

Which Of These 4 Presentation Styles Do You Have?

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I solve the “people pain points” that keep leaders awake at night.

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We all have our own presentation style, but have you ever thought about how your particular style compares to others? And the strengths and weaknesses of your presentation style?

After years of research, my team and I have found there are four primary presentation styles: the Closer, the Data Scientist, the Director and the Storyteller. You can discover your own style with the quiz [What’s Your Presentation Style?](#)

One style isn’t better than other; but picking the wrong style for a particular audience can cause trouble for even the best presenter.

One of the traits that differentiates presenters is whether they like communicating with emotions or data. Some presenters make emotional connections with their audience, while others prefer to persuade through facts and analytics. Another characteristic that differentiates presenters is whether they stick to a structured presentation or they go off script and jump around.

There’s more to presentation styles than just these characteristics, but as a starting point, these differences are emblematic of the myriad ways we deliver presentations.

Here are descriptions of each of the four presentations styles (the Closer, the Data Scientist, the Director and the Storyteller). See which style you think resonates with you, and then [take the presentation styles quiz](#) to corroborate your intuition.

The Data Scientist

Some of the most innovative ideas in today’s world are powered by big data and analytics. The Data Scientist presentation style captures that wonderfully. Knowing that the business world is increasingly moving in an analytical direction, one of your biggest strengths is how you fill your presentations with data analysis.

While some presenters would rather tell a story and focus on narrative, you use data, analytics, facts, and figures to make your point and persuade your audience. Nobody will ever accuse you of giving a presentation filled with fluff. While some presenters can speak for an hour and say absolutely nothing, you will rarely, if ever, have that problem. Your presentations deliver hard data, information and analysis.

One potential downside to watch out for is facing an audience that doesn't grasp or want all of your analytics. They'll lose interest in what you're saying perhaps because they want a presenter who connects with them emotionally or who gains their buy in by skipping right to the big finale. When you find yourself in this situation it will test your presentation skills. You'll need to be able to assess what presentation style your audience prefers and know how to stretch outside of your Data Scientist comfort zone.

Faced with a world that increasingly loves analytics, having a Data Scientist presenter on the team can be a great benefit.

The Storyteller

Some of the most persuasive presentations in history have been engaging narratives and stories. As humans we are fundamentally emotional creatures and that's why your Storyteller presentation style is so powerful. The Storyteller that can tap those emotions and weave a persuasive narrative typically delivers successful presentations.

Some presenters are much happier delivering dozens of slides with charts and graphs. But as a Storyteller, one of your greatest strengths is staying focused on making an emotional connection with your audience. An audience may not remember every single data point or statistic, but they will remember a great story or emotional connection. When an audience doesn't connect with data, or they're getting bored with too many slides, you're able to skip all of that, feel their pain and get them connected to you.

One potential downside to watch out for is audiences that just want a factual answer to a simple question. Sometimes an audience isn't quite ready to make an emotional connection to a presenter and, in those cases, you'll be faced with a big decision. You'll need to be able to assess what presentation style your audience prefers and know how to stretch outside of your Storyteller comfort zone.

In a world where emotion sells, and stories are so memorable, having a Storyteller presenter on board can be a big advantage.

The Closer

The Closer doesn't mess around. Knowing the reputations of many type-A CEOs, the Closer can jump into a presentation, cut right to the chase, deliver the bottom line and skip all the boring stuff.

Some presenters are dedicated to outlines, slides, timelines, and scripts, but not you. As a Closer, you see the end goal and you go right for it. Why spend 60 minutes dragging your audience to a conclusion when you can get right to the point and be done in 15 minutes?

While patience isn't necessarily your biggest virtue, distilling a presentation to its essence is. And that's one of your greatest strengths. You can see the destination and get right to it. And as a result, your audiences will rarely, if ever, get bored or miss the central point.

One potential downside to watch out for is that, at some point, you may run into an audience that isn't ready to move as quickly as you. And that may leave them feeling like your presentation style is too abrupt or harsh. Or that you've bounced around too much, leaving them feeling disoriented. You'll need to be able to assess what presentation style your audience prefers and know how to stretch outside of your Closer comfort zone.

With today's world of information overload, having a Closer who can distill a presentation to its essence can be a terrific asset.

The Director

The Director gives order to presentations. As a Director you like presentations to have a clear linear flow, with logically structured slide decks and clear transitions across topics and presenters. While some people are content to jump in front of a crowd and speak extemporaneously, you are much happier with an outline, slides, timelines, and scripts.

Sometimes a presentation misses the mark (perhaps running into a bored or distracted audience). And while some presentation styles (like the Closer or Storyteller) will happily trash the slide deck and go 'off-script', you're much more likely to stay the course and see it through.

This is one of the greatest strengths of the Director. You deliver ordered, logical and structurally sound presentations. It's highly unlikely that you would walk into a presentation unprepared. And when you're working on a team presentation, you're typically the one to whom the others will turn to ensure that the slides, outlines, timelines and scripts are well executed.

One potential downside to watch out for is when the presentation you've so carefully prepared is a poor fit for your audience. Perhaps there was a last minute change in the attendance or some emergency sprung up. But regardless of why, you may someday face a test of whether you're willing to scrap your thorough preparation and react on the fly. You'll need to be able to assess what presentation style your audience prefers and know how to stretch outside of your Director comfort zone.

Ultimately, with today's complex and complicated presentations and teams, having a Director on board can be a great asset.

Conclusion

So, what's your presentation style? As I said at the beginning, one style isn't better than another. The key is to first understand your own particular presentation style so you can match your style to that of your audience. Whether you're pitching your boss, delivering a sales presentation, speaking to your employees or an audience of thousands, matching your style to your audience is an essential step to effective presenting.

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