



Presentations On Fire - Intention

ALA 2014 Exercise | Define The Intention of Your Next Presentation

Anyone who has done presentations has experienced this dilemma - You know your subject well, you have tons of important and valuable material, and you are passionate about all of it. So how do you decide what to keep and what to leave out?

Before you start building your presentation and filling it with all of your great material, try this little exercise to identify your ***intentions*** for your presentation.

Who Is My Audience?

☐ Identify who will be in your audience:

- Peers or coworkers with a similar level of expertise
- Managers
- Direct reports and other subordinates
- People only from your company or group
- A group with a wide range of knowledge and experience
- Complete beginners (or totally new to your topic)

You need to consider what they already know about your subject and how much they should care about it. If you assume they have more knowledge or interest than they do, or if you start using jargon or get too technical, you'll lose them. The most engaging speakers very quickly introduce the topic, explaining why *they* care so deeply about it, and convincing the audience that they should, too.

What Do They Care About?

☐ Put yourself in your audience's seat. Write down the ten things that matter the most to them.

- What does your audience need to know?
- What do they want to know?
- What will help them to improve, succeed, progress, learn, develop, grow?

☐ Reduce your list of ten down to the top three things.

- How will you address each of these three things?
- Will you solve their problems or answer their questions with your information?

☐ Now, approach from the other direction:

- What is the one thing you want them to **know** when you are done speaking?
- How do you want your audience to **feel**?
- What will **you say** to make them feel that way?

Remember, view your presentation as a screenplay or journey. It needs to have a clear beginning, middle and end, and an identifiable structure.

When you have answered these questions, organize your thoughts, find stories and images that illustrate your points, and you are ready to start building *your* Presentation On Fire!

"A successful talk is a little miracle — people see the world differently afterward."

~Chris Anderson - Lessons from TED