

Winning the Room by Jonathon Pease

Confidence in the context of public speaking is two-fold. There's the internal element of how you feel as the presenter, which is probably what you're used to focusing on when you think of confidence. Then there is the external element: how the audience perceives you. Regardless of how you feel, do they think you are confident and therefore to be believed and followed? **The first person you need to convince is yourself. Feeling confident will free you up to engage with your listener. And when your audience thinks you ooze confidence, they will position you as a subject-matter expert. People want to engage with and buy from confident people.**

Your voice is as personal, irreplaceable, and expressive as your face. And your audience, whether you're pitching in a boardroom or asking someone to go on a date with you, will be making judgments about who you are and what you stand for the second you open your mouth (or even before that). From your accent to timbre and use of slang, your voice gives other people a huge number of clues about who you are, and the unconscious biases of your audience will start to play out from the first word.

I mark up my speech notes with specific markers for voice changes. I like to underline and mark in bold-use whatever notation works for you. For example, I will have a section that is bold and underlined. I know I'm going to make a big, positive, uplifting move with my voice. And then, maybe toward the end, the line will be underlined. And I know that at that point, I'm going to bring it down to a more meaningful moment, carrying more weight at the end of that sentence or section.

If you waste time with small talk, you will undoubtedly drift off your plan and into distracting (and diluting) waters.

The first words you say in the room at the start of your presentation reach your audience at their fastest, most receptive, and paradoxically, most judgmental state of mind. Now that you know this, you must work with it and against your natural inclination to want to warm up slowly. One of the ways to do this is to make those powerful statements first -or at least lay some solid groundwork for building toward the "reveal" later. Think of this moment as the most precious one in your whole pitch, and don't waste it.

Firstly, choose someone on your team to introduce your whole team (if you're presenting alone, that choice will be easy). Secondly, figure out relevant stories about each person (or yourself) that relate directly to your presentation and the outcome you're looking to achieve. Maybe it's stories about that person's last job that position them as ideal experts for this type of project. Or maybe it's an outside-of-work passion or side hustle that makes them highly attuned to the target audience. Then, finally, deliver the introductions with passion and enthusiasm. Look people in the eyes, smile at your audience, and, importantly, smile at the people in your group as you introduce them. Done well, your introductions can be the running start you need to start winning.

Drop It Like It's Hot

Try to do what I call a hot intro. As soon as you get into the room, say a few hellos, but minimise this. Say little-and then start your pitch. I can imagine this makes you feel uncomfortable and if you're feeling that way, it's working! If you feel uncomfortable, imagine how your audience is feeling. When we feel uncomfortable, we're paying attention. Go straight into the pitch with no small talk at all. Now that's powerful: that demonstrates that you are confident: you're here for a reason; you respect your time, and you respect the time of your audience. And you're not willing to waste a minute. There's no better signal of the fact that you mean business: you're here, it's important, and they need to pay attention.

Like a Superhero

Harvard psychologist Amy Cuddy found that "postural expansiveness" sitting or standing with head up, shoulders back, and chest expanded-had a marked effect on a person's mental and physiological state.

From my experience, I haven't met a successful public speaker who doesn't warm up (or at least has a routine) before stepping into the light.

Pacing and pausing are incredibly effective in keeping your audience engaged and conveying confidence. Slowing down the delivery and intentionally incorporating pauses allows the audience time to absorb information, signalling key points in the content, and helps eliminate filler words, thereby creating a more compelling and impactful speech. When you master this technique, it will help you handle unexpected disruptions and give you a greater sense of control, which in turn creates a positive feedback loop.

I recommend putting pauses before and after each of your major points to get a feel for how powerful pausing can be. It is the quickest way to drive recall. Yes, many other things can be done to make people remember your points, but pausing is the easiest. You will see the results almost immediately.

A great way to build a habit of pausing is to mark up your speech notes. I use a simple dot-dot-dot (ellipsis) to show where I intend to pause. I then use this marked-up script for all my rehearsals. I will look through the speech as I do with voice modulation and circle the major points. I also look for anywhere that's about jeopardy or consequences. Basically, moments where the stakes are high, and therefore I want to accentuate those moments and get my audience to think about them.

When I started out in advertising, a wise boss once told me I needed to "get some more gears." I had no idea what she meant then, but I've since realised that she was onto something important. She was commenting on how I treated clients and that I was basically the same no matter who the client was. I didn't have enough "gears" or enough of a range of styles. In her opinion, I'd do better if I found different (more bespoke) gears for each client.

Good communication, no matter what form it takes, considers the needs of the audience first and foremost. So, think about your audience. What do they want? What will make them

engage with you? What will make them believe you? What do you want them to feel from you? One way to do this is to employ a technique Edward de Bono coined in the 1980s called the "Six Thinking Hats," where you approach the problem from several perspectives.

My advice is simple: start your introduction at a six on the energy scale and slowly ramp it up during your presentation so you can end on a surprising ten or maybe drop it right down to a whispered one! Change your gears up and down depending on the point you're making for bonus points and even more cut-through. Maybe you start at a four and then move up to an eight, back down to a six, then up to a nine, and so on. Always keeping your audience engaged and along for the ride.

First, I want you to understand that being likeable to your audience is critical-you need your audience to engage with you and genuinely like you to believe and remember you. Being interested is more important than being interesting. Empathy is another key quality of likeable people, and again, one of the best ways to demonstrate this is to listen.

Ask open-ended questions. Open questions (rather than questions that would give you yes or no answers) demonstrate curiosity and are likely to result in answers with more depth; in turn, this sparks greater curiosity and willingness to listen. Positive reinforcement, and another way to build relevance. Talking to someone else about themselves-or, in our context, about their challenges with this project, goals, or objectives in their role-will help you build relevance, create connection, and make you more likeable.

It seems counterintuitive, and it's a cognitive bias known as the Benjamin Franklin effect. Essentially, it's the brain's way of avoiding inner conflict or cognitive dissonance: by doing someone a favour, we become invested in their success, partly because it reflects on our status and partly because, by doing them a favour, we rationalise that they must be favour - worthy, and thus likeable.

The optimal way to do eye contact is to look at individuals, not groups. Look at each person and dwell there, holding their gaze, being present with them, until you get a little bit of feedback. It's often a micro expression, a little smile, or a nod. Once you get that acknowledgement, you can move on to the next person. This is the key: It's deliberate. It's generous. It's a moment of true connection.

For every five minutes of you talking, you need to have at least one minute of back-and-forth conversation. Your presentation will be far more engaging, and people will remember you and your content. They may not even quite know why, but it'll be because they were part of it.

I can't recommend role-playing enough. Get people that you know and trust and ask them to help your pitch by being your rehearsal audience. Ask them to play a range of different roles and adopt different personalities to help you prepare; run through different scenarios so you can plan how to get your audience talking in the presentation, no matter how they respond.

Saying something like, "This is a great conversation, but we don't have time to do it justice today. Let's put it on a Post-it note in the parking station. I will follow up with you on this point later this week."

The lesson here is simple: if you can get your audience talking, they will feel more involved and rewarded. As the presenter, you can demonstrate your personality when you respond to what they have to say. Let's recap: Getting people talking in your presentation is critical to help them stay focused and make them feel involved and invested before you're even at the point of making your ask. To achieve this, you've got to plan for it, build it into your presentation; think about how to get people talking up front and early.

To cultivate chemistry with your audience, focus on enhancing each moment of connection-not just between you and your audience but with you and your team. Use these simple techniques to reinforce positive interpersonal dynamics. Make sure you use the names of the audience if you can, use your teammates' names when you speak to and about each other, make eye contact with one another, and exhibit great body language. As an individual or as a group, you'll be more likeable and attractive to buy from.

The importance of using humour doesn't mean that everyone needs to be laughing hysterically or joking around the whole time. Think about where you might be able to inject humour, and which moments you can plan to lighten the mood. Just like when you're shifting the tone, it's another technique in your toolkit to deliver a live, authentic, engaging experience in the room, and it comes down to your good judgment and ability to read the audience as to when and how to deploy it.

Next time you're about to walk into a room, ask yourself "What mood do I want to create today?" and "How do I want to show up?" Ask yourself and see what pops into your head. Spoiler alert, the right answer should almost always be generous.

A speaker who can focus on serving their audience, offering valuable content, and enhancing the audience's understanding wins more than the room. The pitch becomes a mutually beneficial experience where both the speaker and the audience gain, rather than a zero-sum scenario.

Reading the room is about reminding ourselves to put our empathy skills into practice, and then-and this is where we get smart about it-it's about how we apply this skill in tandem with the other skills you're learning to create positive change. The audience is giving you nonverbal cues all the time. Become a student of body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. These can give you strong clues about how they are feeling and what they are thinking. Look for patterns of behaviour: Notice that certain behaviours or reactions are common among a group of people. This can help you get a sense of the overall mood in the room. Ask open-ended questions to help you gather more information about how people are feeling; encouraging people to share their thoughts will give you a great deal of insight, not only into the individual's perspective, but also their colleagues' attitudes and state of mind.

If you're reading the room and see your content isn't landing, turn the screen off and have a conversation instead. You can amend your slides on your time and send them later but do

not waste this opportunity. If you don't read the room, you will leave people disinterested and disengaged.

Learning your content Tight is about practising not only what you'll say but also how you will say it.

To start, write your speech in long form on standard A4 paper. This is the definitive longest-form version of your speech—we're nowhere near the palm-card stage right now. **By long form, I mean not just the speech itself but the speech annotated with notes and descriptions about how you will present it. You need to get detailed at first, thinking about and documenting the specifics, like how you're going to stand, what you'll do with your hands, and precisely when you're going to smile. Thinking through and planning these extra layers is essential at this early stage. I suggest you create a code in your notes so it's easy for you to follow and remember. Maybe you underline the things you want to emphasise, highlight the moments when you want to make sure you're making eye contact with your audience and add a simple ellipsis when you're planning to pause. The more detail the better; marking up your speech notes is an art. Once you've got all of this written out, you'll notice two significant things. First, it's long. Second, so much of what you present is not in what you say but in how you say it. This is a great thing to realise upfront and early.**

If you want to get Tight on your content, you need a minimum of ten rehearsals. Yes, I said ten. My response is always the same: if your speech is not worth rehearsing ten times, is it even worth presenting? Maybe it should be an email or a group text. The bottom line is that you can only present something Loose after getting Tight.

Let's say you've enlisted a friend. Start by presenting your content to them. As you present, make sure you talk about what's in the margin. Tell them how you will say each point and give it a go. When it's feeling good, start to act out the directions in the margin too. If things aren't working, find a way that does and mark up your notes. This is the driest of run-throughs, so you should feel free to make mistakes, double back, and experiment with things. I recommend doing this a few times through. As you present, write down notes and continue to mark up your speech.

The first two or three times you rehearse, you'll find your speech gets longer, and your notes get more detailed. You'll be thinking that there's now no way you can fit this entire performance into the time you have, but don't worry. This is a great thing. Keep the specifics flowing. The aim here is to get your head around how you're going to present the content. Then, on about the third or fourth rehearsal, you'll want to start reducing your notes. Maybe you change it from A4 paper to a palm-card style. The last five rehearsals are about reducing your notes, with the objective of eventually having no notes at all. By the night before your presentation, you've rehearsed more than ten times, you know your content inside out, and more importantly, you know precisely how you will say it. Every word, every gesture, and every pause has been planned out and choreographed. You are a well-oiled public speaking machine, and you're wound tight on this content

To start rehearsing effectively, here's what you need to do. Know what a rehearsal is and stay disciplined. Reciting lines in your head or in front of a mirror isn't a proper rehearsal (although it can be beneficial). **A good rehearsal requires an audience, or at least to be**

in front of someone who can critique your performance once your content is locked.

Don't get discouraged if your rehearsals aren't going well. Mistakes in rehearsals are where we learn about our strengths and weaknesses and where we can make adjustments. It's what they're for. And one mistake incurred in a rehearsal will inevitably be a mistake avoided when it's genuinely time to perform.

Role-Play

During rehearsals, ask your audience to role-play and act like your real audience—one person is easily distracted and looking at their phone, another is exhibiting negative body language, another is interrupting with constant questions, etc. Experiment with ways to overcome these curveballs public speaking can throw at you.

Swap Roles

When you're rehearsing with your team, take the opportunity to swap roles. The lead person becomes the support act and vice versa. What do you notice about your section when someone else performs it back to you that needs to change? Practice those transitions and workshop some ways of passing between yourselves with high-energy, high-ball generosity. Force yourself to change ten things about your presentation.

Eat the Elephant

How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time. Chunk it down. Dismantle your presentation into sections and rehearse them separately; take them out of order and mess around with the flow.

Add a Rogue

Bring in someone who knows nothing about your content and your ideas. Does your pitch pass the pub test, where you make sure you can get your point across to someone from a different world? What would need to change for you to explain it to your mom or your grandad?

Experiment with how you present—will you be sitting or standing (or a combination of the two), will you use props, will you use any technology to help convey your message? Try presenting your content seated, and then try presenting while pacing around the room like a caged tiger. How does this shift the tone, and could you incorporate different styles at key moments?

Rehearse in the Room

Call the client and ask if you can rehearse in the room, you'll pitch in. You'd be surprised at how often people say yes to this (and it's another great knowledge-gathering opportunity). If you're going to present slides, make sure you've got the slides up in rehearsal. If you're going to use a particular clicker to move through your slides, again, use that clicker. If it will be in a big room, find a big room to rehearse in. What will you wear? Plan it out and ensure you wear that outfit or a similar one when you rehearse. What you're trying to do is to closely replicate the live event before you do it.

Q&A

Recognise the importance of Q&A and rehearse for it. When someone is listening to you speak, it's much like someone walking into a shop. They are being analytical in their approach-comparing prices, models, colours, etc. Only when they approach a shop assistant does their analytical approach change, or can be changed, into buying mode. That's what Q&A is about, and it will help you gauge your audience's buy-in to what you're saying.

"A lot of people never use their initiative because no one told them to." -Banksy

Your job in the first few minutes of any presentation is to signal to your audience that you are in control of yourself.

Start Strong

First, you need to address your audience with your eyes, facial expressions, and body. Start with your body. Ensure you enter the room with your body open and facing your audience. Avoid doing anything that feels defensive. Crossing your arms is obvious, but even things like fidgeting, pacing too much, or covering part of your face with your hands will subtly tell people you're not confident and in control.

Make sure you know exactly what you want out of the meeting and be prepared to return to that ask-repeatedly if needed. You'll need to develop a callus about this one. Even in a context that is by nature a commercial one, the number of people I've worked with who have a visceral reaction and entrenched reluctance to talk about, let alone ask for, money is astonishing.

I'll say two things about this: that is the primary purpose of a commercial meeting, and in a high-stakes situation, nothing robs you of status faster than squeamishness about asking for the decision you came here to get. And secondly-money is merely a symbolic form of value in our culture. You're doing this presentation because you have a concept you believe is worthwhile; you've brought your best, most authentic self, your entire focus and intention, to this room-if you don't think that makes the task worthwhile, again, send the deck by email and save everyone some time.

Setting the moral means bringing your values and aspirations to life through this narrative and gives the audience an easy-to-remember statement about your purpose in this meeting. The key message or lesson (the moral) should be stated upfront and revisited at the end.

By setting the moral, you're giving the audience a clear understanding of who you are and what your story is about at a deeper level. It is one of the most powerful ways I can think of to communicate what's important to you, what you value, and what you believe to be worth working for, allowing them to connect with the authentic you through values, not just content. The first thirty seconds of opening your mouth should be about setting the moral. Then you can go forth and tell your story throughout your presentation. Toward the end, you revisit the moral you set up front and then fulfil it.

Suppose you find yourself stuck in the what (factual, logical, rational); try asking why. Why are we showing up to do this? Why does this matter? Why should anyone care? In my creative practice, I ask myself, "Why?" five times.

If you want people to engage with your morals, you must clearly say it. As in, say it out loud. Yes, I'm being that literal. I often see presentations where the moral is buried on a slide or amongst a series of other points.

Cognitive biases and heuristics, or shortcuts, are patterns of thinking that can (and do) lead us to make irrational or illogical decisions. And understanding what's going on when people are making choices can help us at least try to reduce the friction and stress that decision-making can create in the audience. Designing our content and how we present it to hit these markers, rather than starting on the back foot, can make a significant difference.

If you want to influence someone to take any action to change their behaviour or attitudes, make it Easy, Attractive, Social, and Timely.

Taking away friction or cognitive strain is an important consideration. It's one of the reasons I'm so obsessed with reducing the amount of information in a presentation and not offering endless choices or variations in the room. We know that asking someone to select from too many options can induce analysis paralysis.

I find solutions for clients within a specific timeframe, where the impact will happen within X weeks or months. Brains do not love delayed gratification; I always want to look for outcomes that deliver something sooner rather than later. If you're pitching something which is a long-term build or process, think about how you could build in some milestones along the way where we can see positive results in a short while, even if they're only a small part of a bigger picture.

Clothes communicate; our bodies do too. Being intentional about how you move, sit, stand, and so on is something you need to rehearse. Plan how you can emphasise points from your presentation or shift the tone by changing your pose or the pace of movement.

Research shows people who gesticulate freely are usually seen as warmer, more open, more positive and more likeable. Try holding your hands loosely with your palms facing up; this is a universally understood signal of openness, trustworthiness, and agreeability. The important thing to remember about movement is not to do it unnecessarily; every move you make on stage or in a conversation should have meaning. So, if you move toward or away from the audience, make sure it relates to your point.

Five quick examples show you where to start looking for them.

1. You're pitching to get an investment in your new technology idea in a venture capital boardroom. Instead of talking about features and benefits, try taking the audience back to the moment when the idea started. Tell your audience about that moment in detail and help them share that first feeling of inspiration.

2. You're figuring out how to propose to your significant other on holiday. Consider telling them a story about your life before they arrived. Introduce them to that old version of yourself, and don't skip the details.

3. You're asking your boss for a pay rise in her office. Tell a story about how your friends and family feel about you working there. Maybe it's a story filled with positivity...your parents

couldn't be prouder. Or maybe they took some time to convince, but they're now the biggest advocates for the job and the business.

4. You're campaigning on a national stage for votes. Try telling your audience about a dream you had (thanks, MLK). A dream about a world where your campaign promises have been delivered. Like in the other examples, go into the details and make the audience inhabit that new world.

5. You're making a speech at your school reunion. Instead of simply talking about your experiences and the people you knew well, why not tell a big story about why schools exist? You could then pepper that board narrative with specific stories about you and your school along the way

The Drumroll structure involves building the story to a crescendo. It's the classic structure and starts out slowly and gradually, and over the course of your presentation, your pace speeds up until you get to the point where you will have the reveal. The key is to take the audience through the content point by point, section by section, increasing the intensity and pace, and signalling a building excitement until you're at fever pitch.

This is where Build Back can help. At the start of the presentation, you present your idea. No introduction and no preamble. Then you stop talking and sit in silence for a moment. Make eye contact around the room and smile at people. Take a beat and then walk through the background behind your idea. Talk about the research, insights, and breakthroughs along the way.

Here's how it works: instead of telling a direct, linear story, you take your audience on a winding road from your introduction to your idea. And on that winding road, you have several bends. These bends are where you present the good (but not great) ideas you had during the process of having your great idea-the one you're recommending today.

Just as I was about to close my laptop and head for the door, my pitch mate started expanding our ideas and bringing in new ones. The new ideas were great, but we had already gotten a yes! The client was ready to talk about pricing and time lines. My pitch mate was, and is, an effective communicator, so they introduced these new ideas well. And the client, who a mere moments ago had wholly bought our concept, started to say things like, "This is a major program of work with lots of ideas...I wonder where we should start." And, "There are so many aspects to this, I wonder if we have the time and resources to execute properly." And just like that, this client moved from a yes to a maybe...and we were scrambling. We'd done our pitch. We'd rehearsed it. And we executed it. But because we introduced new ideas at the end and new aspects to the lead idea, the client became less confident with their first instinctual decision.

And that's because Phil knew that once you've done your pitch, presented the idea, and sold it in, all you can do from that point is unravel it and unpick the great work that's just been done. You need to pitch, and then you need to get the heck out of there. A concept that we talk about a lot in my office is "Make it easy to buy." A great pitch makes your ideas easy to buy. It builds belief in your audience and lets everyone

know it's achievable. It's affordable. It's powerful and effective. Do that succinctly and quickly. After that, all you can do is start to plant seeds of doubt. And those seeds of doubt grow and grow the longer you spend in the room. So, the advice is straightforward: pitch in a succinct way, Tell a story. Get to the end. Give them something to remember and hang on to at the end-then start standing up and getting out of the room.

Simple things like ending the slideshow, closing your notebook, starting to push your chair out, and starting to use language that brings the room to a natural close--are things you need to be actively doing. And if you're presenting with a group, the rest of your team should be doing it too; you should have already practised it, rehearsed it, and thought about how you will do it.

Think of it this way: what a gift to the client to have chosen a brilliant idea that will help their business and make them look good to their board, and as a little bonus, wrapped up with a bow-you're giving them fifteen minutes of their day back.

First, the core principle of memorability is association. So, the likelihood of an idea remaining in people's minds long after you have left the room has a lot to do with how vividly and effectively you created associations with that idea.

And third, if you only remember one thing, remember this: Memory formation requires attention. We remember only what we notice. There are three distinct ways to be memorable: we must create a sense of novelty through shock or surprise, create an emotional connection, or repeat the information.

PERP is a circular model that should be applied to any point you want your audience to recall. It stands for Make the Point. Explain the point. Repeat the Point.

Figuring out what your three to five significant points are is crucial. This distilling process takes a lot of work to do. We often think we have lots of vital points to make. The truth is that your audience will only be able to retain up to five points. For those who truly believe they have more than five significant points to get across, I suggest creating a leave-behind document or a simple summary email that captures all of these points. Then, in your public speaking moment, you can focus on the top three to five and land these in the room. You could say many things in your presentation but only focus on what will move the needle.

Signposting has a simple premise: When you present, your audience needs to know what to remember. It involves breaking down your presentation and the things that come out of your mouth in a way that telegraphs exactly what and when you want them to write down and remember.

In any great presentation, there are three to five major points. Any more than that, you should write it down and send it in an email. Any less, and you're doing yourself a disservice in making the most of that live opportunity. A presentation with this approach is structured.

The more I present and the more I watch team members present and clients present, the more I realise that we just don't pause enough. Even the biggest pausers in the world do not pause enough. If we are in the attention game, which I must tell you we are, especially with the world as it is, so jumbled up with information and noise, we all need to be trying to grab and hold attention more often. Pausing is a big way to do that.

You must make your presentation novel, narrative, visual, high-contrast, and short.

Novel: Give the audience something they haven't encountered before. I'd argue that this should be novel in a positive way; you'd need to have some compelling reasons to deliver something new and unpleasant (remembering that stress impedes memory, and we're certainly not going to be seen as more likeable and trustworthy if we give our audiences a horrible experience).

Narrative-based: Use your storytelling skills to build a presentation that includes a narrative area; this is code that unlocks our most receptive state of mind.

Visual: While not everyone processes information in the same way, remembering that change is what we pay attention to, creating a bold and eye-catching presentation is a fast and easy way to capture attention.

High-Contrast: Change is what we pay attention to. Whether it's rushing from one section to the next, shifting tone, using movement, or sudden changes in the pitch of your voice, making sure your presentation has moments of dramatic contrast is a great way to keep your audience focused and engaged.

Short: This is relatively self-explanatory. If the meeting is booked for an hour, plan your presentation to run for twenty minutes. Our brains are overloaded, and sustaining attention for lengthy periods of time first creates cognitive load and then cognitive drift.

A story I love-advertising pitch theatre at its finest is the tale of an agency pitching for a rail network account in the UK, famously the home of the worst train services in the developed world. The client was invited to the agency's offices for the presentation and arrived to find the waiting room empty, not enough chairs, litter everywhere, and no sign of the pitch team. The client became more and more annoyed, and at the exact point when they were about to walk out, the pitch team entered the room and explained that this is the type of experience that rail customers put up with every day, and the remainder of their pitch contained their ideas to improve matters. As you can imagine, that tone shifted significantly, and the agency won the retainer. If you remember to shift the tone-and keep shifting it then you stay in control of the room, keep the attention, and create a more memorable moment for your audience.

It's a golden rule I've developed in my own work. I only ever design twenty-minute pitches. The rest of the time is for conversation.

So, if you think about the pitch or the public speaking moment in terms of the objective and get disciplined, you will start to remove the fat and end up with a highly powerful, much shorter presentation.

Let's go through the benefits.
Number one, highly memorable.

Number two, more manageable for you to rehearse and present.

Number three, your presentation gets past the croc brain into the rest of the human brain, so your content can be analysed and felt.

And four, it's easier for your audience to talk about afterwards. Often, we find ourselves pitching to people who are not the ultimate decision-makers. Therefore, we need our audience to take our ideas and push them up and around the organisation and that's never going to happen if you've given someone a long-winded, bloated pitch that they can't pick up and work with.