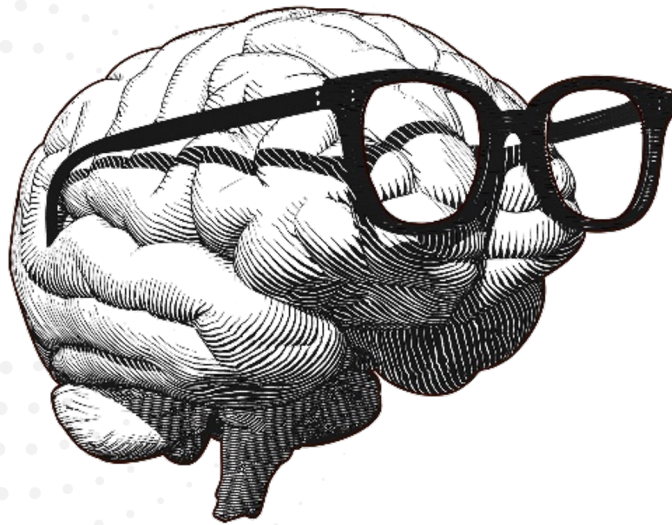


Neuroscience of PersuasionSM



A biological framework for successful presentations



2016 Platinum Award for
'Whitepaper on storytelling'

Version 1.0 Research 2014

Version 2.0 Research 2022

“

The facts speak for themselves, so why isn't this opportunity a slam dunk?

Have you ever wondered why your completely logical, fact-based argument failed to persuade a prospect? Or investor? Or spouse?, We've heard this frustration from many potential clients, so we decided to make the answer available to every confused presenter:

Answer: "Because we're selling to humans."

Companies and job titles don't make decisions; people do. And people aren't algorithms. People are biological beings, using brain structures evolved for bush survival to navigate the boardroom. If you want to gain someone's business, trust, or investment dollars, you need a strategy that appeals to our biology rather than working against it. In this whitepaper, we show you how—in three easy steps.



Presenters who use only IQ facts leave our brains searching for more.

P r e s e n t e r s w h o i n s p i r e u s

EMOTIONALLY

will have
our full
and rapt
attention



Brain Work



I've got a deck to create. How much biology do I really need to know?

The truth is, not much. We've boiled down decades of research and practical experience into a few simple principles that guide our three steps to success.

This is your brain.

This is your brain on dopamine.

We have brains wired for survival, a million-year-old system built to reward us with good feelings when we engage in activities that improve our survival odds and discourage us with bad feelings when we do something that might get us eaten by a tiger.¹ Most of us are chasing that reward, the neurotransmitter dopamine.

Dopamine is the animal kingdom's original drug. When triggered, we feel strong positive emotions—happiness, hope, motivation, awe—that let us know we're making the right decisions and encourage us to act.¹ Effectively tapping into these emotions is the holy grail of successful persuasion. That is why presenters who inspire us emotionally have our full and rapt attention.^{2, 3} Presenters who offer only dry facts—even “no-brainer” facts—will have zero impact on our dopamine levels and thus become flat and un motivating.



LOGIC NEEDS A DOSE OF INSPIRATION TO MAKE PEOPLE WANT TO MOVE.



Brain Work

Mirror, mirror...

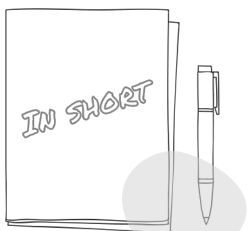
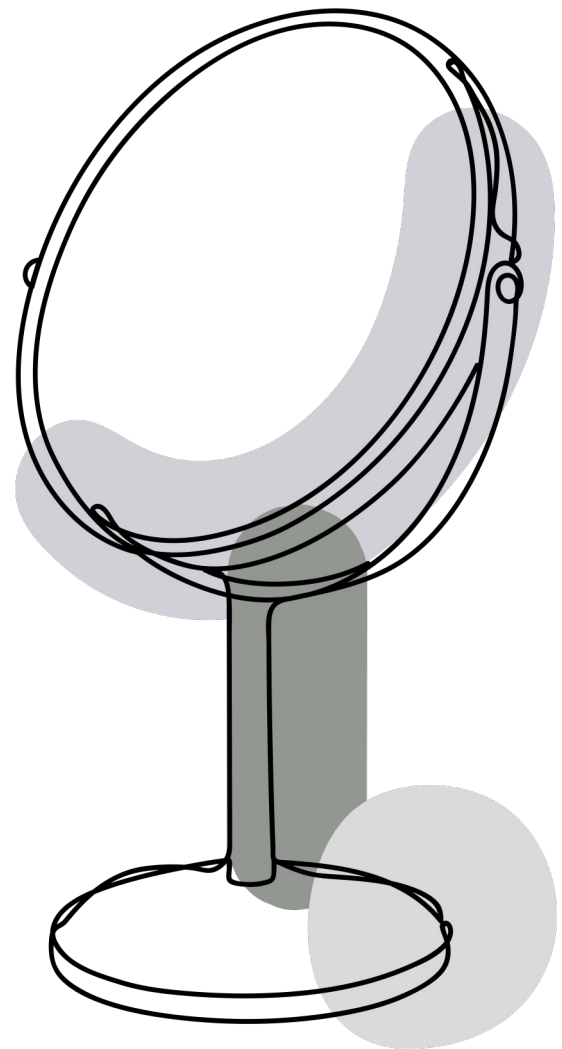
Humans are social beings down to our cells. Mirror neurons allow us to match the emotions of others — such as trust, confidence, and inspiration — directly. When communication is successful, the brains of speakers and listeners exhibit similar response patterns.^{4, 5} So when you access the emotions that get your dopamine flowing while presenting, your audience is right there with you.

The power of a story

We've emphasized on inspiring emotions, but how do we do that? We do it by wielding the most powerful psychological tool known to humanity: a story.

The human brain's prefrontal cortex is far more organized and expanded than in other animals—it's where high order thinking occurs, directing other areas of the brain in complex thought.⁶ This organization is critical in allowing us to do what other animals cannot: imagine an experience without living through it.

Storytelling is the uniquely human practice of triggering emotions through language, **allowing us to learn the lessons we need to survive without experiencing them firsthand**. A story empowers you to create dopamine from thin air.^{7, 8} Facts aren't irrelevant — our intellectual side cares about them — but only to the extent that they fit into the larger narrative we've already created for ourselves.



For better or worse, we use facts to justify the decisions we've already unconsciously made based on the story, not the other way around.⁹

Step #1: Audience

It's not about you.

It's about

them

When most people sit down to build a deck, they think about the information they want to get across. We've all sat in that conference room or auditorium, watching a dull presenter drone on, thinking that poking ourselves in the eye might be preferable to enduring a barrage of bullet points that have no personal relevance. On the other hand, when successful presenters start the same task, they chart out what their audience *feels* at the start before they put the first word on a slide.

It's also the most critical.

Your brain: Filtering out irrelevant information

We're bombarded with sensory information every minute of every day, far more than we can reliably process at once. Our brains are constantly engaged in the critical task of filtering out irrelevant information.¹⁰ Our brains constantly determine our focus by asking, "What does this mean for me?" If our brain doesn't find enough relevance from a presenter, it will keep looking in other places, even as the slides advance. For the presenter, this means that whatever is grabbing their attention, it's not you.^{3, 11}



A narrative that offers a personal stake

So, if you're the person with the pointer, how do you engage your audience? Make sure what you say is meaningful to them by connecting with their current point of view before you try to change it.

If I start a presentation by saying, "My brand of coffee is made from special beans" or "My brand of coffee is the best," you may not care about the fact or opinion I've just given you. If I say instead, "I know how important it is to start your day off right with that very first cup of coffee, and the last thing you want is to begin with something less than you deserve," I've started a narrative that gives you a personal stake in the information that follows. Advertisers have been so successful in employing this strategy that we spend more than \$120 billion with them every year to make our companies more successful. But their techniques are available to anyone who can imagine what an audience needs.

Step #1: Audience (cont.)

Here's a sample for a CFO looking at a financial planning and analysis platform.

Intellectual needs

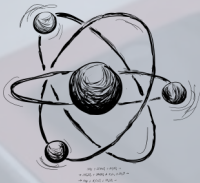
I need a platform that develops accurate forecasts and provides insights. (Good to know but doesn't provide much opportunity outside of a commoditized bid.)

Hopes

I can bring internal business decision support from both AI analytics and people to render valuable insights that allow us to compete with greater agility. I can be the leader that enables others to function better. (Here is an opportunity for you to connect emotionally. For example, promising assurance that your platform won't be a prescription but rather a collaborative journey, where we share risk. The CFO can be the leader they want to be)

Fears

We have data but no accurate insights. Our organization must sift through and analyze countless reporting and transaction interpretations. (It's important to know that in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety trumps aspirational emotions every time, so you may need to remind your audience why the status quo is riskier than your solution.)



Remember, your audience has a human brain trying to focus by asking,

“What does this mean for *me*?”

Step #2: Meaning

Give them clarity or give them death — by PowerPoint.

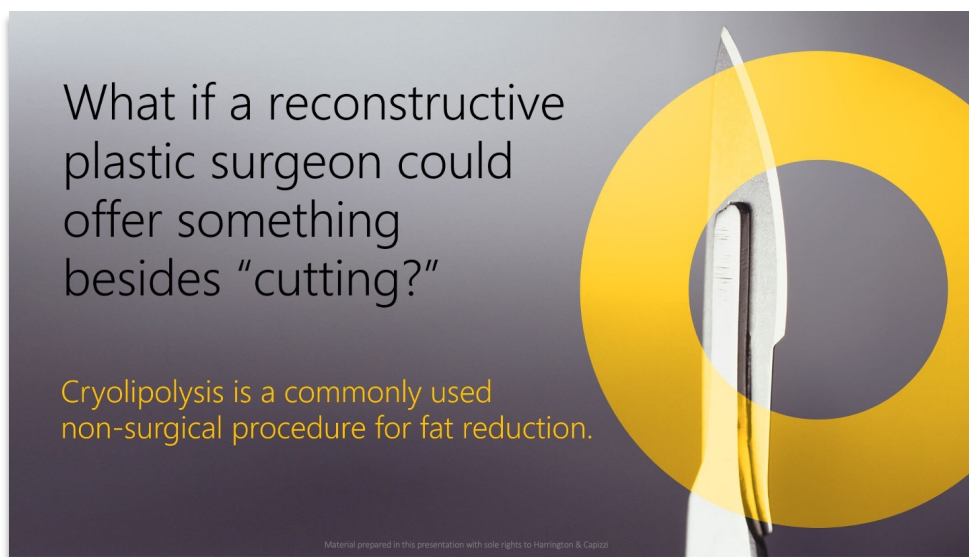
Once you know the point of view of your audience, you can begin to craft your persuasive argument. Audience members spend their days, as we all do, overwhelmed by complexity, so the last thing their brains want is more context-divorced facts to process or complex terminology to parse.¹² The moment your audience starts wondering what you mean, they've stopped listening to you.¹³ Give them shortcuts: well-considered, clearly communicated solutions, delivered on a silver platter.

Doing so engenders the trust that's critical to any business relationship. Think of your presentation less like a textbook and more like a movie trailer. You don't need to give away every detail upfront; first, captivate your audience with your core story. Have the facts at hand — as appendix slides or

supplementary collateral — they'll ask for those details when the core story hooks them.

It may sound easy to deliver clarity, but it's the most challenging part of an excellent presentation. We already know our story, so we want to delve into deep facts that expand it without considering our audience's starting point. Delivering clarity requires peeling away the layers of complexity by asking yourself what is truly meaningful for your audience until you get to the core.

Ask yourself: If my audience remembers only three things from this presentation, what do I want them to be? Could they share the core of this story with their coworkers without my deck and figures on hand?



BACKGROUND

- Many patients that have undergone mastectomy surgery are left with residual lateral fat under the arm
- While the fat may be associated with pain and cause undesirable bulges in clothing and skin irritation, most post-mastectomy patients are not interested in additional surgery
- Cryolipolysis is a commonly used non-surgical procedure for fat reduction
- Typically performed for aesthetic improvement in the abdomen, thighs, submental area, arms, back, and flanks

DEATH BY PowerPoint



Step #2: Meaning (Cont.)

How to turn facts into meaningful take-aways

By knowing the emotional as well as rational needs of your audience, you can spin facts into emotion-laden headlines that will both engage prospects in the moment and provide them with memorable takeaways to pass around to other stakeholders.

audience
emotion

Does your company have enough traction to mitigate my investment risk?

facts

95% licensed clients demonstrate retention
51% client growth in 2019
F2F clients increasing spend

new emotive
headline

Too much success for one slide;
We're going to need a bigger boat.



TOO MUCH SUCCESS FOR JUST ONE SLIDE

WE NEED A BIGGER BOAT



On-site market is thriving
51% growth in 2019, adding 47 new clients.

F2F clients are adding virtual
F2F clients are increasing their spend by adding virtual features, which we've already built in.

In committed relationships
With 95% licensed revenue, eShow's clients demonstrate how hard it is to find a better option.

eShow is confidential. Please see important disclosure. 2020 © eShow. All Rights Reserved

audience
emotion

Will this potential new partner make a rookie mistake that makes me look bad?

facts

Founded in 1957

new emotive
headline

We were taking calls before Lennon met McCartney.



We were taking calls before Lennon met McCartney

A decade of health experience 



1960s 1980s 2000s

57 years in teleservices

Most vendors are new to the industry

audience
emotion

Silos were a good thing in the pre-digital era.

facts

new emotive
headline

Spoiler Alert: **Your existing infrastructure isn't optimized for future growth.**



Silos were great for storing specialized information. But growth by acquisition introduces inefficiencies that a wholesale approach cannot cure.

Step #3: Story

A narrative makes it stick.

Hollywood isn't the only industry that benefits from spinning a good yarn. Our brains evolved over millennia to learn from stories told around a campfire. (Spreadsheets and bullet points only came along much later in the game.) That means that a fact wrapped in a story is 7-10 times more memorable.^{14, 15} That explains why major companies from 3M to Nike have significant corporate initiatives related to storytelling. A strong story coupled with meaningful visuals captures attention and ensures your audience remembers you.¹⁶

Format for a 15-slide deck

If you want to pitch your law firm to potential clients, your drill pipe to engineers, or your startup to venture capitalists, you can follow this basic story outline to put together a presentation that will bring them to the edge of their seats.



Chances are your
message isn't as
engaging as a movie, like
Apollo 13.

But we can learn from the
movie how to structure
our deck.



Intro

Slide #1

About them

Step #3: Story

Your job is challenging but straightforward: orbit, land on the moon and return home safely.

Avoid the temptation to start with the “about us” slide at the beginning. The audience has little reason to care yet. Instead, establish an emotional connection with your audience by demonstrating that you understand the situation. It could be as simple as job responsibilities or market trends in a business context.

Slide #2

Uh oh

Houston, we have a problem. The ship is running low on oxygen and doesn't have a backup system.

The second slide is where we bring in the key difficulties they face. These are 3-5 critical challenges you've chosen because you will later show a legitimate, differentiating value proposition that solves them.

Slide #3

So what

It only takes minutes for cerebral hypoxia to become fatal.

This is the most critical introduction slide and the most often skipped. We may assume it's obvious why the stakes are high, but if you want to trigger their emotions, you need to clarify why the problem matters to them.

Slide #4

Ah ha

You need a solution that allows you to produce additional oxygen using only the components you already have on board.

Now that you have their blood pressure up, you can start showing them a path through the minefield--those things they need to take advantage of the opportunities and avoid the risks you just presented.

Slide #5

About us

This will be our finest hour: Here is our solution that will meet your need.

Now--when the audience cares--is the time to talk about your company, especially about what is important to them. From here on out, they are fully aware of their stake in what you have to say and will be listening carefully.

Middle

Slide #6-13

Middle

The middle slides are where you can bring the facts and intellectual points of your value solution because they will be in the context of the story you started. You can help make that connection even stronger by eschewing titles for headlines.

Finish

Slide #14-15

Finish

The point of the conclusion slides is not to give them a complete summary but to filter down to the emotion that creates a call-to-action. You may want to remind them of 18 things, but human memory is extremely limited. Studies show we can only remember three or four things at a time, so you'll do yourself a favor by keeping things simple for your audience.

Step #3: Story (Cont.)

Will the real expert please stand up?

How do you get someone to trust you in a sales pitch?

Trick question — you don't.

You build trust over a long time. But you can jumpstart the process by building to your solution and practicing vulnerability.

Humans like to figure things out, like the clues to a good TV mystery. When we do, we're rewarded with a feel-good rush of dopamine. **Wouldn't you love to have that rush associated with your product?** By bringing the audience along as you build to your solution rather than leading with it, you can. In the best-case scenario, they'll reach the conclusion you want them to before you say it, making them trust the answer even more.

It's tempting to try and sound like the smartest person in the room or to skip over any flaws. However, **when we only show the good, we leave our audience to imagine the bad.** Building trust includes acknowledging your downsides.¹⁷ Including brief notes about potential risks and concerns helps your audience connect with your humanity and shows them that you're giving them a complete story, not the glossed-over version.



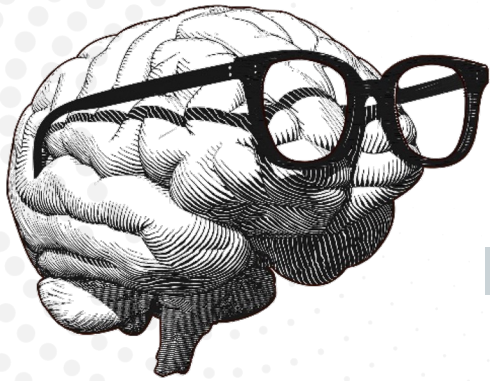
If only they could trust you

Avoid the temptation to sound like the smartest person in the room.

The goal is not for you to feel smart, but for your audience to feel that way.



Photo by [Priscilla Du Preez](#) on [Unsplash](#)



The Neuroscience of PersuasionSM

A biological framework for successful presentations

You finally have a meeting scheduled with a key prospect. A group of 25 analysts hears your pitch or investment opportunity. You just got approved for a keynote at the conference. Now what? Boy, have we been there.

Many of our team members are former executives who've traveled the world making presentations themselves and studied these neuroscientific principles out of frustration with their own flops. Once we experienced the power of successful persuasion, we started Presentation Partners to help others in the same boat.

So, next time you have a presentation to give, take a step back and think about what you're trying to accomplish. If your goal is to persuade someone, consider these three steps as a pathway to radically improving your success.



In short: In the best-case scenario, they'll reach the conclusion you want them to before you say it, making them trust the answer.

1

Audience

It's not about you.
It's about them.

2

Meaning

Give them clarity or
give them death —
by PowerPoint.

3

Story

The narrative
makes it stick.

3 - s t e p s t o s u c c e s s

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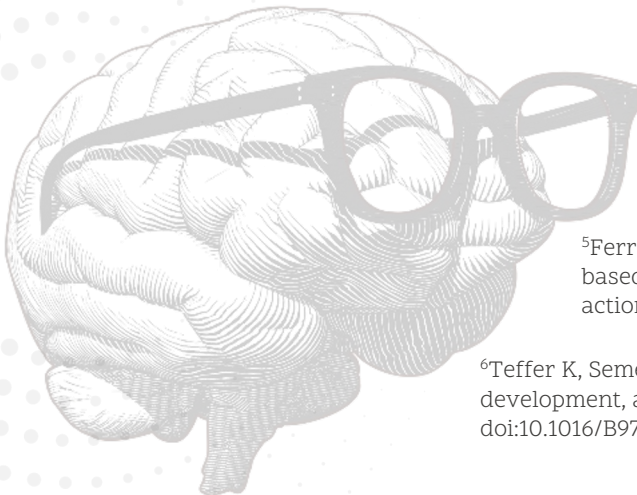
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**That feeling when innovation
crystalizes before your eyes .**

Their crystals? Rough and full of air.
Our crystals? A sheet of perfections.

FOOD & BEVERAGE

**When business loves you, they
verb your product .**

Plexa stands ready to join 'Xerox' this
and 'FedEx' that as workplace lexicon.

DATA ANALYTICS

Sprinters tire quickly. Slow and steady wins the race.

Wise men say only fools rush in.

SaaS companies often suffer because of
bolt-on growth

The SaaS path to stability

SaaS Platform

The cure is personal.

Targeted therapy holds great promise for the
most challenging cancers.

Oncology precision medicine drives the
market, valuing \$46.9B in 2019 and
forecasted for \$148.0B by 2030.

Life Sciences

Restaurant patron to waiter...

**“Where did my chicken come from,
and did it have a happy life?”**

People want:

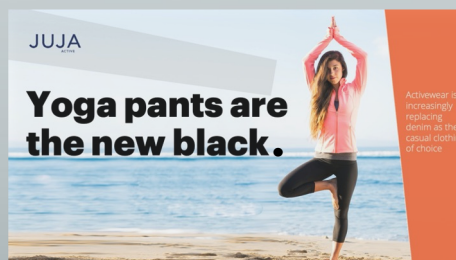
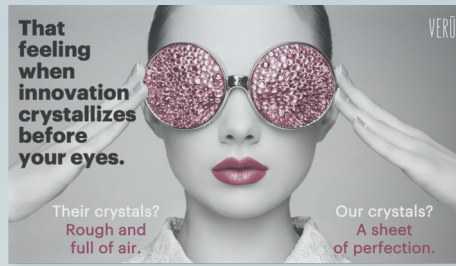
- 1) Transparency
- 2) Strong Organic category
- 3) Unique Position

Agriculture M&A

Yoga pants are the new black.

Activewear is increasingly replacing denim
as the casual clothing of choice.

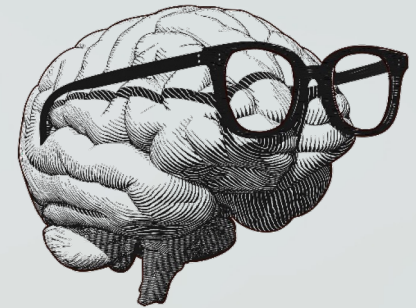
E-commerce Fashion



Great stories scale

the movement people buy into.

Not a soft skill. A biological mechanism,
and the least expensive force-multiplier
you'll ever have.



The Neuroscience of PersuasionSM

A biological framework for successful presentations

Reach out

if you'd like a little help. Or alot.
email at: jon@storycurrency.com