




BOSTON
CONSULTING
GROUP

Business Communications

2022



Andrew Osborne

Project Leader | Singapore | BCG

Learning objectives

After you have finished this training, you will be able to ...

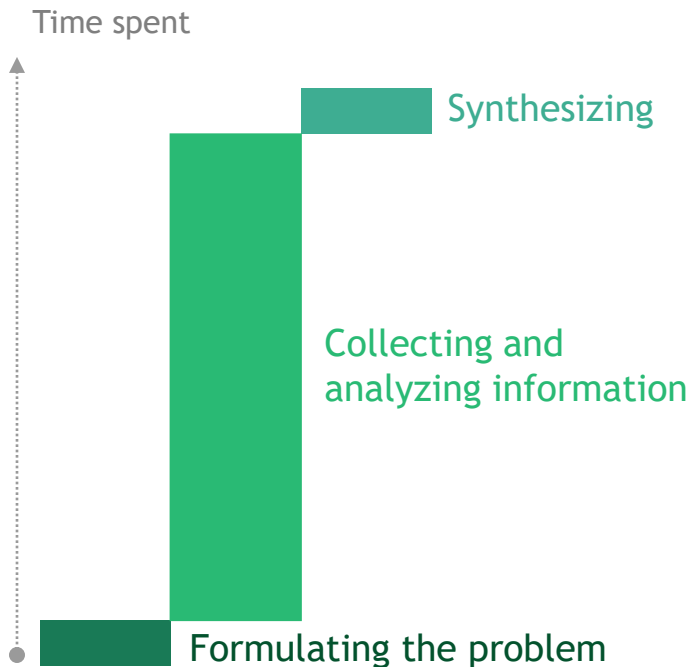
- 1 How to write a good storyline
- 2 How to create an impact through a compelling delivery
- 3 How to get the maximum value out of meeting discussions



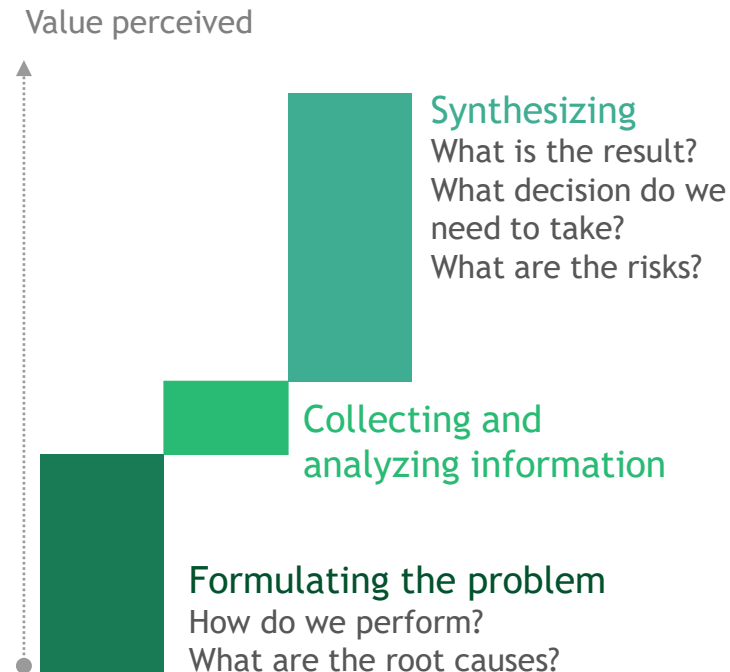
Importance of Storylining

Storylining is so important because it helps you deliver what your audience needs most - the “so what”

You often spend most time on collecting and analyzing information...



...but in the end, your audience is mainly interested in the 'so what' for them



Effective written communication helps you transform data analyses results to a compelling "so what" for your audience

BCG 5 Key Success Factors For Storylining



1 Define key messages—structure them applying the Pyramid Principle

- Divide the question into underlying questions, generate insights by answering these
- Cluster these insights and summarize them into a number of key messages

2 Understand your audience—choose the best way to tell them the story

- What is their background and ingoing mindset?
- What type of story will be most effective?

3 Write the executive summary—structure your summary in four parts

- Specify the situation, Identify the problem, Propose a solution, and Discuss the impact

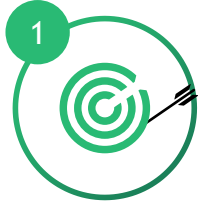
5 Review and reiterate - look through your own eyes and those of the audience

- Own eyes: is it correct, complete, and clear, really the best story you can tell?
- Audience: how will it make them feel? Will they understand? Will they take action?

4 Build your slide flow—translate your executive summary to a flow of slides

- Start with slide titles; these are the same as the key messages in your executive summary
- Think of the best content and visuals to support the slide titles

BCG 5 key success factors for Storylining



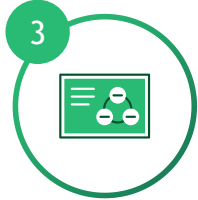
Define key messages

Structure them with the Pyramid Principle



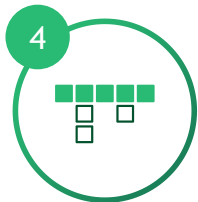
Understand your audience

Choose the best way to tell them the story



Write the executive summary

Structure your summary in four parts



Build your slide flow

Translate your executive summary to a flow of slides



Review and reiterate

Look through your own eyes and those of the audience

Chinese restaurant scenario

Transcript from interview with Chinese restaurant employee (cleaner):

Cleaner: “Oh yes, I’ve been working at the Chinese restaurant for over 10 years now, and it has been very good. I’ve seen it grow from only one stall until now where we have over 20+ stalls. Even on weekdays we have hundreds and hundreds of customers who come to eat from all over Singapore - you should see the queues during the weekend!

Being busy is good for the owner, but quite hard on old folks like us, so many customers means so many dishes. The current dishwasher we have now is nearly as old as I am! It’s very slow - sometimes it doesn’t wash the dishes properly, and sometimes it just breaks down completely. I really do think that we should get a new dishwasher. My grandson sells industrial dishwashers for a living and he says he can get one for only \$20K. That seems like a bargain to me. I feel that if we had this new dishwasher, we can work so much more efficiently. I heard that it is over 40% faster!

But knowing this Chinese restaurant owner, he is quite cheap, and mostly likely he will raise food prices to cover the dishwasher cost. I hope this won’t scare away our customers.

Cluster these insights and summarize them in a number of key messages

Take the different insights that came from your research...

Cups are dirty - drinking out of the bottle

Repairs take over a week - no clean dishes

Utensils are dirty - forced to use plastic

Nobody likes doing dishes by hand

Current dishwasher breaks down 1x a month

New dishwashers are more reliable

Model X has good reputation, on sale

Repairs are costly

Dishes piled up in the sink for 2 weeks

Can afford a new dishwasher

... cluster them, and formulate messages that summarize each group of insights

Current dishwasher does not perform well

Cups are dirty - drinking out of the bottle

Utensils are dirty - forced to use plastic

Dishes piled up in the sink for 2 weeks

Current dishwasher is costly and unreliable

Current dishwasher breaks down 1x a month

Repairs are costly

Repairs take over a week - no clean dishes

Buying a new dishwasher seems like a good option

Nobody likes doing dishes by hand

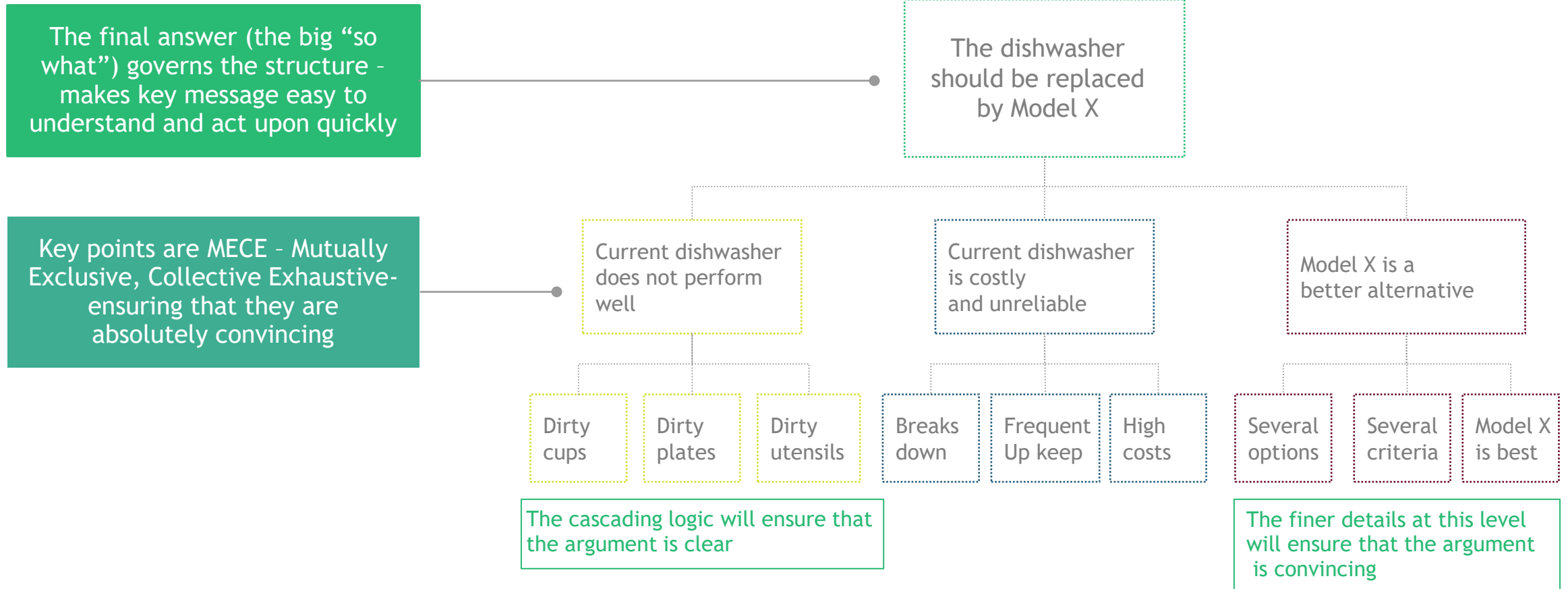
New dishwashers are more reliable

Can afford a new dishwasher

Model X has good reputation, on sale

Map out these key messages in a logic tree

With a hierarchy of key conclusions and supporting arguments





Storyline Exercise: Cleaning products

The audience is the management team of a manufacturer of professional-strength cleaning products (floor care, hard surface and glass cleaners, air fresheners, etc.)

Background

- The company wants to double professional cleaning product sales in five years
- The company thinks it may make sense to expand more into services rather than focusing just on products
- Key Question: Should the company move into the restaurant cleaning service business?

Discrete pieces of information (after three weeks)

- Route density is a key profit driver for many service industries
- Four segments of restaurants: quick-service independent, quick-service chain, full-service independent, full-service chain
- Appearance is critical to restaurants
- Many restaurants outsource cleaning
- Most restaurants don't recognize the company's brand name
- High level of switching among cleaning service providers (for a better price); may also bring back in-house
- Competitors are quite concentrated (top competitor has 40% share)
- Labor comprises > 80% of competitors' cost structures

Structure the provided information in a logic tree using the pyramid principle

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Simple answer	Key support	Detailed support
<div></div>	<div></div>	<div></div> <div></div> <div></div>
	<div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
	<div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>

Route economics analysis?

Competitors hold scale advantage (route density)

Many outsource

Labor comprises > 80% of costs

Client is structurally disadvantaged; entry will be expensive

It's a large market, but customers buy based on price and switch often

High switching levels (and reasons)

Restaurant cleaning services are not an attractive opportunity

Low client brand awareness

Profits would require a very efficient work force and route density

Appearance critical

Submit

Structure the provided information in a logic tree using the pyramid principle

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Simple answer

Key support

Detailed support

CORRECT

Congratulations! Your answer is correct

CONTINUE

Route economics analysis?

Competitors hold scale advantage (route density)

Many outsource

Labor comprises > 80% of costs

Client is structurally disadvantaged; entry will be expensive

It's a large market, but customers buy based on price and switch often

High switching levels (and reasons)

Restaurant cleaning services are not an attractive opportunity

Low client brand awareness

Profits would require a very efficient work force and route density

Appearance critical

Submit

Structure the provided information in a logic tree using the pyramid principle

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Simple answer

Key support

Detailed support

INCORRECT

Sorry! Your answer is incorrect

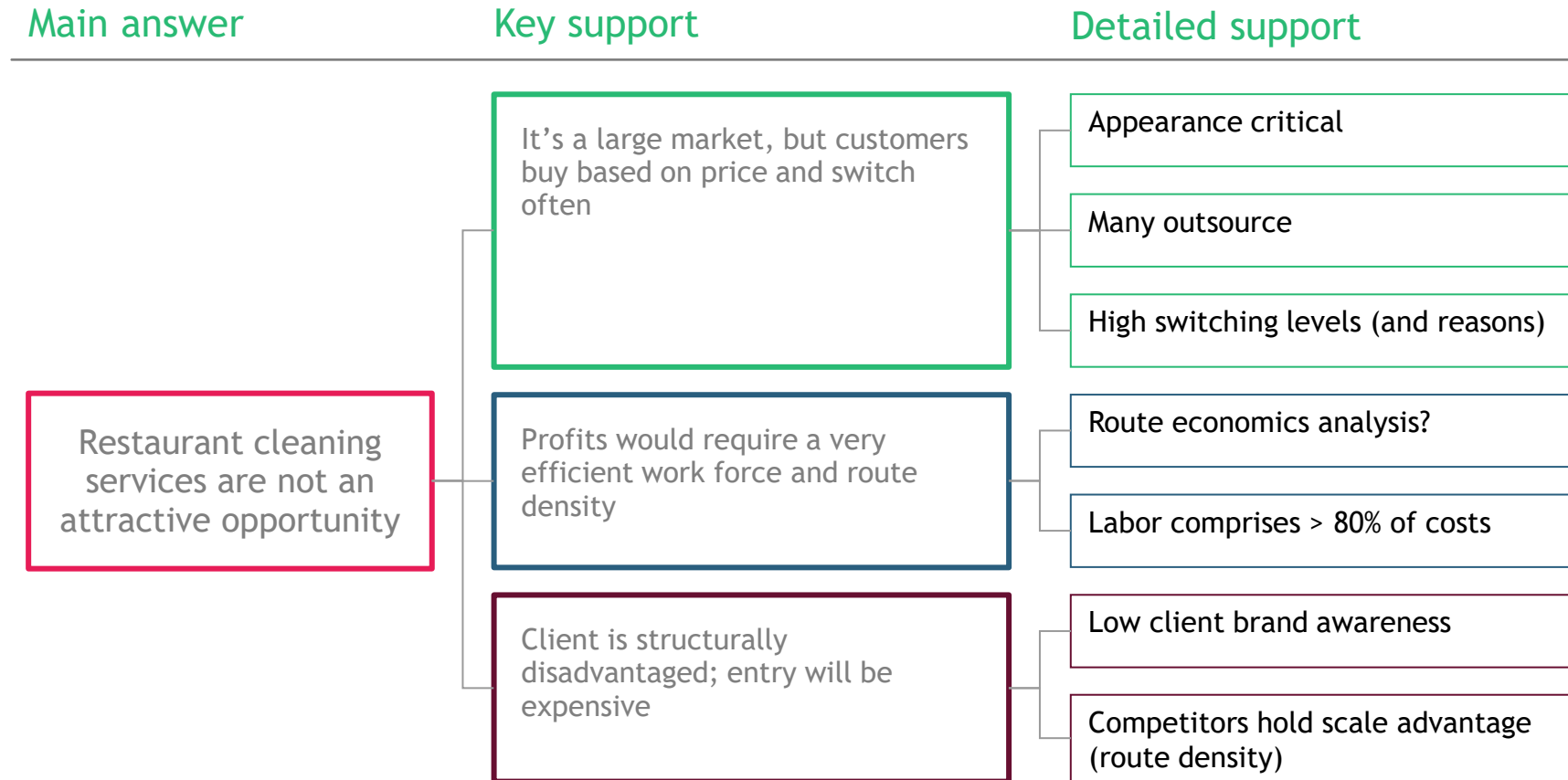
RETRY

VIEW SOLUTION

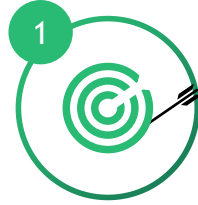
Submit

- Route economics analysis?
- Competitors hold scale advantage (route density)
- Many outsource
- Labor comprises > 80% of costs
- Client is structurally disadvantaged; entry will be expensive
- It's a large market, but customers buy based on price and switch often
- High switching levels (and reasons)
- Restaurant cleaning services are not an attractive opportunity
- Low client brand awareness
- Profits would require a very efficient work force and route density
- Appearance critical

Structure the provided information in a logic tree using the pyramid principle: Potential answer



BCG 5 key success factors for Storylining



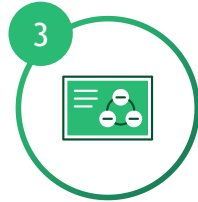
Define key messages

Structure them with the Pyramid Principle



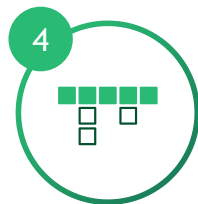
Understand your audience

Choose the best way to tell them the story



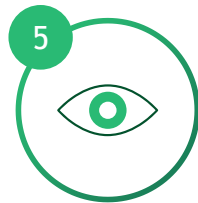
Write the executive summary

Structure your summary in four parts



Build your slide flow

Translate your executive summary to a flow of slides



Review and reiterate

Look through your own eyes and those of the audience

Understand your target audience and the best way to tell them the story

Two ways to tell your story

Best fit with audience



Bottom up

- Initial question
- Methodology
- Analysis results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

- Reluctant/hesitant
- Little background knowledge
- Focused on detail
- More time to listen
- (Often: lower and mid-level audience)

“

“I’m not sure whether he really understands our way of thinking”

“Who does he think he is, telling us what to do?”



Top down

- Key insights and/or required decisions/actions
- Followed by supporting back-up slides

- Confident
- Enough background knowledge
- High level overview
- Little time or patience
- (Often: senior audience)

“I’m sure he knows what he is talking about.”

“So what actions do you recommend we take?”

”



Typical action-oriented purposes

- Check agreement
- Pass decisions
- Reaffirm decisions
- Choose focus of next phase
- Agree on next steps
- Open up next project phase

Think explicitly
on what you
want to achieve
with your audience



Typical passionate purposes

- Challenge
- Convince
- Get commitment
- Motivate/inspire
- Reassure
- Praise

How do you want the audience to feel and think? What actions do you want them to take?

Quiz: Is below statement true or false?

Select the correct answer, then click Submit

	True	False
I should always adopt top-down approach when speaking in meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

SUBMIT

Quiz: Is below statement true or false?

Select the correct answer, then click Submit

I should always adopt a one-size-fits-all approach.

CORRECT

Congratulations! Your answer is correct.
It depends on the situation, who is the audience and what is the meeting objective.

CONTINUE

True

False

SUBMIT

Quiz: Is below statement true or false?

Select the correct answer, then click Submit

I should always adopt a growth mindset

True

False

INCORRECT

Sorry! Your answer is incorrect

RETRY

VIEW SOLUTION

SUBMIT

Quiz: Is below statement true or false?

Select the correct answer, then click Submit

I should always adopt a top-down approach when presenting to a group.

SOLUTION

False.

It depends on the situation, who is the audience and what is the meeting objective.

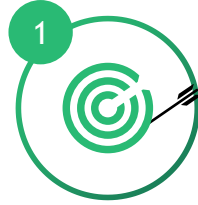
CONTINUE

True

False

SUBMIT

BCG 5 key success factors for Storylining



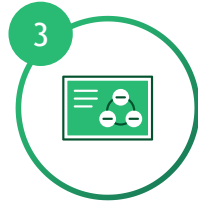
Define key messages

Structure them with the Pyramid Principle



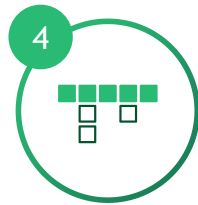
Understand your audience

Choose the best way to tell them the story



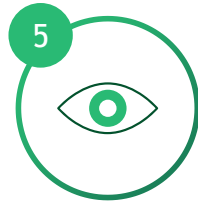
Write the executive summary

Structure your summary in four parts



Build your slide flow

Translate your executive summary to a flow of slides



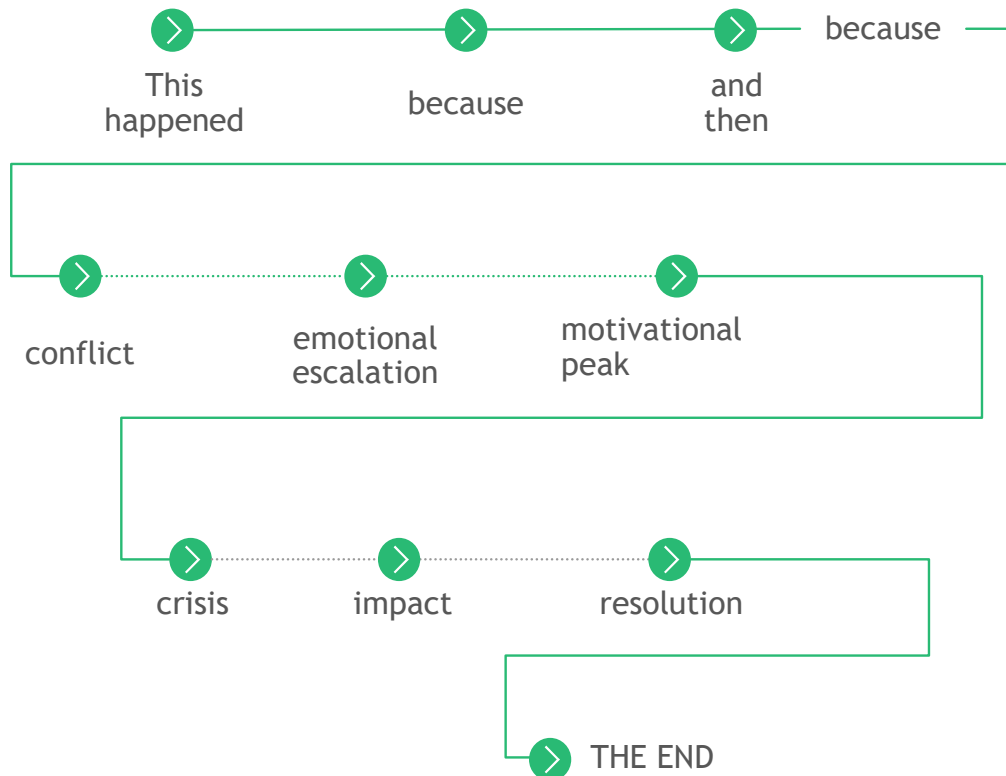
Review and reiterate

Look through your own eyes and those of the audience

4-step writing process: Specify the situation, Identify the problem, Propose a solution, and Discuss impact

Conventional story:

Builds over time to a climax, conclusions buried at the end



Executive summary:

BCG story in four steps

Situation

Setting the situation and background

Problem

Identify the problem(s) or opportunity

Solution

Propose solution

Impact

Discuss impact and implications

Writing executive summaries: An example

It may be the only page you get to present ... spend quality time on it!

Structure	Sample executive summary	Tips
Situation	Company X has been active in the white goods market for 20 years	● Be succinct - aim for 1-2 key lines, supported by bullet points if needed
Problem	Growth in Company X sales has been stagnant for three years. Moreover, the market is forecast to shrink by 1% per annum	● Be precise - use exact figures instead of words like "very, mostly"
Solution	There is an opportunity to grow sales by 20% in five years through expanding into the dishwasher segment	● Be to the point - don't evade the harder messages or make sidesteps
Impact	In order to enter the segment, Company X needs to invest \$Y million over the next two years	

Chinese restaurant scenario

Transcript from interview with Chinese restaurant employee (cleaner):

Cleaner: “Oh yes, I’ve been working at the Chinese restaurant for over 10 years now, and it has been very good. I’ve seen it grow from only one stall until now where we have over 20+ stalls. Even on weekdays we have hundreds and hundreds of customers who come to eat from all over Singapore - you should see the queues during the weekend!

Being busy is good for the owner, but quite hard on old folks like us, so many customers means so many dishes. The current dishwasher we have now is nearly as old as I am! It’s very slow - sometimes it doesn’t wash the dishes properly, and sometimes it just breaks down completely. I really do think that we should get a new dishwasher. My grandson sells industrial dishwashers for a living and he says he can get one for only \$20K. That seems like a bargain to me. I feel that if we had this new dishwasher, we can work so much more efficiently. I heard that it is over 40% faster!

But knowing this Chinese restaurant owner, he is quite cheap, and mostly likely he will raise food prices to cover the dishwasher cost. I hope this won’t scare away our customers.

Match the statements to the correct headers

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Structure	Answer
Situation	
Complication	
Solution	
Impact	

- Chinese restaurant X is a prominent establishment in Singapore and sees high volumes of patrons especially on weekends
- The old dishwasher is old and not running efficiently which is delaying the workflows. It is also costly and unreliable
- There is an opportunity to buy a new dishwasher for a modest \$20k investment
- This new dishwasher will cut washing cycle times by over 40% and increase labour utilization, although our retail rises may need to be raised to recoup the investment

Submit

Match the statements to the correct headers

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Structure	Answer	
Situation	<div>CORRECT</div> <div>Congratulations! Your answer is correct</div> <div>CONTINUE</div>	Dishwasher is old and not running which is delaying the workflows. It is old and unreliable
Complication		Dishwasher will cut washing cycle by over 40% and increase labour costs although our retail rises may need to recoup the investment
Solution		Good opportunity to buy a new dishwasher for a modest \$20k investment
Impact		Restaurant X is a prominent establishment in Singapore and sees high volumes of patrons especially on weekends

Submit

Match the statements to the correct headers

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit.

Structure	Answer
Situation	INCORRECT
Complication	Sorry! Your answer is incorrect
Solution	RETRY
Impact	VIEW SOLUTION

Submit

Washer is old and not running which is delaying the workflows. It is old and unreliable

Washer will cut washing cycle by 40% and increase labour cost although our retail rises may need to recoup the investment

Washer opportunity to buy a new washer for a modest \$20k investment

Restaurant X is a prominent establishment in Singapore and sees high volumes of patrons especially on weekends

Match the statements to the correct headers

Drag the answers into the table below, then click submit

SOLUTION

The answer is:

Situation: Chinese restaurant X is a prominent establishment in Singapore and sees high volumes of patrons especially on weekends

Complication: The old dishwasher is old and not running efficiently which is delaying the workflows. It is also costly and unreliable

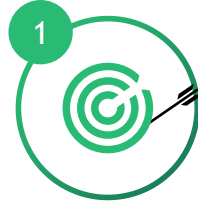
Solution: There is an opportunity to buy a new dishwasher for a modest \$20k investment

Impact: This new dishwasher will cut washing cycle times by over 40% and increase labour utilization, although our retail rises may need to be raised to recoup the investment

CONTINUE

Submit

BCG 5 key success factors for Storylining



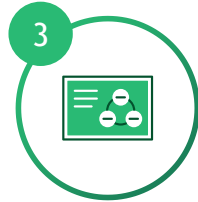
Define key messages

Structure them with the Pyramid Principle



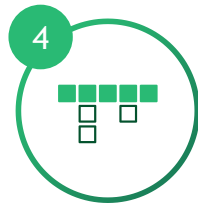
Understand your audience

Choose the best way to tell them the story



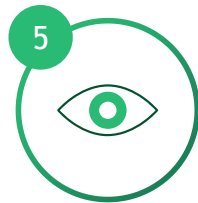
Write the executive summary

Structure your summary in four parts



Build your slide flow

Translate your executive summary to a flow of slides

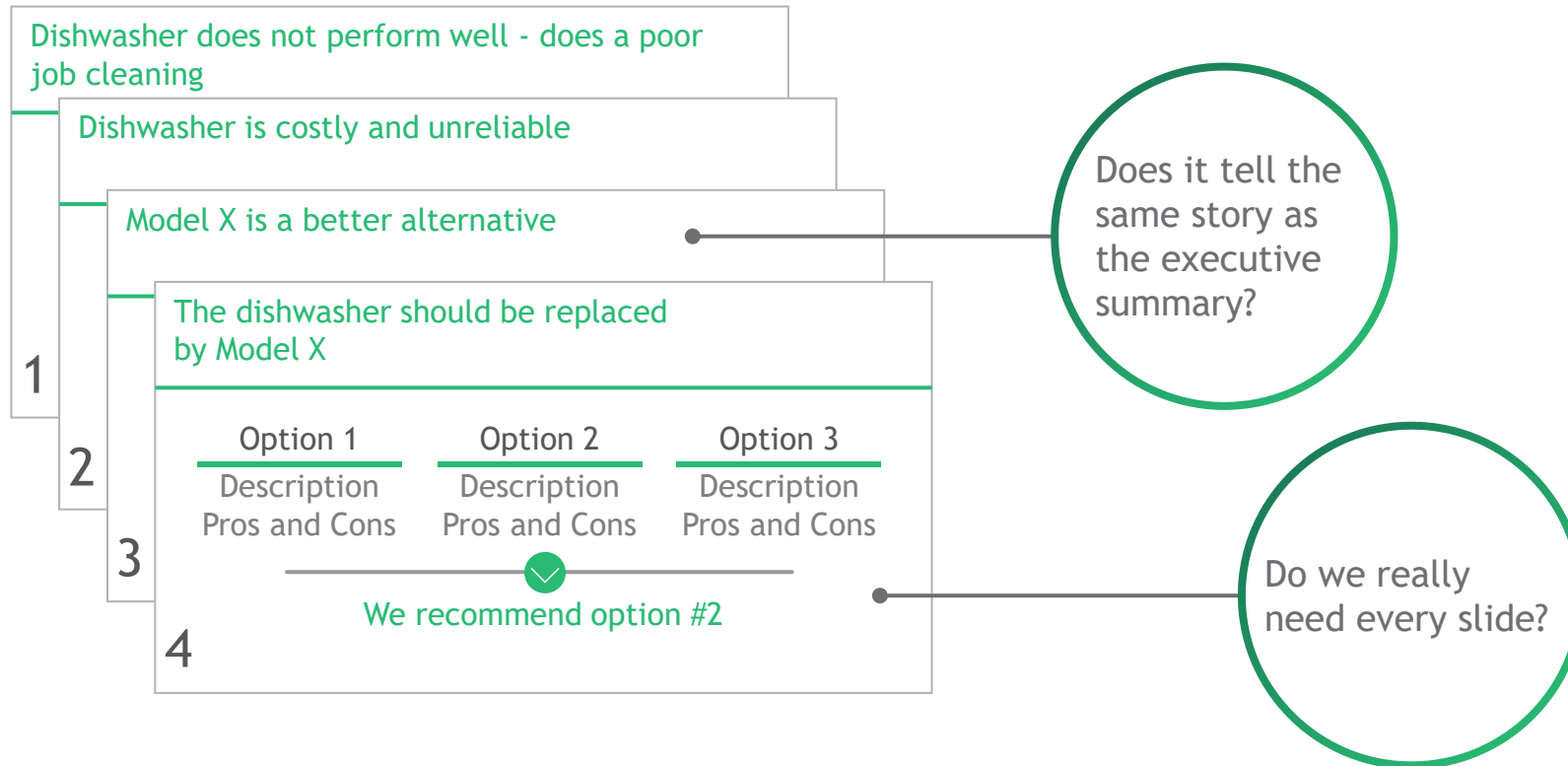


Review and reiterate

Look through your own eyes and those of the audience

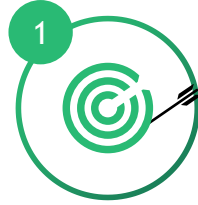
Tell the whole story with the flow of titles

Write titles before creating slides



Your slide titles should be the **key messages** of your executive summary; if not, iterate either summary or slides

BCG 5 key success factors for Storylining



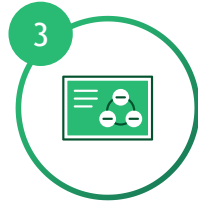
Define key messages

Structure them with the Pyramid Principle



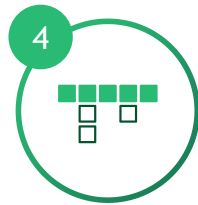
Understand your audience

Choose the best way to tell them the story



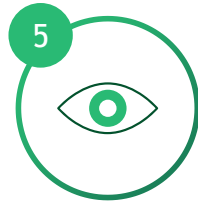
Write the executive summary

Structure your summary in four parts



Build your slide flow

Translate your executive summary to a flow of slides



Review and reiterate

Look through your own eyes and those of the audience



Key questions



Review and reiterate your document through the eyes of your audience

Understanding

Will my audience be able to understand my story, my messages, my slides?

- Can people with a different perspective on the content understand the story, messages, slides?

Feelings and actions

How will the audience feel when they read the story?

What actions will they be inclined to take?

- Is the story powerful enough to convince the audience to take the right actions?

Reactions and interactions

What questions will the audience have?

- Does the story answer my audience's key questions? If not, what's missing?

What parts of the story do I expect challenge or pushback on?

- Do I have the right preparation to give a convincing reaction (e.g., in appendix slides)?

Review and reiterate your document, using the checklist

 [Click here](#) to save this slide as a PDF

? Key questions

Checking yourself

Structure

Are key messages and arguments well structured?

Has the executive summary been structured the right way?

Do slide titles match the executive summary?



- Are key messages complete, correct, and comprehensive?
- Do messages build sufficient support for the main argument?
- Does the story ever stray from key points? (is there a reason?)
- Is the situation (introduction) clear?
- Has the problem been staged in a comprehensible way?
- Has the impact/implications (next steps) been discussed?
- Does the flow of the titles tell the story?
- Does the story flow well logically?
- Does the story flow well from slide to slide?

☐
☐
☐☐
☐
☐☐
☐
☐

Polish

Is the story complete?

Is the story as simple and short as possible?



- What else is needed to make your story comprehensive?
- What else is needed to understand what you are saying?
- What is needed in addition to accept the argument?
- Is this detail really needed?
- Can I say this more simply?
- Is language/wording succinct, precise, and to the point?

☐
☐
☐☐
☐
☐



1 Define key messages—structure them applying the Pyramid Principle

- Divide the question into underlying questions, generate insights by answering these
- Cluster these insights and summarize them into a number of key messages

2 Understand your audience—choose the best way to tell them the story

- What is their background and ingoing mindset?
- What type of story will be most effective?

3 Write the executive summary—structure your summary in four parts

- Specify the situation, Identify the problem, Propose a solution, and Discuss the impact

5 Review and reiterate - look through your own eyes and those of the audience

- Own eyes: is it correct, complete, and clear, really the best story you can tell?
- Audience: how will it make them feel? Will they understand? Will they take action?

4 Build your slide flow—translate your executive summary to a flow of slides

- Start with slide titles; these are the same as the key messages in your executive summary
- Think of the best content and visuals to support the slide titles

Delivery in Business context

Creating impact in meetings requires a combination of compelling delivery and constructive discussion

Delivery

Getting your message across in the best way

- Delivering the “so what”
- Inspiring the audience
- Triggering discussion



**“To speak, and to speak well, are two things.
A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks.”**

Ben Jonson



Discussion

Steering the discussion to the right result

- Making sure everybody is heard
- Receiving valuable information and feedback
- Ensuring the right decisions are made and actions are taken

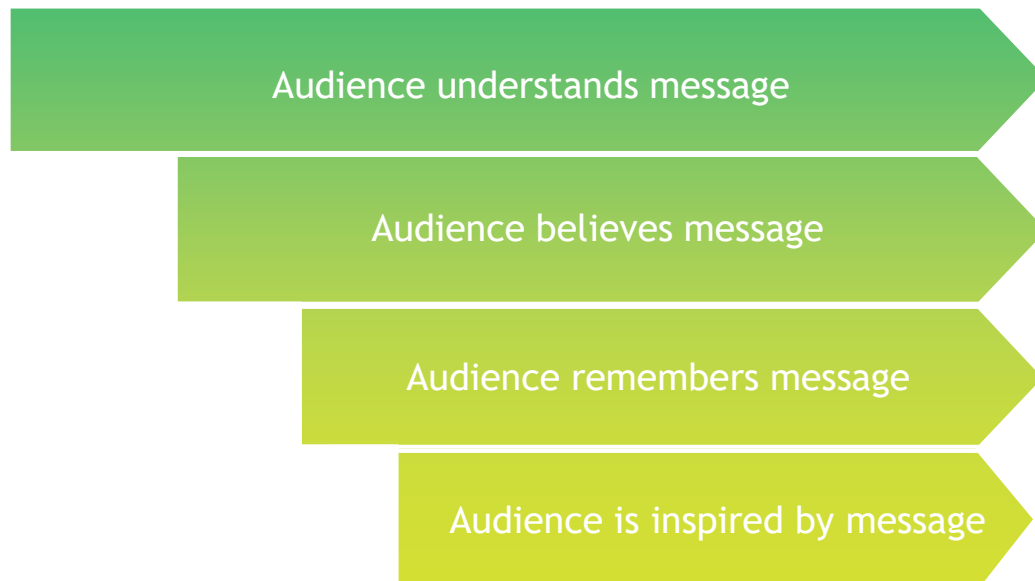


**“The aim of argument, or of discussion,
should not be victory, but progress.”**

Joseph Joubert

The right delivery is important because it enables you to get your message across

Four levels of successful delivery



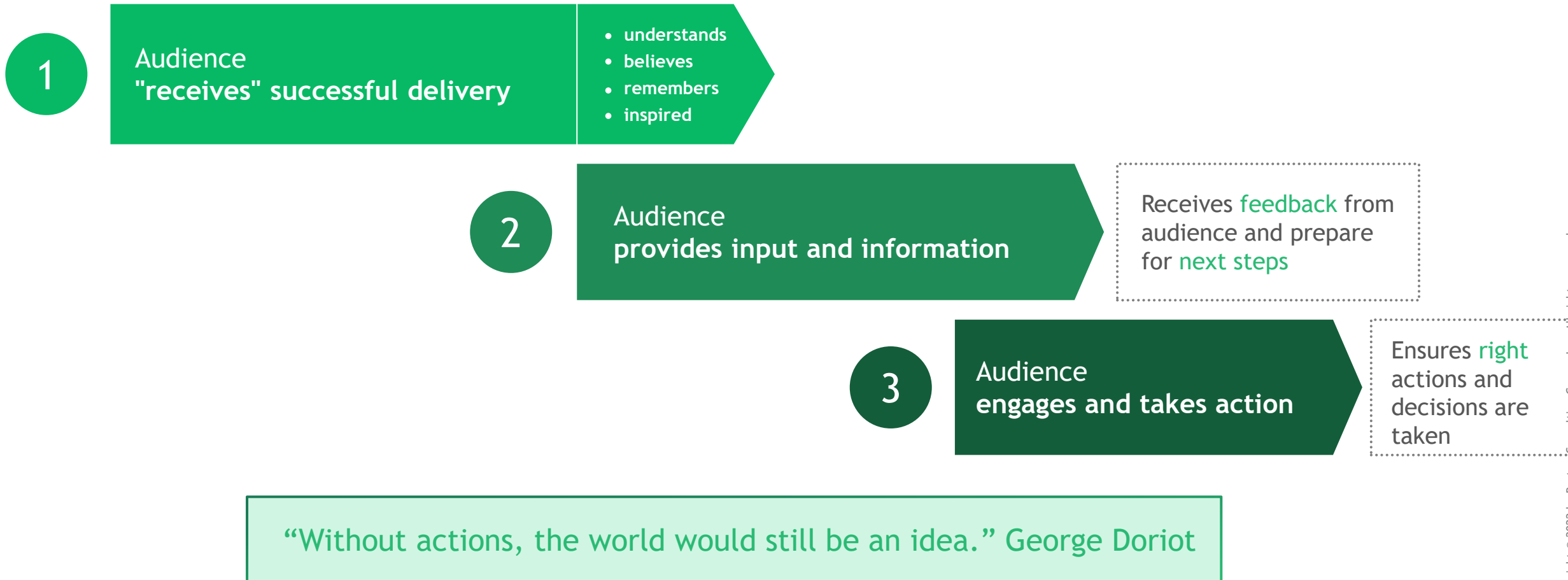
Key points to achieve

- Credibility
- What's In It For Me (WIIFM)
- Clear opening
- Key points
- Logic
- Supporting evidence
- Examples, anecdotes, visuals
- Closing summary
- Enthusiasm, energy
- Connection to audience

Requires solid preparation and flawless execution- all topics are covered in this module!

Combining delivery with the right discussion is crucial to create real impact

Creating real impact requires more than just delivering your story



BCG 3 Key Success Factors For Delivery

BCG's Success Factors for Delivery



Organise and prepare for maximum impact
Opening, Body, Closing, Prepare practicalities



Create an executive presence
Deliver messages that land



Moderate discussions
Listen well, handling objections

BCG's Success Factors for Delivery



Organise and prepare for maximum impact
Opening, Body, Closing, Prepare practicalities



Create an executive presence
Deliver messages that land



Moderate discussions
Listen well, handling objections

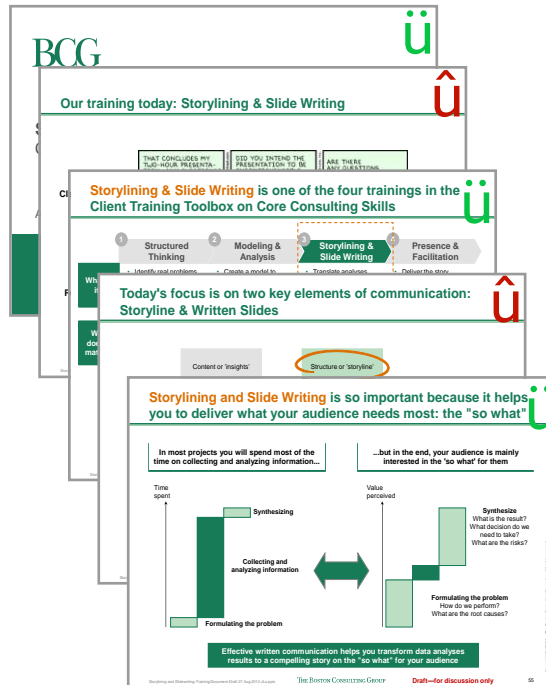
Know your key messages and craft a compelling story around them

Select and tailor messages in your presentation...

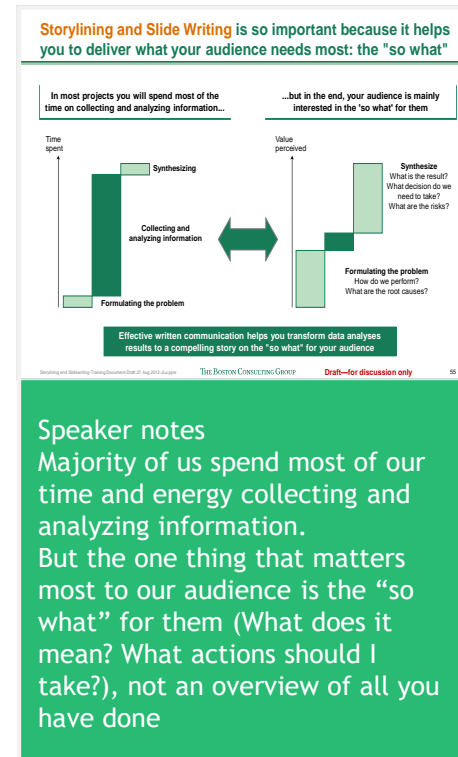
...develop your script with speaker notes...

...and rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

Using the presentation you wrote earlier, select key slides



Determine what to say and when to say it



Always practice beforehand, for several reasons:

- 1 **Nerves**
Practice will help you with your nerves by giving you confidence
- 2 **Speech**
Practice allows you to review your speech not just on paper, but also "live"
- 3 **Experimentation**
Practice permits you to experiment with your voice and gestures
- 4 **Measuring time**
Practice lets you discover your pace and required time
- 5 **Questions**
Practice can help to anticipate questions

Opening: An effective opening should grab the audience's attention and introduce your key message

Listen to an excerpt of Barack Obama's 2004 Convention Speech - this was before he was widely known.
Play from beginning to 3:08.

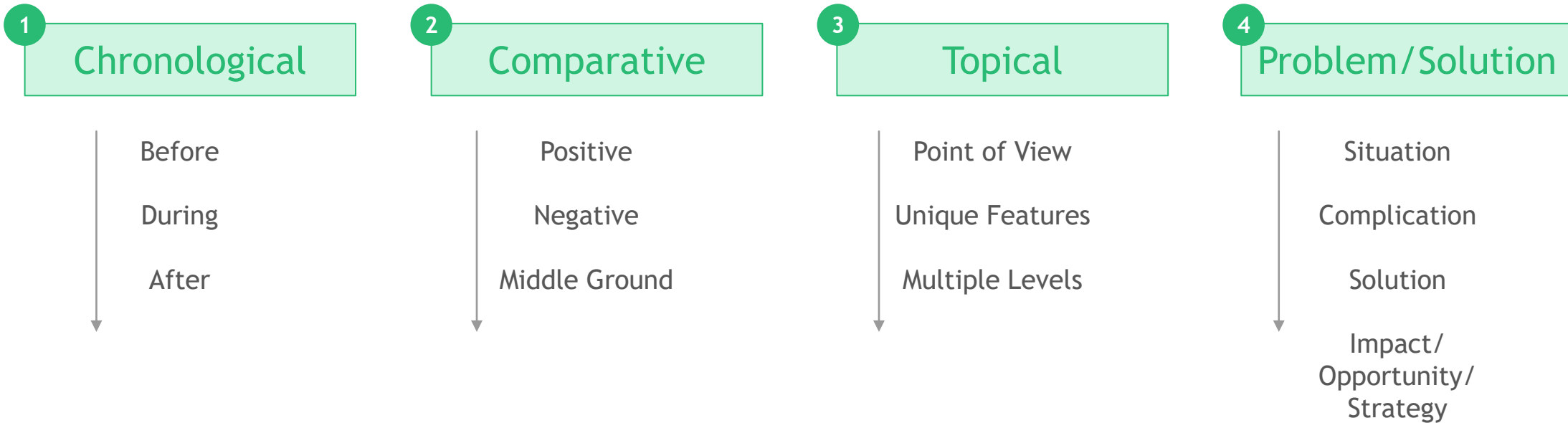


Credit: CNN Youtube Video.

How did he open his speech, and what do you think he did well?

Body: Enhance your presentation by structuring your speech

An effective body should present your key arguments and supporting evidence in a structured way.
The most common ones are:



Closing: An effective closing should be impactful, clear and memorable

Listen to another excerpt of Barack Obama's 2004 Convention Speech.
Play from 13:22 until the end.

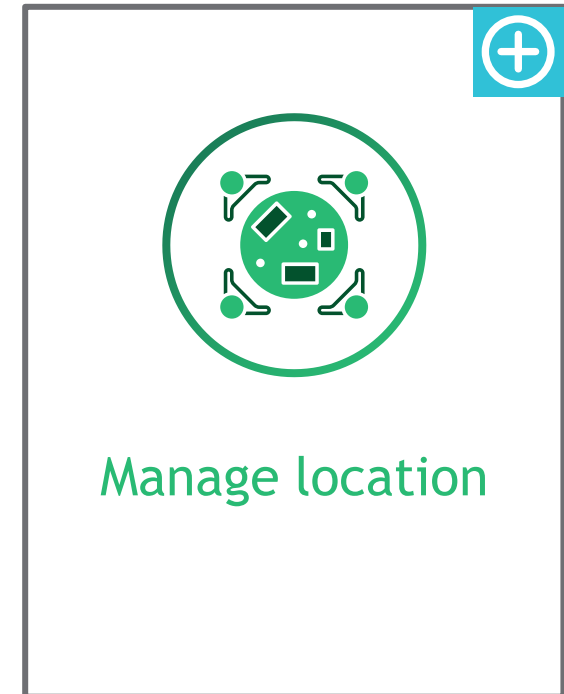
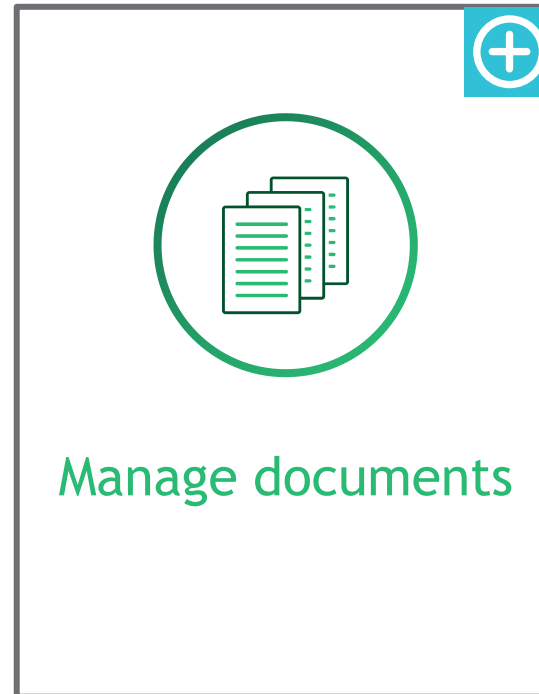
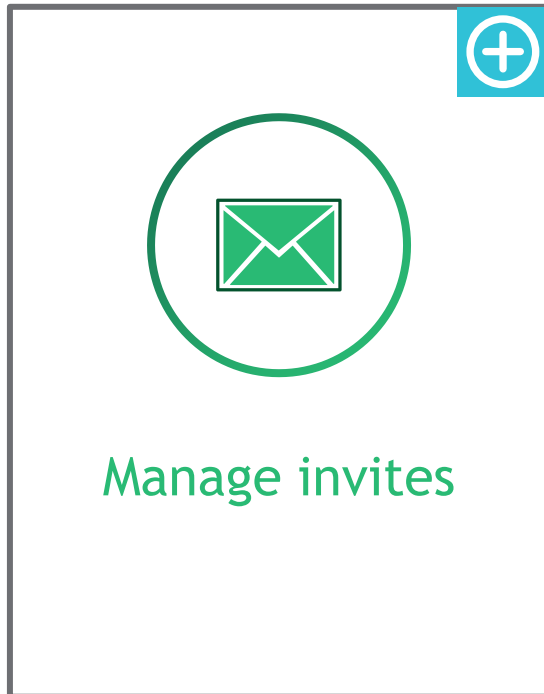


Credit: CNN Youtube Video.

What do you think he did well, and what effect did Obama achieve with his closing?

Prepare practicalities: Make sure you have everything you need


Click the plus signs to learn more



Source: BCG


Prepare practicalities: Make sure you have everything you need

Click the "x" signs to return to previous page




Manage invites

- Send clear meeting requests
- Be explicit about meeting objectives



Manage documents

- **Choose when to send the document**
 - Before the meeting, allowing participants to prepare
 - After the meeting, allowing participants refer back
 - Not at all, in case of high sensitivity
- **Choose how to present the document**
 - With accompanying paper, allowing participants to read freely
 - From screen only



Manage location

- Ensure enough space is available in the meeting room
- Ensure proper set up (e.g., town hall versus roundtable)
- Ensure appropriate equipment (including for discussion facilitation!)

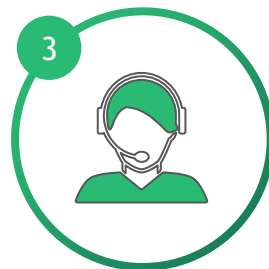
BCG's Success Factors for Delivery



Organise and prepare for maximum impact
Opening, Body, Closing



Create an executive presence
Deliver messages that land



Moderate discussions
Listen well, handling objections

Have the right mindset and energy level

Before the presentation

During the presentation



Mindset

- **Visualize** the room, audience, and you giving the presentation
- Mentally go over what you are going to do from the moment you start to the end of the presentation
- See your audience clapping enthusiastically in appreciation of your presentation

- Make sure you **feel** (and thus radiate) **confident**; you have something important to contribute
- **Mindfulness**: Make sure you are 100% in the room, focused on the group; no daily business or BlackBerry fidgeting
- **Be yourself**: Remain authentic

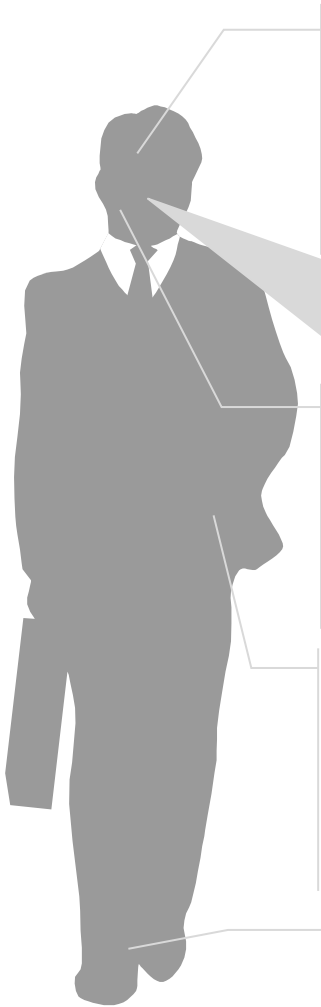


Energy Level

- Feel good about yourself
- Get a **good night's sleep**
- Be well-rested
- Eat a good meal, but don't over eat
- Drink water

- Drink water during the presentation
- Take **short time outs**
- **Breathe deeply** to relax and to have a more powerful resonance
- Stand strong: To spread your weight out evenly, your feet should be a few inches apart (a little bit less than shoulder width)

Use your voice and body effectively



Eye Contact

- Connect with the audience beyond an eye contact scan
- Look at the decision makers (as well as everyone else)

Facial Expressions

- Relaxed and genuine (if you smile, don't grin)
- Look approachable
- Congruent with the message you are delivering

Hand Gestures

- Be natural, illustrate what you are saying
- Keep hands away from face
- Do not fidget, or use a crutch (e.g., pen, pointer, etc.)

Posture and movement

- Stand or sit firmly but relaxed
- Make sure you can see everyone

Using your voice

Pace (speed)



- Slow down through key statements
- Be careful about speaking too fast

Pitch (tone)



- Add drama and excitement (and other emotions) to your statements and stories

Power (volume)



- Speak clearly (but don't yell) at a volume slightly louder than a normal conversation

Power (volume)



- Don't forget to pause after a sentence
- Pauses may emphasize and/or draw reactions

BCG's Success Factors for Delivery



Organise and prepare for maximum impact
Opening, Body, Closing, Prepare practicalities




Create an executive presence
Deliver messages that land



Moderate discussions
Listen well, handling objections

There are different levels of listening


How do you listen most of the time?

	Types of listening	Description/examples	How do you listen?
Best  Worst	Empathetic listening	Listening with the intent to understand. First to understand, then to be understood.	Goal is to spend most of your time here...
	Attentive listening		
	Selective listening		... and less than 10% of your time here
	Pretend listening		
	Ignoring		

“A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.”-Wilson Mizner

There are different levels of listening


How do you listen most of the time?

	Types of listening	Description/examples	How do you listen?
Best  Worst	Empathetic listening	Listening with the intent to understand. First to understand, then to be understood.	Goal is to spend most of your time here...
	Attentive listening	Paying attention and focusing energy on the words that are being said, following the interest of the speaker.	
	Selective listening		... and less than 10% of your time here
	Pretend listening		
	Ignoring		

“A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.”-Wilson Mizner

There are different levels of listening


How do you listen most of the time?

	Types of listening	Description/examples	How do you listen?
Best  Worst	Empathetic listening	Listening with the intent to understand. First to understand, then to be understood.	Goal is to spend most of your time here...
	Attentive listening	Paying attention and focusing energy on the words that are being said, following the interest of the speaker.	
	Selective listening	Only following your own interest, hearing only parts of the conversation.	... and less than 10% of your time here
	Pretend listening		
	Ignoring		

“A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.”-Wilson Mizner

There are different levels of listening


How do you listen most of the time?

	Types of listening	Description/examples	How do you listen?
Best  Worst	Empathetic listening	Listening with the intent to understand. First to understand, then to be understood.	Goal is to spend most of your time here...
	Attentive listening	Paying attention and focusing energy on the words that are being said, following the interest of the speaker.	
	Selective listening	Only following your own interest, hearing only parts of the conversation.	... and less than 10% of your time here
	Pretend listening	“Yeah, uh-huh, right” (i.e., at a party, distracted while thinking of something else)	
	Ignoring		

“A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.” -Wilson Mizner

There are different levels of listening

How do you listen most of the time?

	Types of listening	Description/examples	How do you listen?
 Best	Empathetic listening	Listening with the intent to understand. First to understand, then to be understood.	Goal is to spend most of your time here...
	Attentive listening	Paying attention and focusing energy on the words that are being said, following the interest of the speaker.	
	Selective listening	Only following your own interest, hearing only parts of the conversation.	... and less than 10% of your time here
	Pretend listening	“Yeah, uh-huh, right” (i.e., at a party, distracted while thinking of something else)	
	Ignoring	Not listening at all (i.e.. when reading messages or answering emails at the same time)	
Worst			

“A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he gets to know something.” -Wilson Mizner

Three ways to improve your listening skills



Pay attention to others, beyond words

When we communicate, the message we send is composed of more than words. **Nonverbal communication**, or body language, communicates as much about how you are thinking as words.



Manage your interferences

How well we perform as a listener is driven by how we **manage our interferences**¹—things that keep us from concentrating.

Two key kinds of interferences:

- **External** interferences: distractions from outside world
- **Internal** interferences: distractions from our minds



Use key listening tools

Consistently use **key listening tools** such as summarizing, paraphrasing, and taking notes. These tools need practice to become part of your behavior.

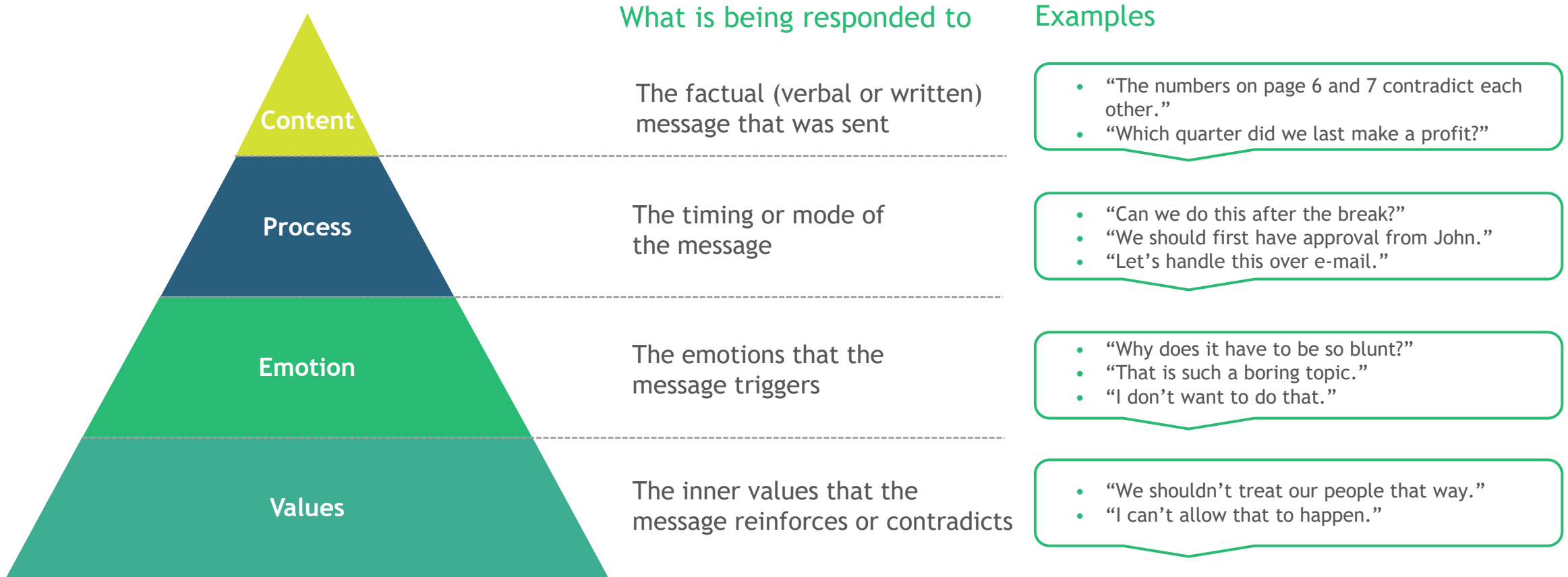
1. “The Inner Game of Tennis,” Timothy Gallway, 1986; “The Inner Game of Work,” Timothy Gallway, 1997

Four layers identified behind audience's objection

People send messages on each of these layers of communication



[Click here](#) to download PDF on how to adapt your response



Be very sensitive not just to what is being said - the real issue is often below the surface

Andrew Osborne

Project Leader | Singapore | BCG



BOSTON
CONSULTING
GROUP