

[View this email in your browser](#)

**KACIK CONSULTING SERVICES, LLC**

**PROFESSIONAL GROWTH ARTICLES**  
HELPING LEADERS, INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS  
LEARN, COMMUNICATE & CONNECT



**KCS**

Joy Conley Kacik  
Career and Leadership Coach  
Team and Leadership Consultant



Share



Forward

# Nail Your Presentations and Public Speaking!

March 2024



Photo Credit: Jeff Bergen

I often work with clients who are making presentations that have to hit the mark. Whether you are presenting at a staff meeting, to a leadership team, the C-Suite, customers or a board of directors, you want your content to hit the target and come across as prepared, polished, persuasive and impressive.

***If you have one coming up,  
you are welcome to reach out to me and I'll help you!***

***Here are some of the key concepts I share with clients.***

Let's start with the content, because when your content is well-organized and presented in the way I'm about to suggest, it will give you confidence.

**Before you even begin your preparation, ask yourself this important question that will be the key to your success:**

**When you are done with your presentation, what do you want your audience to KNOW, THINK OR DO as a result?**

If you can't answer that question, then figure that out before you go any further. You will want to build from this perspective, from start to finish.

### **Your Opening:**

You can start with something light-hearted or genuine just to make a connection to your audience. Here are some examples:

- If it's an annual meeting, you can tell them why you're glad to be back or what you look forward to or some quick anecdote about something funny or positive from last year's event or something exciting.
- You can talk about something that's new in the organization that you're excited about and how that might relate to your presentation.
- You can thank them for the opportunity and tell them why you're looking forward to sharing this with them.
- You can share some funny anecdote of something your partner, child or pet did this morning and how that impacted your day, but try to connect it somehow to you speaking today.
- You can talk about the city you're in and why you're glad to be there.

The idea is just to start with something human to make a human connection so you set a tone that's not too formal.

### **Introduce Your Topic Tell Them What You're Going to Tell Them**

Start by telling them what you are going to tell them. That's it. If there are multiple points to what you're going to tell them, put them in bullets on a slide. By the way, ALWAYS animate your slides so you keep the audience with you and they are not reading ahead or trying to figure out what your slide means. You want them to walk

with you step by step through your presentation. Slides should have minimal content on each slide so they are easy to read and follow. It's better to use more slides with less content, than a few slides that are hard to read or require complicated explanations. When you are presenting to leadership and particularly the C-Suite – your presentation should be at a high level with key points they will need to know or to make a decision, but stay out of the weeds when you are presenting to upper management.

**Don't give them your document  
before your presentation if you can avoid it.**

Unless you are required, try not to give them documents to be reading while you are presenting. Give them the documents at the end. I have seen presentations derailed because someone is looking at the document you gave them and asking questions on that and not really allowing you to make the presentation. That happened to someone I know who was presenting to a CEO and they never got to make the presentation because the CEO just kept shooting questions about the document.

**The Body of Your Topic  
Now Tell Them**

Plan this in outline and bullet form. Be sure there is a logical flow to the information. What's the background they need to know? Be sure the "why" behind things past, present and future is part of it where relevant. They need to understand the why of things. Then, as you are putting together the flow, spend time thinking about what questions they will likely have. What might they ask? What will be the tough questions that you need to be prepared for? Lay out your content so that you can address the questions where appropriate – BEFORE they ask them. If you are doing a PowerPoint presentation, where you get to a slide that may raise some questions, either answer them there, or say, I know you probably have some questions about xyz, and if you'll hold them for a minute, I'll address them in the next few slides or I will be coming back to those issues.

**It's very important that you don't allow questions to derail your presentation.**

I'm not saying not to answer them. I'm saying be prepared! I've seen it happen, where someone isn't prepared and people start asking hard questions the person isn't prepared to answer and before you know it, there's a discussion going on among the group and the presenter has completely lost control of their presentation. Don't let that happen to you. If there could be some tough political issues or

questions, talk to the right people ahead of time to figure out how you will deal with those things when they come up. Have a plan.

### **Handling tough or difficult political questions:**

If there will be people in your audience from two opposing sides of an issue, be the one to bring it up first. You could say something like, “I know some of you support this idea and some of you don’t. My role is to address the plan that we will roll out in the event we decide to do x instead of y. There will be other opportunities to have discussions with others about whether we do x or y, so please know that this presentation is informational at this point.” Another example might be, “I know some of you have some concerns about this and I will be addressing many of them throughout the presentation, so please be patient and allow me to address them.” Then, when you get to those slides, introduce them with, one of the concerns I have heard voiced is ... and I want to now address this. So they recognize that you are addressing it. Otherwise, they’ll raise the question later because they may not have recognized that was how you were answering that concern.

### **Lay a trail of breadcrumbs and call them out.**

What I mean by that is if you tell them at the beginning, I’m going to address these three things, then when you start with the first, say, OK, now here’s the first of the three bullets I said I’d address. If you have a summary slide for that section, call it out, “So here are the four key points about this first item I’m talking about.” You continue to do that so they recognize each of the things you said you’d talk about and you’re calling out what you are doing as you’re doing it. It’s creating recognition and memory of your key points.

### **Make Your Ask and Close Now Tell Them What You Told Them**

You told them at the beginning what you were going to tell them, then you told them throughout the presentation, now there’s one more step. Put your early slide back up with the three bullets of what you were going to cover – and say it again, I told you I was going to talk about these three things and just to refresh, here are the key points in review – just one or maybe a couple slides for that and then, state the key thing you wanted them to get out of it and ask them what you want them to do with your presentation.

Example Asks:

1. **Something you want them to think** – usually this is about raising awareness or shifting a mindset.

“So when you see someone in the lobby who looks a little lost or confused, as we try to increase our customer service reputation, remember that person is your responsibility regardless of your job. A way you might shift your thinking would be to approach the person and ask how you can help and instead of pointing, offer to take them to the area they’re looking for.”

2. **Something you want them to know** – usually this is about giving them knowledge so they use new skills or tools or so they are aware of the company’s financial status or some other relevant data or information.

“Thank you for your attention. We now can all move forward knowing that we are on target for our sales goals because you have all been diligent and focused on finding new clients. So keep up the great work. Don’t take your foot off the pedal though, because it will take more of what you’ve been doing. We’re proud of you – keep it up and we will look forward to a record year.”

3. **Something you want them to do** – usually this is about asking them to commit to some new behavior or take some action or support a proposal of some kind.

“Our department has been asked to take on two additional areas of support and we have the software and the expertise to do this well. As you can see from the data I’ve shown you, we do need additional head count of two more staff positions. The cost will be supported by the outcome of their work generating significantly more revenue than the cost of these positions, so we ask for your help in making this transition effective by adding the two additional positions.”

## Calming Your Nerves

Forget about thinking of your audience in their underwear, as I’ve heard others suggest. I have better tips. First, prepare! Practice your presentation over and over until you’re really comfortable with it without constantly referring to notes. It’s ok to have notes, but be sure you have practiced enough so you don’t have to read them. I speak professionally; many of you know that because you’ve heard me. I practice multiple times for every presentation – even ones I’ve done previously. Feeling confident and prepared helps significantly.

Don’t mistake nerves for being anxious. It’s normal to be anxious before a presentation and that actually gives you an edge. We perform better when we’ve got those butterflies in our stomach. I always have butterflies, but I don’t think it shows,

because I always work hard to be well prepared.

Before your presentation, connect with people in your audience. Introduce yourself, shake hands, and make small talk. The more you've connected with people in the audience, the more you'll realize they are just a number of people the same as you. Even if there isn't time for chit chat, I'll stand in the doorway and introduce myself, shake hands, thank people for coming, etc.

Make eye contact with your audience. Divide your room into thirds – left, middle and right. As you speak, look at someone in one third, make eye contact as if you are talking directly to them for 5 or more seconds, then move to another third and do the same thing. I often find what I call “anchor” audience members when I'm speaking. Those are the folks who are smiling or nodding at you. Make eye contact with them frequently. It will boost your confidence and help you feel more connected with your audience. Think of it as a conversation with people you know rather than a bunch of strangers.

## **They are not going to throw things at you!**

Generally speaking, your audience is there because there is a purpose to your presentation that is important or that they are personally interested in. Think of them as being interested in what you are bringing to them. Unless you are in some really hostile situation, your audience is not there to point out a mistake you make or to criticize you publicly or give you a hard time.

## **What if you make a mistake?**

I've made plenty. It's normal. We're all humans after all. So, if you mess up, say “Oops, that's not the right slide” or, “Oh gosh there's a typo – ok please note your note that it is supposed to be three thousand not three hundred” and keep going! Don't draw any more attention to your mistake. Don't apologize profusely or tell them a story about how you screwed it all up, just fix it the best you can right there and move on. If equipment doesn't work, pause and say, “OK, then, the computer is being a little cranky, give me a second here, to get the right screen up, and then keep going when you get it up. Don't self deprecate by saying I'm so bad at this, or I can never get the technology to work right – Don't criticize yourself in front of the audience.

**If I can help you prepare for a presentation, feel free to reach out to me for a complimentary call.**

I frequently help clients by reviewing their PowerPoint with them and help them structure things as I've described here. I can see things you won't because I'm your

practice audience, so I can help you polish it and boost your confidence.

***Here's to your success!***

***Best Wishes,  
Joy***

***Are you seeking a PROMOTION or perhaps a NEW ROLE in or  
outside your current organization?***

***Take Advantage of a  
COMPLIMENTARY,  
NO-OBLIGATION COACHING SESSION!***



***Click the icon above to email me or you can try my scheduling software  
by clicking the link below. I don't always populate it, but I usually do  
complimentary calls on Fridays. <https://joykacik.youcanbook.me>***



**Joy Conley Kacik**

**Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant,  
customized trainer and facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach with  
expertise in personal career coaching, job offer and salary negotiations and  
leadership coaching.**

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value  
of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders

and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

[www.kacikconsulting.com](http://www.kacikconsulting.com)

[joykacik@kacikconsulting.com](mailto:joykacik@kacikconsulting.com)

[| View LinkedIn Profile |](#)



---

*Copyright © \*2021\* Kacik Consulting Services, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

2408 West St. Brookfield, VT 05036

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).