinced his programmers that they were changing the world together, making a moral choice against Microsoft and making people's lives better. For example, Jobs gave an interview to *Rolling Stone* in 2003 in which he talked about the iPod. The MP3 player was not simply a music gadget, but much more. According to Jobs, "Music is really being reinvented in this digital age, and that is bringing it back into people's lives. It's a wonderful thing. And in our own small way, that's how we're going to make the world a better place."[18] Where some people see an iPod as a music player, Jobs sees a world in which people can easily access their favorite songs and carry the music along with them wherever they go, enriching their lives.

Jobs reminds me of another business leader whom I had the pleasure of meeting, Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz. Prior to our interview, I read his book, *Pour Your Heart into It*. Schultz is passionate about what he does; in fact, the word *passion* appears on nearly every page. But it soon became clear that he is not as passionate about coffee as he is about the people, the baristas who make the Starbucks experience what it is. You see, Schultz's core vision was not to make a great cup of coffee. It was much bigger. Schultz would create an experience; a third place between work and home where people would feel comfortable gathering. He would build a company that treats people with dignity and respect. Those happy employees would, in turn, provide a level of customer service that would be seen as a gold standard in the industry. When I reviewed the transcripts from my time with Schultz, I was struck by the fact that the word *coffee* rarely appeared. Schultz's vision had little to do with coffee and everything to do with the experience Starbucks offers.

"Some managers are uncomfortable with expressing emotion about their dreams, but it's the passion and emotion that will attract and motivate others," write Collins and Porras.[19] Communicators such as Steve Jobs and Howard Schultz are passionate about how their products improve the lives of their customers. They're not afraid to express it. Coffee, computers, iPods—it doesn't matter. What matters is that they are motivated by a vision to change the world, to "leave a dent in the universe."

This book is filled with techniques to help you sell your ideas more successfully, but no technique can make up for a lack of passion for your service, product, company, or cause. The secret is to identify what it is you're truly passionate about. More often than not, it's not "the widget," but how the widget will improve the lives of your customers. Here is an excerpt from an interview Jobs gave *Wired* magazine in 1996: "Design is a funny word. Some people think design means how it looks. But of course, if you dig deeper, it's really how it works. The design of the Mac wasn't what it looked like, although that was part of it. Primarily, it was how it worked. To design something really well, you have to get it. You have to really grok what it's all about. It takes a

The Charismatic Leader

> *When I wasn't sure what the word charisma meant, I met Steve Jobs and then I knew.*[20]
>
> —FORMER APPLE CHIEF SCIENTIST LARRY TESLER

passionate commitment to really thoroughly understand something, chew it up, not just quickly swallow it. Most people don't take the time to do that."[21] Yes, *grok* is the word Jobs used. Just as Howard Schultz isn't passionate about the product itself, coffee, Jobs isn't passionate about hardware. He's passionate about how design enables something to work more beautifully.

Think Different

Los Angeles ad agency TBWA/Chiat/Day created an Apple television and print advertising campaign that turned into one of the most famous campaigns in corporate history. "Think Different" debuted on September 28, 1997, and became an instant classic. As black-and-white images of famous iconoclasts filled the screen (Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King, Richard Branson, John Lennon, Amelia Earhart, Muhammad Ali, Lucille Ball, Bob Dylan, and others), actor Richard Dreyfuss voiced the narration:

> Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square hole. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do.[22]

The campaign won a ton of awards, became a cult favorite, and lasted five years, which is an eternity in the life cycle of ad campaigns. The campaign reinvigorated the public's appetite for all things Apple, including an interest in one of the most influential iconoclasts in the computer world, Steve Jobs himself.

In *The Second Coming of Steve Jobs*, Alan Deutschman, who, as mentioned earlier, was pulled into Jobs's reality distortion field, describes a meeting between Jobs and *Newsweek*'s Katie Hafner, the first outsider to see the new "Think Different" ads. According to Deutschman, Hafner arrived at Apple's headquarters on a Friday morning and waited a long time for Jobs to show up. "Finally he emerged. His chin was covered by stubble. He was exhausted from having stayed up all night editing footage for the 'Think Different' television spot. The creative directors at Chiat/Day would send him video clips over a satellite connection, and he would say yes or no. Now the montage was finally complete. Steve sat with Katie and they watched the commercial. Steve was crying. 'That's what I love about him,' Katie recalls. 'It wasn't trumped up. Steve was genuinely moved by that stupid ad.' "[23]

Those ads touched Jobs deeply because they reflected everything that pushed Jobs to innovate, excel, and succeed. He saw himself in the faces of those famous people who advanced the human race and changed the world.

As a journalist, I learned that everyone has a story to tell. I realize we are not all creating computers that will change the way people live, work, play, and learn. Notwithstanding, the fact is that most of us are selling a product or working on a project that has some benefit to the lives of our customers. Whether you work in agriculture, automobiles, technology, finance, or any number of other industries, you have a magnificent story to tell. Dig deep to identify that which you are most passionate about. 'Once you do, share that enthusiasm with your listeners. People want to be moved and inspired, and they want to believe in something. Make them believe in you.

"There's an old Wayne Gretzky quote that I love," Steve Jobs once said: " 'I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it

has been.' We've always tried to do that at Apple. Since the very, very beginning. And we always will."[24]

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Dig deep to identify your true passion. Ask yourself, "What am I really selling?" Here's a hint: it's not the widget, but what the widget can do to improve the lives of your customers. What you're selling is the dream of a better life. Once you identify your true passion, share it with gusto.
- Develop a personal "passion statement." In one sentence, tell your prospects why you are genuinely excited about working with them. Your passion statement will be remembered long after your company's mission statement is forgotten.
- If you want to be an inspiring speaker but you are not doing what you love, consider a change. After interviewing thousands of successful leaders, I can tell you that, while it's possible to be financially successful in a job you hate, you will never be considered an inspiring communicator. Passion—a messianic zeal to make the world a better place—makes all the difference.

SCENE 4

Create Twitter-Like Headlines

Today Apple reinvents the phone!

—STEVE JOBS, MACWORLD 2007

"Welcome to Macworld 2008. There is something clearly in the air today."[1] With that opening line, Steve Jobs set the theme for what would ultimately be the big announcement of his keynote presentation—the introduction of an ultrathin notebook computer. No other portable computer could compare to this three-pound, 0.16-inch-thin "dreambook," as some observers called it. Steve Jobs knew that everyone would be searching for just the right words to describe it, so he did it for them: "MacBook Air. The world's thinnest notebook."

The MacBook Air is Apple's ultrathin notebook computer. The best way to describe it is as, well, the world's thinnest notebook. Search for "world's thinnest notebook" on Google, and the search engine will return about thirty thousand citations, most of which were written after the announcement. Jobs takes the guesswork out of a new product by creating a one-line description or headline that best reflects the product. The headlines work so well that the media will often run with them word for word. You see, reporters (and your audience) are looking for a category in which to place your product and a way of describing the product in one sentence. Take the work out of it and write the headline yourself.

140 Characters or Less

Jobs creates headlines that are specific, are memorable, and, best of all, can fit in a Twitter post. Twitter is a fast-growing social networking site that could best be described as your life between e-mail and blogs. Millions of users "tweet" about the daily happenings in their lives and can choose to follow the happenings of others. Twitter is changing the nature of business communication in a fundamental way—it forces people to write concisely. The maximum post—or tweet—is 140 characters. Characters include letters, spaces, and punctuation. For example, Jobs's description of the MacBook Air takes thirty characters, including the period: "The world's thinnest notebook."

Jobs has a one-line description for nearly every product, and it is carefully created in the planning stage well before the presentation, press releases, and marketing material are finished. Most important, the headline is consistent. On January 15, 2008, the day of the MacBook Air announcement, the headline was repeated in every channel of communication: presentations, website, interviews, advertisements, billboards, and posters.

In Table 4.1, you see how Apple and Jobs consistently delivered the vision behind MacBook Air.

Most presenters cannot describe their company, product, or service in one sentence. Understandably, it becomes nearly

Setting the Stage for the Marketing Blitz

The minute Jobs delivers a headline onstage, the Apple publicity and marketing teams kick into full gear. Posters are dropped down inside the Macworld Expo, billboards go up, the front page of the Apple website reveals the product and headline, and ads reflect the headline in newspapers and magazines, as well as on television and radio. Whether it's "1,000 songs in your pocket" or "The world's thinnest notebook," the headline is repeated consistently in all of Apple's marketing channels.

TABLE 4.1 JOBS'S CONSISTENT HEADLINES FOR MACBOOK AIR

HEADLINE	SOURCE
"What is MacBook Air? In a sentence, it's the world's thinnest notebook."[2]	Keynote presentation
"The world's thinnest notebook."[3]	Words on Jobs's slide
"This is the MacBook Air. It's the thinnest notebook in the world."[4]	Promoting the new notebook in a CNBC interview immediately after his keynote presentation
"We decided to build the world's thinnest notebook."[5]	A second reference to MacBook Air in the same CNBC interview
"MacBook Air. The world's thinnest notebook."	Tagline that accompanied the full-screen photograph of the new product on Apple's home page
"Apple Introduces MacBook Air—The World's Thinnest Notebook."[6]	Apple press release
"We've built the world's thinnest notebook."[7]	Steve Jobs quote in the Apple press release

impossible to create consistent messaging without a prepared headline developed early in the planning stage. The rest of the presentation should be built around it.

Today Apple Reinvents the Phone

On January 9, 2007, *PC World* ran an article that announced Apple would "Reinvent the Phone" with a new device that combined three products: a mobile phone, an iPod, and an Internet communicator. That product, of course, was the iPhone. The iPhone did, indeed, revolutionize the industry and was recognized by *Time* magazine as the invention of the year. (Just two years after its release, by the end of 2008, the iPhone had grabbed 13 percent of the smartphone market.) The editors at *PC*

World did not create the headline themselves. Apple provided it in its press release, and Steve Jobs reinforced it in his keynote presentation at Macworld. Apple's headline was specific, memorable, and consistent: "Apple Reinvents the Phone."

During the keynote presentation in which Jobs unveiled the iPhone, he used the phrase "reinvent the phone" five times. After walking the audience through the phone's features, he hammered it home once again: "I think when you have a chance to get your hands on it, you'll agree, we have reinvented the phone."[8]

Jobs does not wait for the media to create a headline. He writes it himself and repeats it several times in his presentation. Jobs delivers the headline before explaining the details of the product. He then describes the product, typically with a demo, and repeats the headline immediately upon ending the explanation.

For example, here is how Jobs introduced GarageBand for the first time: "Today we're announcing something so cool: a fifth app that will be part of the iLife family. Its name is GarageBand. What is GarageBand? GarageBand is a major new pro music tool. But it's for everyone."[9] Jobs's slide mirrored the headline. When he announced the headline for GarageBand, the slide on the screen read: "GarageBand. A major new pro music tool." Jobs followed the headline with a longer, one-sentence description of the product. "What it does is turn your Mac into a pro-quality musical instrument and complete recording studio," Jobs told the audience. This is typical Jobs method for introducing a product. He reveals the headline, expands on it, and hammers it home again and again.

The Excitement of the Internet, the Simplicity of Macintosh

The original iMac (the "i" stood for Internet) made getting on the Web easier than ever. The customer had to go through only two steps to connect to the Internet. ("There's no step three," actor Jeff Goldblum declared in one popular ad.) The introduction

captured the imagination of the computer industry in 1998 and was one of the most influential computer announcements of the decade. According to Macworld.com, the iMac redeemed Steve Jobs, who had returned to Apple in 1997, and it saved Apple itself at a time when the media had pronounced the company all but dead. Jobs had to create excitement about a product that threw some common assumptions out the window—the iMac shipped with no floppy drive, a bold move at the time and a decision met with considerable skepticism.

"iMac combines the excitement of the Internet with the simplicity of Macintosh," Jobs said as he introduced the computer. The slide on the screen behind Jobs read simply: "iMac. The excitement of the Internet. The simplicity of Macintosh." Jobs then explained whom the computer was created to attract: consumers and students who wanted to get on the Internet "simply and fast."[10]

The headlines Steve Jobs creates work effectively because they are written from the perspective of the user. They answer the question, Why should I care? (See Scene 2.) Why should you care about the iMac? Because it lets you experience "the excitement of the Internet with the simplicity of Macintosh."

One Thousand Songs in Your Pocket

Apple is responsible for one of the greatest product headlines of all time. According to author Leander Kahney, Jobs himself settled on the description for the original iPod. On October 23, 2001, Jobs could have said, "Today we're introducing a new, ultraportable MP3 player with a 6.5-ounce design and a 5 GB hard drive, complete with Apple's legendary ease of use." Of course, Jobs did not say it quite that way. He simply said, "iPod. One thousand songs in your pocket."[11] No one could describe it better in more concise language. One thousand songs that could fit in your pocket. What else is there to say? One sentence tells the story and also answers the question, Why should I care?

Many reporters covering the event used the description in the headline to their articles. Matthew Fordahl's headline in the Associated Press on the day of the announcement read, "Apple's

New iPod Player Puts '1,000 Songs in Your Pocket.' "[12] Apple's headline was memorable because it meets three criteria: it is *concise* (twenty-seven characters), it is *specific* (one thousand songs), and it offers a *personal benefit* (*you* can carry the songs in your pocket).

Following are some other examples of Apple headlines that meet all three criteria. Although some of these are slightly longer than ten words, they can fit in a Twitter post:

- "The new iTunes store. All songs are DRM-free." (Changes to iTunes music store, January 2009)
- "The industry's greenest notebooks." (New MacBook family of computers, introduced in October 2008)
- "The world's most popular music player made even better." (Introduction of the fourth-generation iPod nano, September 2008)
- "iPhone 3G. Twice as fast at half the price." (Introduction of iPhone 3G, July 2008)
- "It gives Mac users more reasons to love their Mac and PC users more reasons to switch." (Introduction of iLife '08, announced July 2007)
- "Apple reinvents the phone." (Introduction of iPhone, January 2007)
- "The speed and screen of a professional desktop system in the world's best notebook design." (Introduction of the seventeen-inch MacBook Pro, April 2006)
- "The fastest browser on the Mac and many will feel it's the best browser ever created." (Unveiling of Safari, January 2003)

Keynote Beats PowerPoint in the Battle of the Headlines

Microsoft's PowerPoint has one big advantage over Apple's Keynote presentation software—it's everywhere. Microsoft commands 90 percent of the computing market, and among the 10 percent of computer users on a Macintosh, many still use

Headlines That Changed the World

When the "Google guys," Sergey Brin and Larry Page, walked into Sequoia Capital to seek funding for their new search-engine technology, they described their company in one sentence: "Google provides access to the world's information in one click." That's sixty-three characters, ten words. An early investor in Google told me that with those ten words, the investors immediately understood the implications of Google's technology. Since that day, entrepreneurs who walk into Sequoia Capital have been asked for their "one-liner," a headline that describes the product in a single sentence. As one investor told me, "If you cannot describe what you do in ten words or less, I'm not investing, I'm not buying, I'm not interested. Period." Following are some more examples of world-changing headlines that are ten words or less:

- "Cisco changes the way we live, work, play, and learn."—Cisco CEO John Chambers, who repeats this line in interviews and presentations
- "Starbucks creates a third place between work and home."—Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, describing his idea to early investors
- "We see a PC on every desk, in every home."—Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, expressing his vision to Steve Ballmer, who, shortly after joining the company, was second-guessing his decision. Ballmer, currently Microsoft's CEO, said Gates's vision convinced him to stick it out. With a personal net worth of $15 billion, Ballmer is glad he did.

PowerPoint software designed for Macs. While the actual numbers of presentations conducted on PowerPoint versus Keynote are not publicly available, it's safe to say that the number of Keynote presentations given daily is minuscule in comparison with PowerPoint. Although most presentation designers who

are familiar with both formats prefer to work in the more elegant Keynote system, those same designers will tell you that the majority of their client work is done in PowerPoint.

As I mentioned in Scene 1, this book is software agnostic because all of the techniques apply equally to PowerPoint or Keynote. That said, Keynote is still the application that Steve Jobs prefers, and the Twitter-like headline he created to introduce the software was certainly an attention grabber. "This is another brand-new application that we are announcing here today, and it is called Keynote," Jobs told the audience at Macworld 2003. Then:

> Keynote is a presentation app for when your presentation really counts [slide reads: "When your presentation really counts"]. And Keynote was built for me [slide reads: "Built for me"]. I needed an application to build the kind of slide show that I wanted to show you at these Macworld keynotes: very graphics intensive. We built this for me; now I want to share it with you. We hired a low-paid beta tester to beta test this app for an entire year, and here he is [audience laughs as screen shows photo of Jobs]. Rather than a bunch of slides about slides, let me just show you [walks to stage right to demo the new software].[13]

Again, we see a remarkable consistency in all of Apple's marketing material surrounding the new product launch. The Apple press release for Keynote described it as "The application to use when your presentation really counts."[14] This headline can easily fit in a Twitter post and, without revealing the details, tells a story in one sentence. A customer who wanted more details could read the press release, watch Jobs's demonstration, or view the online demo on Apple's website. Still, the headline itself offered plenty of information. We learned that it was a new application specifically for presentations and made for those times when presentations can make or break your career. As a bonus, it was built for Jobs. For many people who give frequent

presentations, that headline was enough to pique their interest and give the software a try.

Journalists learn to write headlines on the first day of J-school. Headlines are what persuade you to read particular stories in newspapers, magazines, or blogs. Headlines matter. As individuals become their own copywriters for blogs, presentations, Twitter posts, and marketing material, learning to write catchy, descriptive headlines becomes even more important to professional success.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Create your headline, a one-sentence vision statement for your company, product, or service. The most effective headlines are concise (140 characters maximum), are specific, and offer a personal benefit.
- Consistently repeat the headline in your conversations and marketing material: presentations, slides, brochures, collateral, press releases, website.
- Remember, your headline is a statement that offers your audience a vision of a better future. It's not about you. It's about them.

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SCENE 5

Draw a Road Map

Today we are introducing three revolutionary products.

—STEVE JOBS, REVEALING THE iPHONE

On January 9, 2007, thousands of Mac faithful watched as Steve Jobs delivered an electrifying announcement. "Today Apple reinvents the phone," Jobs said as he revealed the iPhone for the first time to the public.[1]

Before delivering that headline, however, Jobs added to the drama and suspense when he told the audience that Apple would introduce not one, but three revolutionary products. He identified the first one as a wide-screen iPod with touch controls. This met with a smattering of applause. Jobs said the second product would be a revolutionary mobile phone. The audience cheered that announcement. And the third, said Jobs, was a breakthrough Internet communications device. At this point, the audience members sat back and waited for what they thought would be further product descriptions and perhaps some demos of the three new devices—but the real thrill was yet to come. Jobs continued, "So, three things: a wide-screen iPod with touch controls, a revolutionary mobile phone, and a breakthrough Internet communications device. An iPod, a phone, and an Internet communicator. An iPod, a phone—are you getting it? These are not three separate devices. This is one device, and we are calling it iPhone." The audience went wild, and Jobs basked in the glow of nailing yet another product launch that would solidify Apple's role as one of the world's most innovative companies.

Jobs draws a verbal road map for his audience, a preview of coming attractions. Typically these road maps are outlined in groups of three—a presentation might be broken into "three acts," a product description into "three features," a demo into "three parts." Jobs's love of threes can be traced back at least as early as the original Macintosh introduction on January 24, 1984. Appearing at the Flint Center, in Cupertino, California, Jobs told the audience, "There have only been two milestone products in our industry: the Apple II in 1977 and the IBM PC in 1981. Today we are introducing the third industry milestone product, the Macintosh. And it has turned out insanely great!"[2]

Verbal guideposts serve as road maps, helping your listeners follow the story. When coaching clients to appear in the media, I always instruct them to create an easy-to-follow story by clearly outlining three or, at the most, four main points before filling in the details. When this technique is followed, reporters will often take extensive notes. If the spokesperson misses a point, reporters will ask, "Didn't you say you had three points? I heard only two." A verbal road map of three things will help your listeners keep their place. See Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 Jobs sticks to the rule of three in his presentations.

ROBYN BECK/AFP/Getty Images

It is well established that we can hold only small amounts of information in short-term, or "active," memory. In 1956, Bell Labs research scientist George Miller published a classic paper titled "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two." Miller cited studies that showed we have a hard time retaining more than seven to nine digits in short-term memory. Contemporary scientists have put the number of items we can easily recall closer to three or four. So, it should not be surprising that Jobs rarely offers more than three or four key message points. As for that, in a Steve Jobs presentation, the number three is much more common than four. Steve understands that the "rule of three" is one of the most powerful concepts in communication theory.

Why Goldilocks Didn't Encounter Four Bears

Listeners like lists. But how many points should you include in the list?

Three is the magic number.

Comedians know that three is funnier than two. Writers know that three is more dramatic than four. Jobs knows that three is more persuasive than five. Every great movie, book, play, or presentation has a three-act structure. There were three musketeers, not five. Goldilocks encountered three bears, not four. There were three stooges, not two. Legendary NFL coach Vince Lombardi told his players there were three important things in life: family, religion, and the Green Bay Packers. And the U.S. Declaration of Independence states that Americans have a right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," not simply life and liberty. The rule of three is a fundamental principle in writing, in humor, and in a Steve Jobs presentation.

The U.S. Marine Corps has conducted extensive research into this subject and has concluded that three is more effective than two or four. Divisions within the marines are divided into three: a corporal commands a team of three; a sergeant

commands three rifle teams in a squad; a captain has three platoons; and so on. If the marines were kind enough to study this stuff, why should we reinvent the wheel? Go ahead and use it. So few communicators incorporate the rule of three in their presentations that you will stand apart simply by doing so. The rule of three—it works for the marines, it works for Jobs, and it will work for you.

At the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference on June 6, 2005, Jobs announced the switch from IBM's PowerPC chips to Intel microprocessors. "Let's talk about transitions," Jobs said.

> The Mac in its history has had two major transitions so far [begins to outline three points]. The *first* one, 68K to PowerPC. That transition happened about ten years ago in the mid-nineties. The PowerPC set Apple up for the next decade. It was a good move. The *second* major transition has been even

How the Rule of Three Can Improve Your Golf Game

During a break from writing this chapter, I took a golf lesson from a local coach. Any golfer will tell you that the toughest part of the game is remembering the dozens of small moves that ultimately result in a fluid swing: posture, grip, takeaway, balance, hinging, weight shift, follow-through, and other variables. Problems occur when you think about too many things at the same time. The marines have found that giving directions in groups of three makes it easier for soldiers to follow the directions. So, I asked my instructor to give me three directives, and three only, to improve my swing. "Fine," he said. "Today you're going to focus on closing your hips, shifting your weight to the right side on the backswing, and making a full follow-through. So, think hips, shift, follow-through." *Hips, shift, follow.* That's it. The instruction worked wonders, and since that day, my golf game has improved considerably. The rule of three—good for presentations and good for golf, too!

> bigger. And that's the transition from OS 9 to OS X that we just finished a few years ago. This was a brain transplant. And although these operating systems vary in name by just one [digit], they are worlds apart in technology. OS X is the most advanced operating system on the planet, and it has set Apple up for the next twenty years. Today it's time to begin a *third* transition. We want to constantly be making the best computers for you and the rest of our users. It's time for a third transition. And yes, it's true. We are going to begin the transition from PowerPC to Intel processors [emphasis added].[3]

Revealing the narrative in groups of three provides direction for your audience. It shows people where you've been and where you're going. In the preceding excerpt, Jobs sets the theme of "transitions," and we assume there will be at least a third transition because, as Jobs explains, the Mac has already had two of them. He also builds the drama with each point. The first transition was a "good move." The second was "even bigger." By extension, the third must be bigger still.

Apple's Three-Legged Stool

At the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference in September 2008, Jobs displayed a slide of a stool with three legs. "As you know, there's three parts to Apple now," he said. "The first part, of course, is the Mac. The second part is our music businesses, the iPod and iTunes. And the third part is now the iPhone." Jobs introduced the executives who would speak about the Mac and the iPod business. Jobs would take the iPhone portion himself.

As he launched into the iPhone discussion, Jobs once again provided a road map for his listeners—this time, a road map in *four* parts: "In a few weeks, it's going to be the iPhone's first birthday. We shipped our first iPhone on June 29. It was an amazing introduction, the most amazing one we've ever had. iPhone has had tremendous critical acclaim. It's the phone that has changed phones forever. But we have mountains to climb to reach the next level. What are these challenges? The first,

The *USA Today* Method

Journalists are trained to distill complex ideas into specific points, or takeaways. Read *USA Today*, America's most popular newspaper, and you will find that most articles condense main points into groups of three. When Intel rolled out a faster chip called Centrino 2, Michelle Kessler covered it for the newspaper. Kessler outlined three specific benefits and explained why each was important—why they matter:

- **Battery life.** "The best laptop in the world isn't worth much when its battery dies. Intel's new chip features an ultra low power processor and other energy-saving tools."
- **Graphics.** "Laptops traditionally use low-end graphics chips. But now 26 percent have powerful stand-alone graphics chips and more people watch movies, play games, and use graphics-intensive programs."
- **Wireless Internet.** "Intel's new chip line features the latest version of Wi-Fi, known as 802.11n. Later this year it plans to roll out chips using a new wireless Internet standard, WiMax, which can send a signal over several miles."[4]

Kessler proves that you can take the most complex technology—or idea—and describe it in three concise points.

Ed Baig also writes for *USA Today*, reviewing some of the latest technology products. After testing Microsoft's new operating system (Windows 7) in its beta, or test mode, Baig focused on three highlights:

- **Getting around.** "Icons on the task bar are bigger and you can arrange them in any way you choose."
- **Security.** "Windows 7 won't constantly bog you down with annoying security messages every time you try to load programs or change settings."
- **Compatibility.** "Even as a beta, Windows 7 recognized my printer and digital camera."[5]

Baig, Kessler, and other top reporters write their material in manageable chunks to make it easier to read. So does Jobs. He writes the content of his presentation just as a *USA Today* reporter would review a product: headline, introduction, three points, conclusion.

3G networking—faster networking. Second, enterprise support. Third, third-party application support. And fourth, we need to sell iPhone in more countries."

After providing that verbal preview of the four points he would discuss in more detail, Jobs returned to the first point. "So, as we arrive at iPhone's first birthday, we're going to take it to the next level, and today we're introducing the iPhone 3G."[6] This is a remarkably consistent technique in Jobs's presentations. He outlines three or four points, returns to the first point, explains each one in more depth, and then summarizes each point. This is a simple recipe for ensuring your audience will retain the information you are sharing.

Jobs and Ballmer Share a Love of Threes

In January 2009, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer opened the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. It was his first keynote speech at the conference, replacing Bill Gates, who had moved on to his philanthropic pursuits. Over fifteen years, it had become a tradition for Microsoft to open the conference, and Gates had delivered nearly every keynote. As a presenter, Ballmer was much different from Gates. He exuded passion, energy, and excitement. He stripped his talk of esoteric jargon and technical buzzwords. Ballmer also understood the value of the rule of three in providing a verbal road map for his listeners.

How the Rule of Three Helped DuPont Face an Economic Meltdown

In his book *Leadership in the Era of Economic Uncertainty*, management guru Ram Charan wrote about the global giant DuPont and how it aggressively responded to the economic meltdown in 2008. Chief executive Chad Holliday met with the company's top leaders and economists, formulating a crisis plan that was implemented within ten days. DuPont had sixty thousand employees at the time. Every employee met with a manager who explained in plain English what the company had to accomplish. Employees were then asked to identify three things that they could do immediately to conserve cash and reduce costs. The company had decided that if employees felt overwhelmed, they wouldn't take any action. Three, however, was a manageable and meaningful number that would spark employees to take action.

The groups of three just kept coming. Here are a few examples from his keynote:

- "I want to spend time with you talking about the economy, our industry, and the work that we are doing at Microsoft."
- "When I think about opportunities, in my mind I frame it in three key areas. The first is the convergence of the three screens people use every day: the PC, the phone, and the TV . . . The second major area is how you will interact with your computer and other devices in a more natural way . . . and the last area of opportunity is what I call connected experiences."
- "Looking back, there were three things that made Windows and the PC successful. First, the PC enabled the best applications and let them work together. Second, the PC enabled more choice in hardware. And, third, the Windows experience helped us all work together."

» "We're on track to deliver the best version of Windows ever. We're putting in all the right ingredients—simplicity, reliability, and speed."[7]

Ballmer used groups of three no fewer than five times in one presentation, making his speech much easier to follow than any of Gates's keynotes. Although there's no love lost between Apple and Microsoft, both Ballmer and Jobs understand that explaining complex technology in language that's easy to follow is the first step to creating excitement among their existing and future customers.

The Road Map as an Agenda

Jobs kicked off Macworld 2008 with the verbal equivalent of an agenda (there are no agenda slides in a Steve Jobs presentation, just verbal road maps). "I've got four things I'd like to talk to you about today, so let's get started," he said.

> The *first* one is Leopard. I'm thrilled to report that we have delivered over five million copies of Leopard in the first ninety days. Unbelievable. It's the most successful release of Mac OS X ever . . . Number *two* is about the iPhone. Today happens to be the two hundreth day that the iPhone went on sale. I'm extraordinarily pleased that we have sold four million iPhones to date . . . OK, number *three*. This is a good one, too. Number three is about iTunes. I'm really pleased to report that last week we sold our four billionth song. Isn't that great? On Christmas Day we set a new record, twenty million songs in one day. Isn't that amazing? That's our new one-day record . . . So, that brings us to number *four*. There is something in the air. What is it? Well, as you know, Apple makes the best notebooks in the business: the MacBook and the MacBook Pro. Well, today we're introducing a third kind of notebook. It's called the MacBook Air . . ."[8]

What the World's Greatest Speechwriters Know

Ted Sorensen, John F. Kennedy's speechwriter, believed that speeches should be written for the ear and not for the eye. His speeches would list goals and accomplishments in a numbered sequence to make it easier for listeners. Kennedy's speech to a joint session of Congress on May 25, 1961, offers a perfect example of Sorensen's technique. In calling for a major commitment to explore space, Kennedy said:

> First, I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind, or more important for the long-range exploration of space . . . Secondly, an additional twenty-three million dollars, together with the seven million already available, will accelerate development of the Rover nuclear rocket . . . Third, an additional fifty million dollars will make the most of our present leadership, by accelerating the use of space satellites for worldwide communications. Fourth, an additional seventy-five million dollars will help give us at the earliest possible time a satellite system for worldwide weather observation. Let it be clear that I am asking the Congress and the country to accept a firm commitment to a new course of action, a course which will last for many years and carry heavy costs . . . If we are to go only halfway, or reduce our sights in the face of difficulty, in my judgment it would be better not to go at all.[9]

U.S. president Barack Obama, a fan of Kennedy's speeches, adopted some of Sorensen's rules to make his own speeches more impactful. Here are some samples from Obama's speeches that follow the rule of three, beginning with the speech that put him on the map, his keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention:

> I believe that we can give our middle class relief and provide working families with a road to opportunity . . . I believe we can provide jobs to the jobless, homes to the homeless, and reclaim young people in cities across America from violence and despair . . . I believe that we have a righteous wind at our backs and that as we stand on the crossroads of history, we can make the right choices and meet the challenges that face us.[10]

As illustrated in this excerpt, Obama not only breaks up his speeches into paragraphs of three sentences but also often delivers three points within sentences.

When Obama took the oath of office to become America's forty-fourth president on Tuesday, January 20, 2009, he delivered a historical address to some two million people who gathered to watch the speech in person and millions more on television around the world. Obama made frequent use of threes in the speech:

- "I stand here today humbled by the task before us, grateful for the trust you have bestowed, mindful of the sacrifices born by our ancestors."
- "Homes have been lost, jobs shed, businesses shuttered."
- "Our health care is too costly, our schools fail too many, and each day brings further evidence that the ways we use energy strengthen our adversaries and threaten our planet."
- "Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real, they are serious, and they are many."
- "Our workers are no less productive than when this crisis began, our minds no less inventive, our goods and services no less needed than they were last month or last year."[11]

Every time Jobs announced a numeral, his slide contained just one image—the number itself (1, 2, 3, and 4). We will explore the simplicity of Jobs's slide design more thoroughly in Scene 8, but for now keep in mind that your slides should mirror your narrative. There is no need to make the slides complicated.

Jobs not only breaks up his presentations into groups but also describes features in lists of three or four items. "There are *three* major breakthroughs in iPod," Jobs said in 2005. "The *first* one is, it's ultraportable" [5 GB, one thousand songs in your pocket]. "*Second*, we've built in Firewire" [Jobs explained how Firewire enabled a download of an entire CD in five to ten seconds, versus five to ten minutes via a USB connection]. "*Third*, it has extraordinary battery life," Jobs said.[12] He then described how the iPod provided ten hours of battery life, ten hours of continuous music.

This chapter could easily have become the longest in the book, because every Steve Jobs presentation contains verbal road maps with the rule of three playing a prominent role. Even when he's not using slides in a traditional keynote presentation, Jobs is speaking in threes. Jobs kicked off his now famous Stanford commencement address by saying, "Today I want to tell you *three* stories from my life."[13] His speech followed the outline. He told three personal stories from his life, explained what they taught him, and turned those stories into lessons for the graduates.

Applying the Rule of Three

As we've learned, business leaders often prepare for major television interviews or keynote presentations by structuring their message around three or four key points. I know, because I train them to do so! Here is how I would apply the advice from Scenes 4 and 5 to prepare for an interview on the topic of this book. First, I would create a headline of no more than 140 characters: "Deliver a presentation like Steve Jobs." Next, I would write three big ideas: (1) Create the story, (2) Deliver the experience, and (3) Package the material. Under each of the three ideas, I would include rhetorical devices to enhance the narrative: stories, examples, and facts. Following is an example of how an abbreviated interview might unfold:

REPORTER: Carmine, tell us more about this book.

CARMINE: *The Presentation Secrets of Steve Jobs* reveals, for the first time, how to do deliver a presentation like Steve Jobs. The Apple CEO is considered one of the most electrifying speakers in the world today. This book walks you through the very steps he uses to sell his ideas. Best of all, anyone can learn these techniques to improve his or her very next presentation.

REPORTER: OK, so where would we start?

CARMINE: You can deliver a presentation like Steve Jobs [repeat the headline at least twice in a conversation] if you follow these three steps: First, create the story. Second, deliver the experience. And third, package the material. Let's talk about the first step, creating the story . . .

Jimmy V's Famous Speech

On March 4, 1993, college basketball coach Jimmy Valvano gave one of the most emotional speeches in recent sports history. Valvano had led North Carolina State to the NCAA championship in 1983. Ten years later, dying of cancer, Valvano accepted the Arthur Ashe Courage & Humanitarian Award. Valvano's use of the rule of three provided the two most poignant moments of the speech (emphasis added):

> To me, there are *three* things we all should do every day. We should do this every day of our lives. *Number one* is laugh. You should laugh every day. *Number two* is think. You should spend some time in thought. And *number three* is, you should have your emotions moved to tears—could be happiness or joy. But think about it. If you laugh, you think, and you cry, that's a full day . . . Cancer can take away all my physical ability. It cannot touch my mind; it cannot touch my heart; and it cannot touch my soul. And those three things are going to carry on forever. I thank you and God bless all of you.[14]

As you can tell in this example, providing a road map of three parts creates an outline for a short interview, a much longer interview, or an entire presentation.

Your listeners' brains are working overtime. They're consuming words, images, and sensory experiences, not to mention conducting their own internal dialogues. Make it easy for them to follow your narrative.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Create a list of all the key points you want your audience to know about your product, service, company, or initiative.
- Categorize the list until you are left with only three major message points. This group of three will provide the verbal road map for your pitch or presentation.
- Under each of your three key messages, add rhetorical devices to enhance the narrative. These could include some or all of the following: personal stories, facts, examples, analogies, metaphors, and third-party endorsements.

SCENE 6

Introduce the Antagonist

Will Big Blue dominate the entire computer industry? Was George Orwell right?

—STEVE JOBS

In every classic story, the hero fights the villain. The same storytelling outline applies to world-class presentations. Steve Jobs establishes the foundation of a persuasive story by introducing his audience to an antagonist, an enemy, a problem in need of a solution. In 1984, the enemy was "Big Blue."

Apple is behind one of the most influential television ads in history and one in which we begin to see the hero-villain scenario playing out in Jobs's approach to messaging. The television ad, 1984, introduced Macintosh to the world. It ran only once, during the January 22 Super Bowl that same year. The Los Angeles Raiders were crushing the Washington Redskins, but more people remember the spot than the score.

Ridley Scott, of *Alien* fame, directed the Apple ad, which begins with shaven-headed drones listening to their leader (Big Brother) on a giant screen. An athletic blonde, dressed in skimpy eighties-style workout clothes, is running with a sledgehammer. Chased by helmeted storm troopers, the girl throws the hammer into the screen, which explodes in a blinding light as the drones sit with their mouths wide open. The spot ends with

a somber announcer saying, "On January 24, Apple Computer will introduce Macintosh and you'll see why 1984 won't be like *1984*."[1]

Apple's board members had unanimously disliked the commercial and were reluctant to run it. Jobs, of course, supported it, because he understood the emotional power behind the classic story structure of the hero and villain. He realized every protagonist needs an enemy. In the case of the historic 1984 television ad, IBM represented the villain. IBM, a mainframe computer maker at the time, had made the decision to build a competitor to the world's first mass-market home computer, the Apple II. Jobs explained the ad in a 1983 keynote presentation to a select group of Apple salespeople who previewed the sixty-second television spot.

"It is now 1984," said Jobs. "It appears IBM wants it all. Apple is perceived to be the only hope to offer IBM a run for its money . . . IBM wants it all and is aiming its guns on its last obstacle to industry control: Apple. Will Big Blue dominate the entire computer industry? The entire information age? Was George Orwell right?"[2]

With that introduction, Jobs stepped aside as the assembled salespeople became the first public audience to see the commercial. The audience erupted into a thunderous cheer. For another sixty seconds, Steve remained onstage basking in the adulation, his smile a mile wide. His posture, body language, and facial expression said it all—*I nailed it!*

Problem + Solution = Classic Jobs

Introducing the antagonist (the problem) rallies the audience around the hero (the solution). Jobs structures his most exciting presentations around this classic storytelling device. For example, thirty minutes into one of his most triumphant presentations, the launch of the iPhone at Macworld 2007, he spent three minutes explaining why the iPhone is a product whose time has come. The villains in this case included all the current

smartphones on the market, which, Jobs would argue, weren't very smart. Listed in the left column of Table 6.1 are excerpts from the actual presentation; the right column shows the words or describes the images on the accompanying slides.[3] Pay attention to how the slides act as a complement to the speaker.

TABLE 6.1 JOBS'S iPHONE KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

STEVE'S WORDS	STEVE'S SLIDES
"The most advanced phones are called 'smartphones,' so they say."	Smartphone
"They typically combine a phone plus e-mail plus a baby Internet."	Smartphone Phone + Email + Internet
"The problem is they are not so smart and they are not so easy to use. They're really complicated. What we want to do is make a leapfrog product that is way smarter than any mobile device has ever been."	Smartphone Not so smart. Not so easy to use.
"So, we're going to reinvent the phone. We're going to start with a revolutionary user interface."	Revolutionary UI
"It is the result of years of research and development."	Revolutionary UI Years of research & development
"Why do we need a revolutionary user interface? Here are four smartphones: the Motorola Q, BlackBerry, Palm Treo, Nokia E62—the usual suspects."	Image of four existing smartphones: Motorola Q, BlackBerry, Palm Treo, and Nokia E62
"What's wrong with their user interface? The problem with them is in the bottom forty. It's this stuff right there [points to keyboards on the phones]. They all have these keyboards that are there whether you need them or not. And they all have these control	The top half of each image fades away, leaving just the bottom half—the keyboard

continued

TABLE 6.1 JOBS'S iPHONE KEYNOTE PRESENTATION (continued)

STEVE'S WORDS	STEVE'S SLIDES
buttons that are fixed in plastic and are the same for every application. Well, every application wants a slightly different user interface, a slightly optimized set of buttons just for it. And what happens if you think of a great idea six months from now? You can't add a button to these things. They're already shipped. So, what do you do?"	
"What we're going to do is get rid of all these buttons and just make a giant screen."	Image of iPhone
"How are we going to communicate with this? We don't want to carry around a mouse. So, what are we going to do? A stylus, right? We're going to use a stylus."	Image of iPhone on its side; a stylus fades in
"No [laughs]. Who wants a stylus? You have to get them out, put them away—you lose them. Yuck. Nobody wants a stylus."	Words appear next to image: Who wants a stylus?
"So, let's not use a stylus. We're going to use the best pointing device in the world—a pointing device that we're all born with. We're born with ten of them. We'll use our fingers."	Stylus fades out of frame as image of index finger appears next to iPhone
"We have invented a new technology called 'multi-touch,' which is phenomenal."	Finger fades out, and words appear: Multi-Touch
"It works like magic. You don't need a stylus. It's far more accurate than any touch display that's ever been shipped. It ignores unintended touches. It's supersmart. You can do multi-finger gestures on it, and boy have we patented it!" [laughter]	Words reveal upper right: Works like magic No stylus Far more accurate Ignores unintended touches Multi-finger gestures Patented

Make note of how Jobs asks rhetorical questions to advance the story. "Why do we need a revolutionary user interface?" he asked before introducing the problem. He even raises problems to his own solution. When he introduced the concept of replacing the keyboard with a touch screen, he rhetorically asked, "How are we going to communicate with this?" His ready answer was, "We're going to use the best pointing device in the world . . . our fingers."

Nobody really cares about your product or Apple's products or Microsoft's or any other company's, for that matter. What people care about is solving problems and making their lives a little better. As in the smartphone example in Table 6.1, Jobs describes the pain they're feeling, gives them a reason for their pain (usually caused by competitors), and, as you will learn in Scene 7, offers a cure.

Making His Case to CNBC

"Why in the world would Apple want to jump into the handset market with so much competition and so many players?" asked CNBC's Jim Goldman in one of the few interviews Jobs granted immediately after the iPhone announcement. Jobs answered the question by posing a problem in need of a solution: "We used all the handsets out there, and boy is it frustrating. It's a category that needs to be reinvented. Handsets need to be more powerful and much easier to use. We thought we could contribute something. We don't mind if there are other companies making products. The fact is there were one billion handsets sold in 2006. If we just got 1 percent market share, that's ten million units. We've reinvented the phone and completely changed the expectations for what you can carry in your pocket."

"What message is this sending to your competitors?" asked Goldman.

"We're a product company. We love great products. In order to explain what our product is, we have to contrast it to what products are out there right now and what people use," said Jobs.[4] This last sentence reveals Jobs's approach to crafting

a persuasive story. Explanations of new products or services require context, a relevance to a problem in your customer's life that is causing that person "pain." Once the pain is established, your listener will be much more receptive to a product or service that will alleviate that pain.

The Apple Religion

In his book *Buyology*, marketing guru Martin Lindstrom equates Apple's message with the same powerful ideas that propel widespread religions. Both appeal to a common vision and a specific enemy.

"Most religions have a clear vision," writes Lindstrom. "By that I mean they are unambiguous in their missions, whether it's to achieve a certain state of grace or achieve a spiritual goal. And, of course, most companies have unambiguous missions as well. Steve Jobs's vision dates back to the mid-1980s when he said, 'Man is the creator of change in this world. As such he should be above systems and structures, and not subordinate to them.' Twenty years and a few million iPods later, the company still pursues this vision."[5]

According to Lindstrom, who spent years studying the common traits of lasting brands, religions and brands such as Apple have another quality in common: the idea of conquering a shared enemy. "Having an identifiable enemy gives us the chance not only to articulate and showcase our faith, but also to unite ourselves with our fellow believers . . . this us-versus-them strategy attracts fans, incites controversy, creates loyalty, and gets us thinking—and arguing—and, of course, buying."[6]

Will It Eat Me?

Establishing the antagonist early is critical to persuasion, because our brains needs a bucket—a category—in which to place a new idea. Think about it this way: your brain craves meaning before details. According to scientist John Medina, our brains were formed to see the big picture. Medina says that when primitive

man saw a saber-toothed tiger, he asked himself, "Will it eat me?" and not "How many teeth does it have?"

The antagonist gives your audience the big picture. "Don't start with the details. Start with the key ideas and, in a hierarchical fashion, form the details around these larger notions," writes Medina in his book *Brain Rules*.[7] In presentations, start with the big picture—the problem—before filling in the details (your solution).

Apple unveiled the Safari Web browser during Macworld 2003, designating it the fastest browser on the Mac. Safari would join several other browsers vying for attention in the face of Microsoft's juggernaut—Internet Explorer. At his persuasive best, Jobs set up the problem—introducing the antagonist—simply by asking a rhetorical question: "Why do we need our own browser?"[8] Before demonstrating the new features—filling in the details—he needed to establish a reason for the product's existence.

Jobs told the audience that there were two areas in which competitors such as Internet Explorer, Netscape, and others fell short: speed and innovation. In terms of speed, Jobs said Safari would load pages three times faster than Internet Explorer on the Mac. In the area of innovation, Jobs discussed the limitations of current browsers, including the fact that Google search was not provided in the main toolbar and that organizing bookmarks left a lot to be desired. "What we found in our research is that people don't use bookmarks. They don't use favorites very much because this stuff is complicated and nobody has figured out how to use it," Jobs said. Safari would fix the problems by incorporating Google search into the main toolbar and adding features that would allow users to more easily navigate back to previous sites or favorite Web pages.

One simple sentence is all you need to introduce the antagonist: "Why do you need this?" This one question allows Jobs to review the current state of the industry (whether it be browsers, operating systems, digital music, or any other facet) and to set the stage for the next step in his presentation, offering the solution.

The $3,000-a-Minute Pitch

During one week in September, dozens of entrepreneurs pitch their start-ups to influential groups of media, experts, and investors at two separate venues—TechCrunch 50 in San Francisco and DEMO in San Diego. For start-up founders, these high-stakes presentations mean the difference between success and obsolescence. TechCrunch organizers believe that eight minutes is the ideal amount of time in which to communicate an idea. If you cannot express your idea in eight minutes, the thinking the goes, you need to refine your idea. DEMO gives its presenters even less time—six minutes. DEMO also charges an $18,500 fee to present, or $3,000 per minute. If you had to pay $3,000 a minute to pitch your idea, how would you approach it?

The consensus among venture capitalists who attend the presentations is that most entrepreneurs fail to create an intriguing story line because they jump right into their product without explaining the problem. One investor told me, "You need to create a new space in my brain to hold the information you're about to deliver. It turns me off when entrepreneurs offer a solution without setting up the problem. They have a pot of coffee—their idea—without a cup to pour it in." Your listeners' brains have only so much room to absorb new information. It's as if most presenters try to squeeze 2 MB of data into a pipe that carries 128 KB. It's simply too much.

A company called TravelMuse had one of the most outstanding pitches in DEMO 2008. Founder Kevin Fleiss opened his pitch this way: "The largest and most mature online retail segment is travel, totaling more than $90 billion in the United States alone [establishes category]. We all know how to book a trip online. But booking is the last 5 percent of the process [begins to introduce problem]. The 95 percent that comes before booking—deciding where to go, building a plan—is where all the heavy lifting happens. At TravelMuse we make planning easy by seamlessly integrating content with trip-planning tools to provide a complete experience [offers solution]."[9] By introducing

the category and the problem before introducing the solution, Fleiss created the cup to pour the coffee into.

Investors are buying a stake in ideas. As such, they want to know what pervasive problem the company's product addresses. A solution in search of a problem carries far less appeal. Once the problem and solution are established, investors feel comfortable moving on to questions regarding the size of the market, the competition, and the business model.

The Ultimate Elevator Pitch

The problem need not take long to establish. Jobs generally takes just a few minutes to introduce the antagonist. You can do so in as little as thirty seconds. Simply create a one-sentence answer for the following four questions: (1) What do you do? (2) What problem do you solve? (3) How are you different? (4) Why should I care?

When I worked with executives at LanguageLine, in Monterey, California, we crafted an elevator pitch based on answers to the four questions. If we did our job successfully, the following pitch should tell you a lot about the company: "LanguageLine is the world's largest provider of phone interpretation services for companies who want to connect with their non-English-speaking customers [what it does]. Every twenty-three seconds, someone who doesn't speak English enters this country [the problem]. When he or she calls a hospital, a bank, an insurance company, or 911, it's likely that a LanguageLine interpreter is on the other end [how it's different]. We help you talk to your customers, patients, or sales prospects in 150 languages [why you should care]."

The Antagonist: A Convenient Storytelling Tool

Steve Jobs and former U.S. vice president turned global warming expert Al Gore share three things in common: a commitment

to the environment, a love for Apple (Al Gore sits on Apple's board), and an engaging presentation style.

Al Gore's award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, is a presentation designed with Apple's storytelling devices in mind. Gore gives his audience a reason to listen by establishing a problem everyone can agree on (critics may differ on the solution, but the problem is generally accepted).

Gore begins his presentation—his story—by setting the stage for his argument. In a series of colorful images of Earth taken from various space missions, he not only gets audiences to appreciate the beauty of our planet but also introduces the problem. Gore opens with a famous photograph called "Earthrise," the first look at Earth from the moon's surface. Then Gore reveals a series of photographs in later years showing signs of global warming such as melting ice caps, receding shorelines, and hurricanes. "The ice has a story to tell us," he says. Gore then describes the villain in more explicit terms: the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, gas, and oil has dramatically increased the amount of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere, causing global temperatures to rise.

In one of the most memorable scenes of the documentary, Gore explains the problem by showing two colored lines (red and blue) representing levels of carbon dioxide and average temperatures going back six hundred thousand years. According to Gore, "When there is more carbon dioxide, the temperature gets warmer." He then reveals a slide that shows the graph climbing to the highest level of carbon dioxide in our planet's history—which represents where the level is today. "Now if you'll bear with me, I want to really emphasize this next point," Gore says as he climbs onto a mechanical lift. He presses a button, and the lift carries him what appears to be at least five feet. He is now parallel with the point on the graph representing current CO_2 emissions. This elicits a small laugh from his audience. It's funny but insightful at the same time. "In less than fifty years," he goes on to say, "it's going to continue to go up. When some of these children who are here are my age, here's where it's going to be." At this point, Gore presses the button again, and the lift

carries him higher for about ten seconds. As he's tracking the graph upward, he turns to the audience and says, "You've heard of 'off the charts'? Well, here's where we're going to be in less than fifty years."[10] It's funny, memorable, and powerful at the same time. Gore takes facts, figures, and statistics and brings them to life.

Gore uses many of the same presentation and rhetorical techniques that we see in a Steve Jobs presentation. Among them are the introduction of the enemy, or the antagonist. Both men introduce an antagonist early, rallying the audience around a common purpose. In a Jobs presentation, once the villain is clearly established, it's time to open the curtain to reveal the character who will save the day . . . the conquering hero.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Introduce the antagonist early in your presentation. Always establish the problem before revealing your solution. You can do so by painting a vivid picture of your customers' pain point. Set up the problem by asking, "Why do we need this?"
- Spend some time describing the problem in detail. Make it tangible. Build the pain.
- Create an elevator pitch for your product using the four-step method described in this chapter. Pay particular attention to question number 2, "What problem do you solve?" Remember, nobody cares about your product. People care about solving their problems.

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SCENE 7

Reveal the Conquering Hero

The only problem with Microsoft is they just have no taste. And I don't mean that in a small way. I mean that in a big way.

—STEVE JOBS

Steve Jobs is a master at creating villains—the more treacherous, the better. Once Jobs introduces the antagonist of the moment (the limitation to current products), he introduces the hero, revealing the solution that will make your life easier and more enjoyable. In other words, an Apple product arrives in time to save the day. IBM played the antagonist in the 1984 television ad, as discussed in Scene 6. Jobs revealed the ad for the first time to a group of internal salespeople at an event in the fall of 1983.

Before showing the ad, Jobs spent several minutes painting "Big Blue" into a character bent on world domination. (It helped that IBM was known as Big Blue at the time. The similar ring to Big Brother was not lost on Jobs.) Jobs made Big Blue look more menacing than Hannibal Lecter:

> It is 1958. IBM passes up the chance to a buy a new, fledgling company that has invented a new technology called xerography. Two years later, Xerox is born, and IBM has been kicking itself ever since. It is ten years later. The late sixties. Digital Equipment, DEC, and others invent the minicomputer. IBM

> dismisses the minicomputer as too small to do serious computing and therefore unimportant to their business. DEC grows to become a multihundred-million-dollar corporation, while IBM finally enters the minicomputer market. It is now ten years later. The late seventies. In 1977, Apple, a young, fledgling company on the West Coast, invents the Apple II, the first personal computer as we know it today [introduces the hero]. IBM dismisses the personal computer as too small to do serious computing and unimportant to their business [the villain overlooking the hero's qualities]. The early eighties. In 1981, Apple II has become the world's most popular computer, and Apple has grown into a $300 million company, becoming the fastest-growing corporation in American business history. With over fifty competitors vying for a share, IBM enters the personal computer market in November 1981, with the IBM PC. 1983. Apple and IBM emerge as the industry's strongest competitors, each selling over $1 billion in personal computers in 1983 [David has now matched Goliath]. The shakeout is in full swing. The first major firm goes bankrupt, with others teetering on the brink. It is now 1984. It appears IBM wants it all [the hero is about to spring into action]. Apple is perceived to be the only hope to offer IBM a run for its money. Dealers initially welcoming IBM with open arms now fear an IBM-dominated and -controlled future. They are increasingly and desperately turning back to Apple as the only force that will ensure their future freedom.[1]

The audience broke out into wild cheers as Jobs created a classic showdown. Jobs played his best James Bond. Just as the villain is about to destroy the world, Bond—or Jobs—enters the scene and calmly saves the day. Ian Fleming would be proud.

The Hero's Mission

The hero's mission in a Steve Jobs presentation is not necessarily to slay the bad guy, but to make our lives better. The

introduction of the iPod on October 23, 2001, demonstrates this subtle but important difference.

It helps to understand the state of the digital music industry at the time. People were carrying portable CD players that looked monstrous compared with today's tiny iPods. The few existing digital music players were big and clunky or simply not that useful due to a small storage capacity that allowed only a few dozen songs. Some products, such as the Nomad Jukebox, were based on a 2.5-inch hard drive and, while portable, were heavy and were painfully slow to transfer songs from a PC. Battery life was so short that the devices were pretty much useless. Recognizing a problem in need of a solution, Jobs entered as the conquering hero.

"Why music?" Jobs asked rhetorically.

"We love music. And it's always good to do something you love. More importantly, music is a part of everyone's life. Music has been around forever. It will always be around. This is not a speculative market. And because it's a part of everyone's life, it's a very large target market all around the world. But interestingly enough, in this whole new digital-music revolution, there is no market leader. No one has found a recipe for digital music. We found the recipe."

Once Jobs whetted the audience's appetite by announcing that Apple had found the recipe, he had set the stage. His next step would be to introduce the antagonist. He did so by taking his audience on a tour of the current landscape of portable music players. Jobs explained that if you wanted to listen to music on the go, you could buy a CD player that held ten to fifteen songs, a flash player, an MP3 player, or a hard-drive device such as the Jukebox. "Let's look at each one," Jobs said.

> A CD player costs about $75 and holds about ten to fifteen songs on a CD. That's about $5 a song. You can buy a flash player for $150. It holds about ten to fifteen songs, or about $10 a song. You can go buy an MP3 CD player that costs $150, and you can burn up to 150 songs, so you get down to a dollar a song. Or you can buy a hard-drive Jukebox player for $300. It holds about one thousand songs and costs thirty

> cents a song. We studied all these, and that's where we want to be [points to "hard drive" category on slide]. We are introducing a product today that takes us exactly there, and that product is called iPod.

With that, Jobs introduced the hero, the iPod. The iPod, he said, is an MP3 music player that plays CD-quality music. "But the biggest thing about iPod is that it holds a thousand songs. This is a quantum leap because for most people, it's their entire music library. This is huge. How many times have you gone on the road and realized you didn't bring the CD you wanted to listen to? But the coolest thing about iPod is your entire music library fits in your pocket. This was never possible before."[2] By reinforcing the fact that one's entire music library could fit in a pocket, Jobs reinforces the hero's (iPod) most innovative quality, reminding the audience that this was never possible until Apple appeared to save the day.

After the iPod's introduction, Knight-Ridder columnist Mike Langberg wrote an article in which he pointed out that Creative (the maker of the original Nomad Jukebox) saw the opportunity in portable music players before Apple and unveiled a 6 GB hard-drive player in September 2000; Apple followed with its first iPod a year later. "But," he noted, "Creative lacks Apple's not-so-secret weapon: founder, chairman, and chief evangelist, Steve Jobs."[3]

"I'm a Mac." "I'm a PC."

The "Get a Mac" advertising campaign kicked off in 2006 and quickly became one of the most celebrated and recognizable television campaigns in recent corporate history. Comedian John Hodgman plays "the PC," while actor Justin Long plays the "Mac guy." Both are standing against a stark white background, and the ads typically revolve around a story line in which the PC character is stuffy, slow, and frustrated, whereas the Mac has a friendly, easygoing personality. The ads play out the villain (PC) and hero (Mac) plot in thirty-second vignettes.

In one early ad (Angel/Devil), the Mac character gives PC an iPhoto book. An "angel" and a "devil" appear (the PC character dressed in a white suit and a red suit). The angel encourages PC to compliment Mac, while the devil prods PC to rip the book in half. The metaphor is clear. I'm a Mac/I'm a PC could be titled "I'm the good guy/I'm the bad guy."[4]

Once the hero is established, the benefit must be made clear. The one question that matters to people—Why should I care?—must be answered immediately. In an ad titled Out of the Box, both characters pop out of boxes. The conversation goes like this:

MAC: Ready to get started?
PC: Not quite. I've got a lot to do. What's your big plan?
MAC: Maybe make a home movie, create a website, try out my built-in camera. I can do it all right out of the box. What about you?
PC: First, I've got to download those new drivers, I have to erase the trial software that came on my hard drive, and I've got a lot of manuals to read.
MAC: Sounds like you've got a lot of stuff to do before you do any stuff. I'm going to get started, because I'm kind of excited. Let me know when you're ready. [Jumps out of box]
PC: Actually, the rest of me is in some other boxes. I'll meet up with you later.

Some observers have criticized Apple's campaign, saying it smacked of smug superiority. Whether you like the ads or hate them, there is no question they are effective, if only to keep people talking about Apple. In fact, the ads were so successful that Microsoft countered with an ad campaign of its own showing famous and not-so-famous people in all walks of life proudly proclaiming, "I'm a PC." But Apple had landed the first punch, painting the PC as nerdy and Apple as the cool kid you really want to be like. The Microsoft ads are fun to watch but lack the emotional punch of Apple's ads, for one reason—there's no villain.

Problem and Solution in Thirty Seconds

With more than ten thousand applications available for the iPhone, the App Store has been a resounding success for Apple. The company features some individual apps in television and print ads for the iPhone and iPod Touch. The television ads are effective because in thirty seconds they paint a picture of a problem and offer a solution.

For example, in one ad for an app called Shazam, a narrator says, "You know when you don't know what song is playing and it's driving you crazy? [introduces problem] With the Shazam app, you just hold up your iPhone to the song, and within seconds you will know who sings it and how to get it."[5] The taglines are always the same: "That's the iPhone. Solving life's dilemmas one app at a time."

In thirty seconds, the commercials succeed in raising a problem and solving those problems one app at a time. The ads prove that establishing problems and offering solutions need not be time consuming. Don't spend too much time getting to the punch line.

Jobs Doesn't Sell Computers; He Sells an Experience

After identifying the villain and introducing the hero, the next step in the Apple narrative is to show how the hero clearly offers the victim—the consumer—an escape from the villain's grip. The solution must be simple and free of jargon. Visit the Apple site, for instance, and you will find the top reasons "why you'll love a Mac."[6] The list includes specific benefits and largely avoids complicated technical language. As a case in point, instead of saying that a MacBook Pro comes with an Intel Core 2 Duo 2.4 GHz, 2 GB, 1,066 MHz, DDR3 SDRAM, and a 250 GB Serial ATA 5,400 rpm, the site lists direct benefits to the customer: "It's gorgeous inside and out; it does what a PC does, only better; it has the world's most advanced operating system, and then some; it's a pleasure to buy and own." You see, your target customers are

not buying a 2.4 GHz multicore processor. They are buying the *experience* the processor provides.

Unlike his competitors, Jobs largely avoids mind-numbing data, stats, and jargon in his presentations. During Macworld 2006, Jobs added his famous "One more thing" signature phrase near the end of the presentation. The one more thing turned out to be the new MacBook Pro with an Intel Core 2 microprocessor, marking the first Intel chips in Mac notebooks. Jobs took a few minutes to clearly outline the problem and introduce the hero's tangible benefits, in plain and simple language.

"There's been this pesky little problem in the PowerBooks," Jobs said.

"It's not a secret that we've been trying to shoehorn a G5 [IBM microprocessor] into the PowerBook and have been unable to do so because of its power consumption. It's unrealistic in such a small package. We've done everything possible engineeringwise. We've consulted every possible higher authority [shows a slide with a photograph of the pope, drawing a huge laugh]."

Replacing the existing microprocessor with an Intel Core Duo, Jobs explained, yielded much better performance in a smaller package.

> Today we are introducing a new notebook computer we are calling the MacBook Pro. It has an Intel Core Duo chip in it, the same as we're putting in the new iMac, which means there will be dual processors in every MacBook Pro. What does this yield? It's four to five times faster than the PowerBookG4. These things are screamers . . . The new MacBook Pro is the fastest Mac notebook ever. It's also the thinnest. It's got some amazing new features. It has a 15.4-inch wide-screen display that is as bright as our cinema displays. It's a gorgeous display. It's got an iSight camera built in. Now you can have videoconferencing right out of the box on the go. It's great. Videoconferencing to go. This is heaven.[7]

You may or may not agree that a portable webcam is "heaven," but Jobs knows his audience and voices what is, to those present, a serious problem in need of a solution.

This skill, the ability to create a villain and sell the benefit behind the hero's solution, is a Steve Jobs messaging technique that appears in nearly every presentation and interview he gives. When Jobs agreed to be interviewed for Smithsonian's oral and video history series, he said that perseverance separates the successful entrepreneurs from the nonsuccessful ones. Perseverance, he said, comes from passion. "Unless you have a lot of passion about this, you're not going to survive. You're going to give it up. So, you've got to have an idea or a problem or a wrong that you want to right that you're passionate about. Otherwise, you're not going to have the perseverance to stick it through. I think that's half the battle right there."[8]

Jobs is the Indiana Jones of business. Just as great movie characters vanquish the villain, Jobs identifies a common enemy, conquers that enemy, and wins over the hearts and minds of his audience as he walks off into the sunset, leaving the world a better place.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

- Describe the state of the industry (or product category) as it currently stands, followed by your vision of where it could be.
- Once you have established the antagonist—your customers' pain point—describe in plain English how your company, product, or service offers a cure for that pain.
- Remember, Steve Jobs believes that unless you're passionate about a problem that you want to make right, you won't have the perseverance to stick it out.

INTERMISSION 1

Obey the Ten-Minute Rule

Your audience checks out after ten minutes. Not in eleven minutes, but ten. We know this valuable fact thanks to new research into cognitive functioning. Simply put, the brain gets bored. According to molecular biologist John Medina, "The brain seems to be making choices according to some stubborn timing pattern, undoubtedly influenced by both culture and gene."[1] Medina says peer-reviewed studies confirm the ten-minute rule, as do his own observations. In every college course Medina teaches, he asks the same question: "Given a class of medium interest, not too boring and not too exciting, when do you start glancing at the clock, wondering when the class will be over?" The answer is always exactly the same—ten minutes.

Steve Jobs does not give the brain time to get bored. In a thirty-minute period, his presentations include demonstrations, a second or even third speaker, and video clips. Jobs is well aware that even his gifts of persuasion are no match for a tired brain constantly seeking new stimuli.

Exactly ten minutes into his presentation at Macworld 2007—and not a second more—Jobs revealed a new Apple television commercial for iTunes and iPods (the one with a dark silhouette of people dancing in front of brightly colored backgrounds—the silhouettes are holding iPods, and the stark white earphones noticeably stick out). "Isn't that great?" Jobs said as the commercial ended.[2] Jobs essentially provided an "intermission" between

the first act of his presentation (music) and the second (the launch of Apple TV, a product designed to play iTunes content on a widescreen TV).

Obey the ten-minute rule and give your listeners' brains a break. Here we go . . . on to Act 2: delivering the experience.