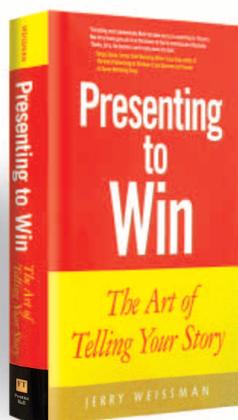




Executive Book Summaries®

FILE: SUCCESS/CAREER
TECHNIQUES

By Jerry Weissman

The Art of Selling Your Story

PRESENTING TO WIN

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Thirty million presentations will be given today. Millions will fail. Millions more will be received with yawns. A rare few will establish the most profound connection, in which presenter and audience will understand each other perfectly, discover common ground, and together, decide to act. If you want your presentation to succeed, you must present to win. Transform your presentations from dry recitals of facts into compelling stories with a laser-sharp focus on what matters most: what's in it for your audience.

In Presenting to Win, corporate presentations coach Jerry Weissman shows how to create power presentations that will inform and persuade even the most hostile of audiences.

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What You'll Learn In This Summary

- ✓ How you can convince even the toughest audience with techniques that have been proven in hundreds of IPO road shows.
- ✓ What you must do to tell your story and how you can identify your real goals and message.
- ✓ How you can use the power of WIIFY — What's In It For You — to stay focused on what your audience really cares about.
- ✓ How to go about brainstorming what will be included in your presentation, ensuring that no important ideas are left out and no irrelevant ones make their way in.
- ✓ How to use Opening Gambits and compelling linkages to capture your audience's attention in the first 90 seconds and keeping their attention through the end.
- ✓ How to create a winning and effective presentation, including making the most of bullets, graphics, charts and special effects.
- ✓ How to practice your presentation using your prepared slides as your guide.

PRESENTING TO WIN

by Jerry Weissman

— THE COMPLETE SUMMARY

You and Your Audience

Few human activities are done as often as presentations, and as poorly. How many are truly memorable, effective and persuasive? Probably only a handful. The vast majority of presentations fall prey to the Five Cardinal Sins:

- **No clear point.** The audience leaves the presentation wondering what it was all about.
- **No audience benefit.** The presentation fails to show how the audience can benefit from the information.
- **No clear flow.** The sequence of ideas is so confusing that the audience is unable to follow.
- **Too detailed.** The main point is obscured by irrelevant information.
- **Too long.** The audience loses focus and gets bored.

Every time you make a presentation, you are trying to get the audience to do your bidding. The key to getting them to act is to build a Power Presentation — one that avoids the five cardinal sins.

The Power Presentation

Most people in business are too busy living their stories to focus on telling them. They live, eat, breathe and dream their businesses. They see every single tree, but not the forest. They rarely have the opportunity to step back and see the whole. The remedy is painfully apparent: Focus. Give the audience only what it needs to know.

Whether it is a formal presentation, speech, sales pitch, seminar or jury summation, every communication has as its goal to take the audience from where it is at the start of your presentation (Point A) to your objective (Point B). This dynamic shift is persuasion.

● **Point A** is the inert place where your audience starts. They are *uninformed*, knowing little about you or your business, *dubious*, skeptical and ready to question your claims. They may even be *resistant* and mentally committed to a position contrary to what you're asking them to do.

● **Point B** is what you want them to do. To reach Point B, you must move the *uninformed* audience to *understand*, the *dubious* audience to *believe* and the

resistant audience to *act*. Point B is the endgame of every presentation.

The only way to create a successful presentation is to begin with the goal in mind.

Audience Advocacy

To get your audience to Point B, you must learn to view yourself, your company, your story and your presentation through the eyes of your audience. This is called *Audience Advocacy*. Everything you say and do in your presentation must serve the needs of your audience. If Audience Advocacy guides every decision in preparing your presentation, you'll be effective and persuasive.

Start by shifting the focus from features to benefits. A feature is a fact or quality about you or your company, the products you sell or the idea you're advocating. By contrast, a benefit is how that fact or quality will help your audience. When you seek to persuade, it's never enough to present the features of what you're selling — every feature must always be translated into a benefit. For people to act on anything, they must have a reason to act, and it must be *their* reason, not yours.

The Power of WIIFY

The key building block for Audience Advocacy is *WIIFY* — What's In It For You. The *WIIFY* is the audience benefit. In any presentation, before you make any statement about yourself or your company, or the products and services you offer, ask yourself, "What's the *WIIFY*? What benefit does this offer my listener?"

Some examples of What's In It For You include:

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The authors: Jerry Weissman, the world's number one corporate presentations coach, has a private client list that reads like a who's who of the world's best companies, including Yahoo!, Intel, Microsoft, and many others.

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You and Your Audience

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- When an entrepreneurial CEO and his or her management team launch an IPO road show for potential investors, the WIIFY is, “If you invest in our company, you’ll enjoy an excellent return for your money.”
- When a corporate headhunter makes a job offer to a sought-after young recruit, the WIIFY is, “If you join our firm, you’ll be starting an incredible career with great pay, fascinating challenges and the prospect of someday becoming company president!”
- When a partner in a marketing consulting firm makes a new-business proposal to the chief operating officer of a Fortune 500 company, the WIIFY is, “If you hire us, the expertise we’ll provide will improve your promotional plans, increase your market share, boost your profits, and your personal stock options will double in value!” ■

For Additional Information on another example of WIIFY, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Avoid the Data Dump: Too Much Information, Not Enough Focus

Too many businesspeople labor under the mistaken assumption that for their audience to understand anything, they have to be told everything. The result is long, extensive presentations that amount to nothing more than Data Dumps.

It goes something like this: “Let’s show them the statistics about the growth of the market. Then we’ve got the results of the last two customer satisfaction surveys. Throw in some excerpts from the press coverage we got after our product launch. Give them the highlights of our executive team’s resumes. And don’t forget the financial figures, the more the better.”

This is a formula for a failed presentation. Your audience will either be overwhelmed by the information or will simply give up and declare, “So what?”

The Data Dump must be part of your preparation, not the presentation. You need a proven system to incorporate it into the development of the story you will tell.

Brainstorming is the ticket. It’s a process that encourages free association, creativity, randomness and openness while helping you consider all the information that may or may not belong in your presentation. Later on in the process, you can sort, select, eliminate, add and organize these raw materials into a form that flows logically and compellingly from Point A to Point B.

Setting Parameters

Think of your presentation as a blank canvas within a frame. This is where you will do your brainstorming. To tighten the focus, you will need to set the parameters of your presentation. These parameters include:

- **Point B.** Start with the objective in sight and work toward it. Remember the first of the Cardinal Sins? *Presentations that lack a clear point.* Identify Point B and you won’t commit the first sin.
- **The Audience.** Analyze what your intended audience knows and what it needs to know to understand, believe or act on what you are asking. First ask yourself who will be in the audience. Then define the level of their knowledge of your topic. And don’t forget the WIIFY. This is the most important factor in your audience analysis. Ask yourself: What does your audience want? How does the subject of your presentation offer it to them? How can you make the benefits to your audience crystal clear?

- **External Factors.** External factors can impact your message. Some will be positive while others will be negative. For example, when making an investment pitch, the fact that there is a rapidly expanding market for your product is a positive external factor while the emergence of new competition in that market is a negative external factor.

- **The Setting.** Keep in mind the physical setting of your presentation. Who will be presenting? When will the presentation take place and how much time is allotted? Where will it take place? Will there be time for discussion or is it a large group presentation where only you will have the microphone and will likely be interrupted? And finally, what kind of audiovisual aids will you be using and will there be a demonstration?

The Brainstorming Session

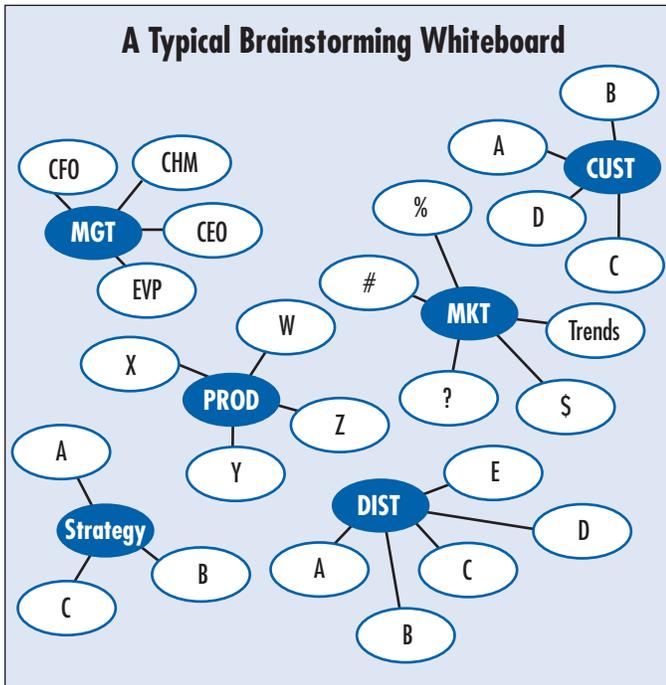
Once you have set the context and the focus, you’re ready to begin developing potential concepts.

You can launch a brainstorming session by having someone call out an idea about something that might go into the presentation. Jot down the word on a white board and draw a circle around it. That concept is now a self-contained nugget.

As each new concept comes up, the entire group should help “explode” the concept. Pop up whatever ideas come to mind that are related to the nugget. (Use different colored markers to separate different levels of ideas.)

- Continue the process with new concept nuggets and related ideas. Your whiteboard will have a series of circles connected to other circles.

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Avoid the Data Dump: Too Much Information, Not Enough Focus

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Clustering

Brainstorming generates ideas of varying importance, loosely related to one another. Getting from relative chaos to an organized, clearly focused presentation requires a technique known as Clustering. When you look at your whiteboard filled with ideas, you will find key clusters emerging from the chaos. Examine the whiteboard and use a new colored marker to highlight the most significant ideas — making them stand out visually from the mass of data.

You may be tempted to avoid the messy stage of Brainstorming and simply identify your main ideas. Don't do it. Always start with unloading a "splat" of ideas in whatever order they come in. Do your polish later. You're so close to your business that it's easy to take key ideas for granted. That's why it's so important to get it all out during your presentation. ■

For Additional Information on how the Ancient Romans used clustering in presentations, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Finding Your Flow

It's time to decide the order in which your ideas will flow. Remember, your audience has only linear access to your content, one slide at a time. Make it easy for them to follow your presentation. Don't make them think!

There are proven techniques for organizing ideas into a logical sequence to create lucid and persuasive presentations. They are called the 16 *flow structures*:

Modular. This method presents a sequence of similar parts, units or components in which the order of the units is interchangeable. This option is difficult to follow and should be used sparingly, as in financial presentations.

Chronological. This option organizes clusters of ideas along a time line. This format is ideal when your presentation consists of a story that deals with change. Take, for example, the fictitious acquisition by Goliath Software of David Software. To help David software developers feel at home, you might use a presentation that shows Goliath's growth, where it is today, how and why the acquisition occurred, and how the two companies will move ahead in the future. David employees will begin building strong connections with their new employer when they understand the change process.

Physical. This flow structure organizes clusters of ideas according to their physical or geographic location. For example, if you are selling the advantages of using your global distribution network, you might organize your presentation around each location, demonstrating how each connects into a global network that can serve customers better than any other distribution company.

Spatial. This method organizes ideas conceptually. In this case, ideas are arranged according to a physical metaphor or analogy, such as in a pyramid or inverted pyramid or concentric circles.

Problem/Solution. This technique organizes the presentation around a problem and a solution offered by you or your company. Many companies in the life sciences use this format when doing a road show to raise private or public capital. To attract investors, they describe a medical problem and how they can solve it with their unique product or service. Just be sure to spend as little time as necessary on the problem and as much time as possible on your solution.

Issues/Actions. This structure organizes the presentation around one or more issues and the actions you propose to address them. Outside the life sciences, the issues/actions variation of the problem/solution presentation may be more effective. Focus on actions. This is often used by companies in turnaround mode. They identify the issues they are facing and the actions they are planning to take to overcome them.

Opportunity/Leverage. This format organizes the presentation around business opportunities and the leverage you or your company will implement to take advantage of them. This is most often the format of IPO road shows because it appeals to the investor audience's

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Finding Your Flow

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essential interest in growth. It identifies an opportunity and immediately shows how your company can take advantage of it.

Form/Function. This structure organizes the presentation around a single central business concept, method or technology with multiple applications or functions emanating from that central core.

Features/Benefits. This method organizes your presentation around your product or service features and the concrete benefits provided by those features.

Case Study. This technique presents a narrative recounting of how you or your company solved a particular problem or met the needs of a particular customer. In the telling, you cover all aspects of your business and its environment. A pharmaceutical company might tell the story of John Smith, for example, who suffered from a particular disease and was helped by your company. As you tell his story, you also tell your company's story and help the audience see the human side to your business.

Argument/Fallacy. This method raises arguments against your own case and then rebuts them by pointing out the fallacies that underlie them. This is a good approach to use with a skeptical or even hostile audience. Raise arguments against your own case and then knock them out of the water by showing they're false. The idea is to pre-empt audience objections.

Compare/Contrast. This option organizes the presentation around a series of comparisons that illustrate the differences between your company and others. Focus on what makes your company special.

Matrix. This structure uses a two-by-two or larger diagram to organize a complex series of concepts into an easy-to-digest, easy-to-follow and easy-to-remember form.

Parallel Tracks. This format drills down into a series of related ideas with an identical set of subsets for each idea. For example, a biotech company might explain one disease, such as an allergic reaction, and call it the *disease mechanism*. This is followed by a description of the company's *drug product*, an explanation of how the company's patented drug treats the disease — the *mechanism of action* — and a description of who is affected by the disease, the *market*. Each drug in the company's stable is described the same way: first the disease mechanism, then the drug product, the mechanism of actions and, finally, the market for the drug.

Rhetorical Questions. This technique asks, then answers, questions that are likely to be foremost in the minds of your audience.

The Four Critical Questions

You have seen how you can begin creating a presentation, starting with the Framework Form, doing Brainstorming and Clustering, and sequencing them into a logical path with a specific Flow Structure. All these steps can be further distilled into Four Critical Questions. They are:

1. **What is your Point B?**
2. **Who is your audience and what is its What's In It For You?**
3. **What are your clusters?**
4. **Which Flow Structure have you chosen?**

Numerical. This method enumerates a series of loosely connected ideas, facts or arguments. Think of this presentation style as a David Letterman top 10 list.

Is one flow structure better than another? Not really. But do pick one or two. If you fail to choose, your presentation will drift, your audience will become confused, and you'll never get them to Point B. It's less important which Flow Structure you choose than that you choose one. ■

For Additional Information on a powerful example of the use of Flow Structure in a presidential speech, go to: <http://my.summary.com>

Capturing Your Audience Immediately

Picture your audience at the start of your presentation. What are they focused on? Chances are it isn't you. If you were to launch into your presentation at full speed, chances are you would vault ahead of your audience and they would never catch up. Remember, *don't make them think!*

The Opening Gambit can overcome this problem. The Opening Gambit is a short statement you can use to seize the attention of your audience. There are seven Opening Gambits from which to choose. They are:

1. Question. Direct a question at your audience. A well-chosen, relevant question evokes an immediate response, breaks down barriers, and gets audience members thinking about how your message applies to them.

2. Factoid — a striking statistic or little-known fact. The factoid must be closely related to the main theme of your presentation. It can be a market growth figure, a detail about a demographic, or a social trend.

3. Retrospective/Prospective — a look backward or forward; a “that was then, this is now” approach. If

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Capturing Your Audience Immediately

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you're selling computer chips, for example, start with a look at speeds five years ago, today, and then project them into the future.

4. Anecdote — a short human interest story, related to your Point B.

5. Quotation — an endorsement about your business from a respected source. Be sure it is relevant.

6. Aphorism — a familiar saying. Examples include: "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts," "Seeing is believing," and "Easier said than done."

7. Analogy — a comparison between two seemingly unrelated items that helps illuminate a complex, arcane or obscure topic. The simpler and clearer, the better.

To make the opening of your presentation most effective, link your Opening Gambit to Point B. You'll need two additional stepping stones to get there — the *Unique Selling Proposition* (USP) and the *Proof of Concept*.

The USP is a very succinct summary of your business, the basic premise that describes what your company does, makes or offers. Think of the USP as the "elevator" pitch of your presentation — the way you'd pitch yourself if you stepped into an elevator and suddenly saw a hot prospect. It should be one or two sentences long. The USP, simply put, is what your company does.

The Proof of Concept is a single telling point that validates your USP. It gives instant credibility to your business. For example, if your USP is that you make the best consumer accounting software, your proof of concept might be that the software won a prestigious consumer award.

Think of your Opening Gambit, your USP, your Proof of Concept, and your Point B as dynamic inflection points. Once you've segued smoothly through each of them at the start of your presentation, your audience will be primed for the heart of your argument. You will have grabbed your audience's attention, and they will be very clear about where you want them to go. Now it's time for you to tell them how you intend to navigate them there.

Tell 'em What You're Gonna Tell 'em

Now that you've caught the audience's attention, are you going to dive directly into the body of your presentation? Not quite yet. Take a moment to give your audience a preview of your major ideas. The technique for helping your audience become oriented is the classic *Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em*. Do this by giving the audience a link forward to your Point B and by telling them how long your presentation will be. ■

Winning Over the Toughest Crowd

When Jim Flautt, a vice president of marketing at DigitalThink, had to do a presentation to a group of first graders at his son's school, he used all the techniques he had learned would work on executives. He was scheduled to talk to the squirmy youngsters about submarines.

He began with the call-for-a-show-of-hands Opening Gambit. Flautt had three questions: "How many of you know what a submarine is?" All the first graders raised their hands. Then he asked, "How many of you have seen a submarine?" Half the students in the class raised their hands. "And how many of you have ever seen a submarine fly?" Now all the first graders giggled and smiled. He had their attention.

He continued on to Point B: "I'm here today to tell you all about submarines." Then, linking forward from Point B, Flautt told 'em what he was gonna tell 'em — what goes on in a submarine, how to drive a submarine, how to repair a submarine. And then he added, "When I'm done with all that, about 15 minutes from now, I'm gonna show you a submarine that flies!"

He then kept their attention for the whole slide show and finished with a video clip of a submarine surfacing exercise, in which it leaps up out of the roiling ocean looking, for all the world, like a dolphin performing a stunt.

The Proper Role of Graphics

Think about the last time you were part of an audience and the graphics didn't work. The reason was probably that they were cluttered, there was too much on the slides or they were data dumps. Many presentations suffer this problem because too many businesspeople fail to distinguish between a document and a presentation.

All too often, presenters take the flood of data contained in typical documents — dense text and highly detailed tables and graphs — and reproduce them as presentation graphics.

The better way to use presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, is as speaker support. The slides and graphics are there to support you, the presenter, not the other way around. To make it work, the guiding principle is *Less is More*.

Effective graphics work to minimize the eye sweeps the audience has to make. For every graphic, keep the number of times their eyes must move back and forth

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The Proper Role of Graphics

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across the screen to an absolute minimum. All the bells and all the whistles and all the graphics programs available for business presentations boil down to just four basic design elements:

- **Pictorial.** Pictures, sketches, maps, icons, logos, screen shots, or clip art.
- **Relational.** Tables, matrices, hierarchies and organizational charts.
- **Text.** Bullets and sentences.
- **Numerical.** Numbers expressed in bar charts, pie charts, area charts, line charts, and histograms.

When you choose either pictorial or relational graphics, you achieve Less is More by default. A picture is worth a thousand words and a table makes less out of more. But not all business information can be captured in a picture or table, so most presentations bulk up with text and numerical graphics. This is where the trouble begins.

Making the Text Talk

Text slides come in two options: bullets and sentences. A bullet is used to express a core idea, taking the form of a headline. When you create a text slide containing bullets, you are in effect presenting only the headlines. Where does the body text appear? It doesn't. It's your job as the presenter to put flesh on the bones of the headline bullets. You deliver the value in your discussion.

- The Less is More bullet slide contains one concept, expressed in a one-line title.
- Subtitles, more often than not, confuse matters.
- The actual bullets contain key words only. Don't use articles, conjunctions and prepositions.
- Use a 4 by 4 formula: four lines down, four words on a line — maximum.
- Space the bullets in your slide proportionally.
- Bullets in a list should be grammatically parallel.
- Avoid sub-bullets.

In order to keep the audience with you and help them concentrate on your message, not your slides, you may want to use presentation software features that let you reveal each bullet in the slide one by one. Bring the bullets in from left to right.

Be careful with your choice of fonts. Just because your presentation program comes with hundreds isn't a license to use them all in the same presentation. Stay with one or two to lend a unified look. You may also want to add some interest to your slides by using design features built into your software. You can, for example, use gradient shading or text boxes to add interest. But again, don't go overboard. Stay with the

same one or two graphic effects throughout your entire slide presentation.

Making the Numbers Sing

Numbers play a key role in any business presentation. Revenues, units shipped, profits, and market share are the hits, runs and errors of the business scorecard and everyone in business understands their importance. But not everyone feels equally at ease when it comes to interpreting those numbers. When you are in a persuasive situation, you want to win the agreement and understanding of both the number-savvy and the number-shy people in your audience. Well-designed numerical graphics that translate digits and decimals into visual images make abstract relationships concrete and easier to interpret.

Numerical slides also need to live by the Less is More motto. Most can be dramatically improved by ruthlessly eliminating unnecessary words, numbers, scales and legends. Make labels horizontal rather than vertical. This minimizes eye sweeps.

Simplify your pie or circle charts. The most important information is conveyed by the relative size of each wedge. To emphasize the right information, put the percentages inside the wedges and the labels outside. ■

Making Graphics Help Your Story Flow

Once you've created a set of slides, step back and take a look at the overview. If using Microsoft PowerPoint, choose the Slide Sorter view. This lets you see all the slides at once. When viewed this way, if some slides don't fit your flow, you can reorder them.

The ultimate technique for checking your flow is to read only the slide titles. If you can trace the logic of your entire presentation by reading only those words, you can be sure you have created clarity.

Once your verbal logic is clear, you can turn to graphics to help communicate your flow. Well-designed graphics convey information clearly and establish connections among ideas. Use the following techniques:

- **Bumper Slides.** Bumper slides serve as dividers between sections of your presentation. Their purpose is closure of the outbound section and a lead — in to the inbound section. Bumper slides should contain a single line of text, centered. The line previews the contents of the next section with phrases like “Market Opportunities” or “Business Results.” You can also repeat your agenda as a bumper slide, highlighting the bullet that you will discuss next, provided the presentation is at least 30 minutes long.

- **Indexing/Color Coding.** Indexing uses a recurring

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Leave Out WIIFY and Point B

Never put “Point B” or “What’s In It For You” directly into your slides. These should be stated by you. Remember, the slides are there as presenter support — they are not the presentation. It is you, the presenter, who must grab your audience at Point A, navigate them through all the parts, and deposit them at Point B.

Making Graphics Help Your Story Flow

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object that is highlighted with different colors or shades coded to map the sections of your presentation. For example, a company’s four-part business strategy may be represented by a pie icon divided into four different-colored wedges. Show the slide near the beginning of your presentation to describe and discuss your overall strategy. When you move to slides discussing each strategy, move a smaller version of the pie to the upper left corner and highlight only the wedge that represents the strategy you are discussing.

- **Icons.** Icons are symbols that express relationships among ideas of your presentation. Some classic icons include yin and yang, representing two-part harmony. It could be used when discussing mergers or other integration concepts. Another is the pyramid, representing building on a foundation.

- **Anchor Objects.** Use a recurring image in a succession of slides to express continuity. Start with one, add a second in the next slide, and so on.

- **Anticipation Space.** Leave the right half of the slide empty and fill it in the next slide. Fulfill expectations. ■

Bringing Your Story to Life

Now it’s time to think about your presentation as a whole. Use the process of **verbalization** to prepare and practice. Verbalization means turning your outline into a full-fledged presentation by practicing it beforehand. Speak the actual words you will use in your presentation aloud, accompanied by your slides. Do it exactly as you will in front of your audience.

You crystallize the ideas in your mind by talking your way through your entire presentation in advance. As you verbalize, articulate your key points and make logical connections.

Every time you verbalize your presentation and every time you deliver it before a live audience, you should expect the words to vary slightly. The logic of your well-honed outline and your improved comfort level will guarantee that every time you deliver your presen-

tation it will be clear and persuasive.

As you make your presentation, link your ideas. There are 12 internal linkages you can use. These are:

- **Reference the Flow Structure.** Make repeated references to your primary Flow Structure as you track through your presentation.

- **Logical Transition.** Close your outbound subject; lead to your inbound subject.

- **Cross-Reference.** Make forward and backward references to other subjects in your presentation.

- **Rhetorical Question.** Pose a relevant question and then answer it.

- **Recurring Theme.** Establish an example or data point early in your presentation and then make several references to it throughout.

- **Symmetry.** Establish an example or data point early in your presentation and then never mention it again until the end.

- **Mantra.** Use a catch phrase or slogan repeatedly.

- **Internal Summary.** Pause at major transitions and review.

- **Enumeration.** Present related concepts as a suite and count down through each of them.

- **Do the Math.** Put numerical information into perspective.

- **Point B Reinforcement.** Restate your call to action at several points throughout your presentation.

- **Say Your Company Name.** State your company, product or service name often. ■

Customizing Your Presentation

For your presentation to be fresh, you must create the illusion of the first time, every time. Make a deliberate effort to focus your energy every time you present. The most effective way to accomplish this is through customizing:

- Mention specifically, by name, one or more members of the audience.

- Make reference to a person, company or organization related to both you and your audience.

- Address a question directly to one or more members of the audience.

- Make reference to what is happening on the day of your presentation.

- Make reference to current information that links to and supports your message.

- Start your presentation with a slide that includes your audience, location and the date. ■

For Additional Information on preparing to present, go to: <http://my.summary.com>