# Chapter 14: The Art of the Workshop—From Boring Parrot to 3D Human

## Part 1: The Pre-Flight Checklist (Pre-Workshop Design)

### The Room of Blank Stares

This is the moment every presenter dreads. You are 20 minutes into your workshop, the one you were paid handsomely to deliver. You look out at the audience, and you are met with a sea of passive, dispassate faces. You see "blank stares".1 You ask a question, and the only response is a "radio silence" 1 so profound you can hear the hum of the projector. You are losing them. In fact, you never had them at all.

This is the central fear of public speaking, and it is amplified a thousand-fold in the high-stakes world of AI consulting. The good news? Teaching, like any other skill, is "very much acquired".1 It is a system of "reps and feedback and stimuli".1 What follows is the mental model for structuring that system—a playbook for commanding the room, holding attention, and, most importantly, demonstrating the kind of value that gets you hired.

### Knowing Your Passengers: The Avatar Scan

Before a single slide is designed, the first order of business is an act of intelligence gathering: you must "know your avatar".1 Who are they? What are their daily responsibilities? The entire design of your presentation hinges on this answer, and most presenters get it wrong. They present at one altitude, while the audience is flying at another.

Mark Kashef identifies two primary, and radically different, avatars: the C-suite and the Analyst.1

* **The C-Suite:** This audience operates at 50,000 feet. They "like to be focused on ROI and very high level" concepts.1 They are not in the room to see code; they are "trying to design what the forest looks like".1 Explaining a technical "curl request" 1 to them is the fastest way to lose their attention and respect.
* **The Analyst:** This audience lives in the weeds, and they are *meant* to.1 They are the ones who will be executing the technical work. They *need* the code, the specifics, and the granular detail.

The failure to distinguish between these two is the first-order error that dooms most workshops. A successful consultant must be bilingual, fluent in the language of "ROI" for the C-suite and the language of "API" for the analyst.

### Reading the Manifest: The "Hostage vs. Pilgrim" Insight

Once you know *who* they are, you must answer the single most important "key question" of the engagement: "Do they want to be here, or were they told to be here?".1

This is the "Hostage vs. Pilgrim" dynamic. If a company is "mandating" that their employees upskill, you will be facing a room of hostages.1 They are canceling other meetings, their real work is piling up, and they are "looking at you with a blank stare, mad at your existence".1 They have "higher resistance".1

A "Pilgrim" audience, by contrast, *wants* to be there. They are eager to "learn first principles" and "foundations".1

Your entire content strategy diverges at this point. You cannot feed "first principles" to a room full of hostages; they will reject it. For them, your only path is to "outperform their expectations" 1 by showing "more magic tricks".1 You must dazzle them. The pilgrims, on the other hand, *want* the foundations. You can "double click on that" 1 and go deep.

### Calming Pre-Flight Jitters: Bringing Shadows to Light

Your audience, particularly in an AI workshop, is carrying a great deal of unspoken fear. They are "worried, potentially, subconsciously, of losing their job".1 This fear makes you, the AI expert, a direct threat.

Your job is to "address any fears directly".1 This is a powerful disarming technique. You must "say what people are thinking out loud" 1, a tactic described as "bringing from the shadows to the light".1 You can say it plainly: "I know some of you might be thinking AI will replace your job. Let's talk about that directly".1

By voicing their deepest fear, you instantly reframe yourself from an adversary to an ally. You can then lighten the mood, reinforce their value by explaining that "a human's still needed" 1 for the critical last 20% of work, and even acknowledge that "AI's kind of overhyped".1 It's "the solution to a lot of problems, not all problems".1 You can even "show a couple memes from Twitter... of LLM having major fails" 1 to break the tension. This honesty is the foundation of trust.

### Packing the Chutes: The '50-Slide' Insurance Policy

You have prepared your content. You believe it will take exactly one hour to deliver your 30 slides. You are wrong. Or at least, you are dangerously unprepared.

The rule is to "always over-prepare on the amount of content".1 Mark's directive is concrete: "if you think that's going to take you an hour to deliver 30 slides, I make 50 slides".1

Those extra 20 slides are your "insurance policy".1 They are your tactical reserve against the "radio silent" audience 1 that gives you "zero back" 1 in participation. You *cannot* "bet... that questions would arise" 1 to fill the time. There is nothing more awkward, or less professional, than ending 40 minutes early because your audience gave you nothing to work with. The extra content is your confidence. It ensures you can persist until the end, fulfilling your obligation and maintaining command.

This leads to the core principle of a resilient presenter: *Never make your energy or your success dependent on the audience's participation*.1

## Part 2: Command of the Cabin (The Hook and Opening Structure)

### Selling the Destination (Not the Flight): The 30-Second Hook

You have exactly "the first 30 seconds to a minute" to "grab the attention".1 This is the hook. A presentation, unlike a YouTube video, is "unpredictable" 1; the audience doesn't know if it will be 8 minutes or 38, so the "likelihood that someone loses interest is very high".1

The number one thing to do is "sell the outcome or sell the dream".1 Most presenters fail here. They sell the *flight plan*—the agenda. Nobody cares about the flight plan. People buy a plane ticket to get to the beach.

Your job is to "paint the picture" of the destination.1 "This is what's in it for you".1 "This is what you'll be able to hopefully do after I'm done speaking".1 In the airplane analogy, you are "talking about the beach" 1 before you *ever* mention the flight. Stop selling your process and start selling their glorious outcome.

### The Pilot's Announcement: The Flight Plan & Safety Demo

*After* you have sold the destination, you "walk through the path".1 This is the "map" 1 that shows them how you will get them from novice to expert. This is the "pilot's announcement" 1 where you finally lay out the "specific agenda".1

This phase also includes the "disclaimers," which are the equivalent of the "health and safety demonstration".1 You must state your base-level assumptions. "Listen, I'm going to assume that you've used Chat...T at least once before".1 "You've at least tried XYZ feature".1 This sets the floor and invites people who are below it to ask clarifying questions.

### Pre-Empting Chaos: The "Turbulence" Warning

The most masterful part of the pilot's announcement is the "turbulence" warning.1 Every workshop has a "very rough part" 1—a technical deep-dive, a complex coding example—where you *know* you are about to lose the average person.

You must "bring that up front".1 You must warn them. Mark provides the exact script: "Listen, I know you all hate coding... But around one hour in, I'm going to quickly, but surgically... walk through a technical part that if you don't understand, the rest of this is useless. But depend on me. I'm going to make this as digestible as I possibly can".1

This is brilliant psychological conditioning. You are acknowledging their pain *before* they feel it.1 By doing so, you prevent them from being "shocked or surprised" 1, which is the moment their attention breaks. You have reframed yourself as their trusted guide through the coming storm.

### The Showman's Hook: Beyond the "Boring Parrot"

In the next 12 to 18 months, generative AI tools like "Hagen" 1 will be so good they can "clone the CEO" 1 and create perfect, boring lectures at scale. "So how will you stand out?".1 You must transition from being a "boring parrot" 1—someone just reciting facts—to being a "3D human" 1, someone who can engage, react, and *perform*. This requires showmanship.

Here are three advanced, non-traditional hooks:

1. **Tactic 1: The "End Result First"**.1 This is the "immediate wow moment".1 *Before* you explain the "how," you show the "what." "Before I even walk through how to do X and Y, let me walk through the end solution... Click on execute workflow, watch what happens. Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom".1 The audience gets the satisfaction of seeing *it works*. Then, and only then, you say, "Great. Now that I've shown you that this works, now I'm going to show you how this works step by step".1 This proves the session is "worth your time" 1 from the outset.
2. **Tactic 2: The Live Automation Demo**.1 This is a high-risk, high-reward move. You start your presentation by clicking "play" on a "live 18 node automation".1 You then say, "While it's spinning... this will run and by the end of... my introduction... it will complete XYZ task".1 This creates immediate, high-stakes tension. "Bonus points" and "brownie points" are awarded "if you can time the automation to stop running by the end of your hook".1
3. **Tactic 3: The "Abstract Image"**.1 This is a master-class in psychological tension. You have the event organizer put an image on the main screen "for 15 minutes before I even went up on stage".1 The image must be "so abstract" and "so seemingly unrelated" 1 to the topic that the audience is consumed by "curiosity on how does this image relate to what this bozo is about to say on stage".1 This creates a powerful "open loop" 1 that the human brain *needs* to close. You have guaranteed their complete, undivided attention for your opening, as they wait for you to land the plane.

## Part 3: In-Flight Service and Smooth Skies (Content Delivery & Retention)

### The "So What?" Slide: Justifying Their Attention

"Attention is one of the last things that people have... a lack of an abundance of".1 In the modern economy, your audience is "very judicious on where they spend their attention dollars".1 You must prove your worth, not just at the beginning, but continuously.

A powerful tactic is to "always have a slide sometimes that says 'so what?'".1 This slide's purpose is to ask, "Why should you care to listen to me for the next 36 minutes?".1 Like the "shadows to light" technique, this voices the audience's most cynical internal question. It forces you, the presenter, to ensure your "points are salient enough" 1 to earn their continued buy-in.

### In-Flight Service: The "Golden Nugget" Strategy

On YouTube, "retention is the game of games".1 The same is true for a workshop. Your greatest enemy is the "dwindling" retention graph 1 that shows attention dropping off after just a few minutes.

The solution is the "in-flight service": a "series of golden nuggets that you plant throughout the presentation".1 A workshop is not one long, slow build to a single climax. It is a *series of small climaxes*. You must "plan out... when you'll have your cool nuggets" 1 and drop them "every couple minutes".1

Why? Because during the explanatory parts, "80% [of the audience]... are thinking about what they want to eat tomorrow".1 Each nugget—"Did you know that you could actually do this in Claude?" 1—is a polite jolt, "recapturing the audience over and over again".1

### The Resonance Engine: The Multi-Layered Example Strategy

"The more examples the better".1 But not all examples are created equal. An effective presenter deploys a multi-layer strategy to maximize resonance. The example stack should include:

1. **Generic Example:** One that everyone in the room understands.
2. **Role-Specific Example:** How an analyst in the room would use this, versus how a C-suite person would.1
3. **Industry-Specific Example:** If it's a law office, "talk about what a law office could automate".1
4. **Big Picture Example:** A 10,000-foot view of its impact.
5. **Day-to-Day Example:** How it applies to "what their actual work looks like".1

This multi-layered approach ensures there are "multiple entry points for people to engage".1 But this strategy has a second, "very intentional" 1 purpose.

This is the hidden playbook of client acquisition. "People will resonate with examples that apply to them, and assume that you have expertise in that area".1 Mark realized that when he made a video with a real estate example, he "would get... paid calls... from real estate".1 The conclusion is a game-changer: "If I want more clients in finance... I should give an example in... high finance. And what do you know... we have a decent number of clients... in high finance".1

This is the principle: **"You get what you give"**.1 Your examples are not just teaching tools. They are a client-cloning machine.

### Making it Digestible: The "Cruise Ship vs. Sailboat"

Your job is to make the complex simple, using analogies as a bridge.1 When explaining a complex no-code tool like N8N, you can describe it as "Lego blocks" 1 or a "game board" 1 to make it non-threatening.

Mark provides a brilliant metaphor *for* metaphors. A complex, highly technical presentation is like a "sailboat... in a storm".1 The audience is "constantly holding on to... keep up with you".1 They are stressed, and they will lose their grip.

Good analogies—like "Lego blocks" or "game board"—are a "railing to hold on to".1 They lower the cognitive load. They transform the frightening sailboat ride into a "beautiful cruise ship, where it's nice and smooth sailing".1 Your job as a teacher is to be the cruise ship director, not the storm-tossed sailor.

## Part 4: Navigating Turbulence (Advanced Engagement and 'What If' Scenarios)

### Scenario 1: The "Radio Silent" Cabin

You ask a question to the room. You are met with "pure crickets".1 This is a high-stakes moment.

A "Machiavellian technique" 1 is to "use silence as your weapon".1 The tactic is a two-part escalation:

1. **The Wait:** "I will stay silent, and I'll wait for 15 seconds".1 This is excruciating. The audience will "look at you to see if you crack under the weight of the silence".1 Do not crack.
2. **The Authority Play:** After 15-20 seconds, you deploy the verbal hardball. "Listen guys, I've done this hundreds of times before. I can stay silent for the next 10 minutes. So we can either stay silent, or you can offer me what you think... I just want some stimulus".1

"The weight of that silence will force somebody, 9 times out of 10, to respond".1 It's a "dance" 1, and you are weaponizing social discomfort to break the stalemate. The *real* checkmate? The managers in the room will get "embarrassed" 1 that their team is not engaging, and *they* will "force their own employees to participate".1

### Scenario 2: Reading the Non-Verbals (The "Jeremy" Tactic)

This tactic requires that you "make sure... people are on camera".1 Once they are, your job is to "read non-verbals".1 Look for the person who is "wincing," "thinking too hard," or leaning "back in their chair," which signals they are disengaged.1

Then, you "call them out".1

"Hey, sorry, who's that one in the back? The one with the beautiful blue blouse? Oh, that's Jeremy. Jeremy, I just want to double check. Am I losing you?... Am I kind of like, putting you to sleep? I want to make sure that this is engaging for you".1

This move, which is "kind of like a comedian" 1 doing crowd work, "catches someone off guard".1 It gets "nervous laughter," and you "pull on the thread of that nervousness" 1 to get a real response. It shatters the "2D human" barrier and proves you are a "3D human" 1 who is actively *present* in the room, not just a "boring parrot" 1 reciting a script.

### Scenario 3: The Presenter's Mindset (Energy Management)

What if the silence wins? What if the audience is 150 people with "cameras off" 1 and you are met with a "long 30 second silence" 1 every time?

The cardinal rule: "Never rely on audience to fuel your workshop energy".1 You must "learn the skill of not... requiring external validation".1 This is a "muscle that you train".1

For introverts especially 1, your energy cannot come from their applause. It must come from "the quality of your content" 1 and your "crystallized knowledge".1 Mark, describing his own ability to speak to a camera alone in a basement, says it's this preparation that allows him to be a "Yappasaurus Rex machine".1 Your confidence must be intrinsic, or a silent room will break you.

### Scenario 4: The "Question Cadence"

Stop asking, "Do you have any questions?".1 This is a weak, closed (yes/no) question that invites a "no."

Instead, use an *assumptive* question: "I know this is complex. **What questions do you have?**".1 This reframes the social contract. It implies that questions are *expected*.

If you are still met with crickets, you escalate. "Use the responses against them".1

"There's no way on Earth, unless everyone here has a 200 IQ and you've done this before, which you said at the beginning, you haven't... So what questions do you have?".1

Then, you deploy the 15-second "I can wait forever" silence.1

## Part 5: Landing the Plane (The Close and Crystallized Knowledge)

### The Final Recap: "Landing the Plane"

"Just as important as you begin... you also wanna conclude".1 The industry phrase is to "land the plane".1 A sloppy ending that just trails off invalidates the professionalism of the entire presentation.

The "closing slides" 1 must be structured and clear. They must "recap what is it that you learned," "how they could apply this," and "what could happen next".1 This is where you provide the "key takeaways," "implementation, resources, and support".1

### The Ultimate Goal: From Teaching to Building

This entire chapter, this entire art form, is not just about teaching. It is about *positioning*. "Creating and delivering workshops... shows crystallized knowledge".1

This is the "Rosetta Stone" for the entire AI Consulting Playbook. "And if you can teach it, people can assume... That you can build it. So if you want to be able to do service delivery on top of service education, then you can do both. And this will help strengthen your position to do so".1

The workshop is not the product. The workshop is the ultimate marketing tool. It is a 90-minute, high-trust, live-action demonstration of your "crystallized knowledge." It proves you are the expert, and it makes you the only logical choice to hire for the *real* money-maker: the "service delivery" contract.

## The Toolkit: Your Workshop Flight Plan Framework

This section translates the art of the workshop into an actionable, "paint-by-numbers" framework. It provides the pacing, the slide structure, and the tactical scripts for a consultant to adapt and deploy.

### A. Workshop Pacing & Timing Grids

This provides a concrete schedule, preventing the fatal error of finishing 40 minutes early.1

**Table 1: The 60-Minute Workshop Template** 1

| **Section** | **Time Allotted** | **Mark's Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Opening & Hook** | 5 min | Set the foundation, sell the dream. |
| **Module 1** | 15 min | Foundational concepts. |
| **Module 2** | 20 min | The "meatiest one," where "a lot of the sauce is." |
| **Module 3** | 15 min | Make this "more ADHD friendly" as "attention span must be waning." |
| **Closing & Takeaways** | 5 min | Land the plane, Q&A, next steps. |

**Table 2: The 90-Minute Workshop Template** 1

| **Section** | **Time Allotted** | **Mark's Notes** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Opening & Hook** | 7 min | More time to set the stage. |
| **Module 1** | 20 min |  |
| **Q&A 1** | 5 min | *Assuming* engagement. |
| **Module 2** | 25 min | The "meatiest" module. |
| **Q&A 2** | 5 min |  |
| **Module 3** | 20 min |  |
| **Closing & Takeaways** | 8 min | More time for recap and pivot. |

### B. The Sample Presentation Structure (Slide-by-Slide)

This is the core framework, connecting Mark's "module content pattern" 1 into a single, logical flow.

**Table 3: The Slide-by-Slide Framework** 1

| **Slide Type** | **Purpose & Key Content (Mark's Guidance)** |
| --- | --- |
| **Title / Hook** | Title, Topic, Who it's for. The "Hook" (e.g., Abstract Image or Live Demo).1 |
| **Learning Outcomes** | "Sell the dream".1 What will they be able to *do* by the end? |
| **The "So What?" Slide** | "Why should you care to listen to me?".1 Answer this cynical question directly. |
| **The Agenda** | "What We'll Cover Today".1 A *good* agenda shows "interconnectivity," not just Topic 1, 2, 3.1 Show the journey. |
| **The Disclaimers** | "Health & Safety Demo".1 State your assumptions ("I assume you know X..."). |
| **The "Turbulence" Warning** | "I know X is complex/boring, but depend on me...".1 |
| **Module Divider Slide** | A simple slide (e.g., "Module 1: The Problem").1 |
| **Module Content: Concept** | "What's the concept? Here's the definition".1 |
| **Module Content: When to Use** | "When is it needed?".1 |
| **Module Content: "Golden Nugget"** | "A key insight".1 The "oh wow" moment. "Did you know...?".1 |
| **Module Content: Before & After** | "Common mistake" (the Before) vs. "The genius better approach" (the After).1 |
| **Module Content: Example** | "Applying it in action".1 "People will remember the example".1 *Use the multi-layer strategy here (generic, role, industry)*.1 |
| **Module Content: Technical Deep Dive** | (Optional) "How it actually works".1 Use "Lego block" analogies.1 |
| **Module Content: Edge Cases** | "What's the exception to the rule?".1 "What could go wrong?" |
| **Quick Recap Slide** | "Quick recap on everything".1 |
| **...Repeat for Modules 2, 3...** |  |
| **Closing: Key Takeaways** | "Summary".1 |
| **Closing: Implementation** | "How they could apply this".1 "Resources & Support." |
| **Closing: Q&A** | "What questions do you have?".1 |
| **Closing: The Final Call-to-Action** | "What could happen next".1 (This is where you pivot to "service delivery" 1). |

### C. The "What If?" Tactical Response Script

This table operationalizes the advanced "Machiavellian" tactics into a quick-reference script for high-pressure moments.

**Table 4: "What If?" Scenarios & Responses**

| **Scenario** | **Mark's Tactic** | **Sample Script** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **The Room is "Radio Silent"** | The 15-Second Silence + Authority Play 1 | (Wait 15 seconds. Make eye contact.) "Listen guys, I've done this hundreds of times. I can stay silent for the next 10 minutes. So we can either stay silent, or you can offer me what you think." |
| **You See a Disengaged Attendee** | The "Jeremy" Tactic 1 | "Hey, [Name], I just want to double check, am I losing you? Am I putting you to sleep? I want to make sure this is engaging for you." |
| **Audience Fears Job Loss** | "Bringing Shadows to Light" 1 | "I know some of you might be thinking AI will replace your job. Let's talk about that directly. Here's the truth..." (Then show memes of LLM fails 1). |
| **Approaching a Boring/Hard Part** | "Turbulence Warning" 1 | "Alright, I know you all hate coding, but in this next section, I'm going to walk through a technical part. If you don't understand this, the rest is useless. But depend on me. I'll make it as digestible as I can." |
| **Asking for Questions (Crickets)** | Assumptive Question + Escalation 1 | "I know this part was complex. What questions do you have?"... (Silence)... "There's no way everyone here has a 200 IQ and has done this before... so, what questions do you have? I can wait." (Then wait). |

#### Works cited

1. Consulting Playbook Day 14\_raw.txt