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The impact of knowledge, attitude and business role in business presentation design—Case: Company X

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The thesis stems from the researcher's passion towards presentations, and the poor state of most business presentations. It researches presentation design, including the visual and verbal aspects of it, as well as persuasion to the extent that was relevant for the scope. The scope excludes presenter's presentation skills and other aspects, which are not directly connected to the design of presentation slides. The objective was to study presentation design principles, investigate how well professionals internationally know them, and create several products based on the theory and research. The research brings business value to company X, which looks to expand internationally with its presentation design service.

The research question was "Is there a relationship between level of knowledge, attitude and business role, when it comes to presentations?" The survey included 29 statements, both true and false, which respondents agreed or disagreed with through Likert-scale answer options, thus allowing to assess the general level of knowledge. In addition, one open question was asked, allowing respondents to share any thoughts and attitudes towards the topic. Also, information about working environment and demographic factors were asked, allowing analysis regarding possible relationships. Answers were gathered with a web questionnaire, which was sent, mainly, via direct messages to 603 people in the researchers network, both inside and outside Finland. The questionnaire received 299 responses, during February 2019, that could be analysed. This included 13 different nationalities of people; almost nine percent were other than Finnish. Answers were transformed into numerical data, and job roles and industries, were adjusted to form comparable groups of respondents.

The researcher concludes, that the level of knowledge regarding the topic was relatively good, yet there is room for improvement. There were 10 statements that clearly divided opinions, and these were the areas that the researcher focuses on in the first product to be derived from the thesis, a training on the subject. Roughly a third of the respondents answered the open question, which did not lead to a clear conclusion regarding attitude. It appears that there is a relationship between level of knowledge and highest education, business role, what size company respondent works for, whether they have managerial responsibility over other people, and if they create their own presentations. There were not notable differences between nationalities. The researcher recommends that companies put efforts into training their employees in presentation design, as it is increasingly everyone's job to persuade others, and often a presentation material is used as support. Further research could be done, e.g. around how respondents use different materials to support their goals.

The first product created was a presentation training. The training was given to a few business professionals, who had also answered the thesis questionnaire, and developed on the basis of their feedback. The training will be officially presented during summer 2019 to another, larger group, of professionals interested to learn about presentation design. Other products to be created are downloadable guides and blog posts.

Keywords
Presentation, Persuasion, Visual communication, Visual design, Content design

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1 Introduction

The introduction tells the objective of the study and its importance to all organisations. It also introduces the organisation the thesis was done for and the significance of the study to the internationalisation purposes of the company. Furthermore, the introduction explains the scope of the study, and walks the reader through the structure of the thesis, explaining the research question and sub-questions. It also clarifies what is meant with the word “presentation”, and gives a taste of the versatility of the theories investigated, and lists the main principles.

1.1 Objective of the study

The study explores the topic of presentation design, including the visual and verbal aspects of them, as well as persuasion to the extent that was seen relevant by the researcher. The researcher’s objective was to study presentation design principles, and related theories, as well as research how well business professionals know them.

The goal was then to use the theory and outcomes of the research to create multiple products, such as a presentation training, downloadable guides and blog posts, for marketing, sales and paid service purposes, to be utilised during the ongoing, as well as the following years. In addition, as, it will be discussed in the next subchapter, the study acted as an initial investigation of internationalisation possibilities of company X, and its presentation design services.

The researcher has a passion for the topic, and works as a presentation designer. The researcher also works in sales and marketing, and has done so in various other companies in the fields of management consulting, online advertising, digital design, and Software-as-a-Service. The researcher has a unique combination of skills including sales and client management, and content and design of business materials, which is beneficial in the design of other companies’, business presentations, both internal and external. Furthermore, it was a fruitful foundation for the conducted research.

1.2 Importance of the study for organisations

The study is important for organisations, as it proves that there is, to some extent, a lack of knowledge in how to create effective presentations. This is concerning as presentations are the primary business communications tool for most companies. Presentations are used in internal and external communications, for example in sales.

Especially in certain areas of the subject matter, the respondents of the survey showed clear confusion, and, often enough, clear wrong answers. These are discussed in detail in the presentation of the research outcomes.

Business roles have become more versatile in regard to areas of responsibility, and will do so for the foreseeable future. Most business people are no longer responsible for only one specialised area, but instead work in varying areas, using a multitude of different kinds of skills. Not many can hide behind their role, and claim that it is someone else's job to push change or persuade colleagues or employers in matters that are important. Influencing others is everyone's job, not only certain business roles' responsibility. Hence, everyone who wants to be able to credibly persuade their peers, bosses or clients, should be aware of the basics of visual and content design, that have an effect on how information is received, remembered and acted on, the theories of which are extensively covered in the literature review, where many relevant studies from multiple fields are presented.

Considering how businesses constantly wish to save time and cut costs to be more efficient, it is interesting how below standard business communications is allowed internally and externally. Perhaps, it is due to a strong belief that other factors in a communication situation override the power of presentations; or perhaps, it is merely lack of understanding of how wrong or right things may go during and after a presentation, depending on its quality.

The time, money and opportunities lost with poor business presentations should interest the leadership of all companies. Also, and especially, since design-oriented companies have been proved to do financially better. As far as the researcher sees it, companies face a triple loss or a triple win in the matter; loosing time, money and opportunity with lack of design thinking and lack of knowledge about how to design, for example, effective presentations; or using time efficiently, performing financially better and getting more opportunities, with a design-mindset and skillset, which can be applied on multiple fronts and therefore can be scaled, and bring long-term benefits.

1.3 Relevance of the study for international business

Company X offers presentation design services as well as other content, marketing, and B2B-sales enabling services for a versatile set of other companies in various fields. The company operates in Finland and employs fewer than 10 people. The company offers unique expertise in the field of presentation design.

The company's experts know how a presentation should be structured, what kind of content a presentation should have, how that content should be portrait either verbally or visually, and how to create functional, easy-to-use and impressive PowerPoints.

The study subject was interesting to the company, as the company was not aware of any similar studies done in the past, i.e. which have to do with evaluating the level of knowledge of different business roles and possible attitudes that they may have towards presentations. Essentially, it is interesting for the company to know what are the roles that could benefit from the company's expert knowledge, and who may be open to receiving it.

The company has a plan of extending their business to Stockholm, Sweden in some years, and therefore it was important for the company to get an initial idea of the possible need of presentation design services in Stockholm. The second largest nationality among the respondents was the Swedes. The results of this research would suggest that the need for presentation design services is along the same lines in Sweden, as they are in Finland. Before actually starting a business in Stockholm, the company could do a similar research directed to Swedes, taking into account what was learned from this first study.

1.4 Scope and structure of the study

The research question is "Is there a relationship between level of knowledge, attitude and business role, when it comes to presentations?" Sub-questions include, "What is the level of knowledge in general among the respondents?", "Is there a relationship between level of knowledge and an attitude towards presentations?", and "Are there notable differences in the level of knowledge between groups of professionals, divided by for example role, industry or size of the company they work for?" As far as the researcher knows, a study with the same topic has not been conducted.

The scope of the thesis does not include the presenters' posture, or presentations skills or the practicing of them; nor does it include the significance of a person's presence, eye contact or body language, or anything along those lines. Neither does it address other methods of supporting one's influence, such as personal brand; or social selling as means of supporting sales activities.

The thesis and research is focused on things that would come across from a visually detectable presentation material, like a story, structure, visualisations, rhetorical devices do, or, at the very least, they have to have been thought about during the presentation design process, even if they are not physically on presentation slides. The thesis focuses on these things, because they are the things that can help a mediocre presenter succeed

better. One may not instill charisma in everyone, but one can give anyone a well-thought-out, strategically developed and beautifully executed piece of material, that gives the presenter the story they need to tell, and help their confidence by giving them something to show that they want to show.

The term “presentation” is used and it mainly refers to the physical material that presenters use, not the act of presenting. Visual design refers to the graphic design and final look and feel of the material, including choices that also non-designers can make. Content design refers to the building of the verbal side, whether it is crafting the arch of the story, using rhetorical devices or choosing what words end up on slides. Under the term “persuasion” other ways of influencing others are introduced, which can be weaved into the story and used to amplify the impact of the slides.

The thesis covers theories about multimodal learning, picture-superiority effect, preattentive processing, emotional competent stimulus, the Gestalt School of Psychology, double-coded theory, and positive test strategy. The theory cites various experts from different fields, such as behavioural and cognitive science, educational and evolutionary psychology, molecular biology, and cognitive poetics and linguistic semantics. In addition, sources included works by experts in creativity, sales, marketing and, of course, persuasion and presentation design.

The thesis is constructed of six main chapters, the second of which is the literature review. On the high level, the first theory subchapter discusses problems and the potential of presentations and persuasion; the second theory subchapter looks at the matter from a scientific perspective; and the third subchapter digs deeper into design and starts to share best practices of presentation creation. The third main chapter provides a conceptual framework based on the theories presented in connection to the research question.

Each theory subchapter connects to the empirical part of the thesis, as each chapter’s headline, or main point of the chapter, was transformed into a statement for questionnaire respondents to agree or disagree with. Each headline and sub-headline therefore reveals one of the most important pieces of information from said chapter. The fourth main chapter explains the planning and implementation of the research, reports results and answers the research questions. The fifth main chapter describes the product developed on the basis of the research outcomes. The sixth chapter considers the results and their business value. This chapter also evaluates the trustworthiness and ethical viewpoints of the thesis. Finally, the researcher draws conclusions and gives suggestions for development and further research.

2 Literature review

This chapter begins by discussing the current poor state of business presentations, as well as, the goals, use and challenges of presentations, on a practical level. Then, it takes a scientific perspective and explores, through literature and previous studies, how humans process, learn and recollect information. Finally, it drills down on persuasion, presentation and design principles, and best practices to intrigue and engage audiences.

2.1 Bad presentations are a plague

This chapter discusses the upsides and downsides of presentations, the problems and opportunities stemming from them. The perspective is that of any business professional experiencing the phenomenon as an active participant; making and giving presentations, or as an audience member.

It is important to look at the problems thoroughly, to grasp the full extent of opportunities missed through sloppy communications, caused by a wild west of amateur presentation design. It is also essential to realise, that presentations are a significant part of a company's image, and the state of a company's presentations speaks volumes of the overall appreciation of design.

Chapter 2.1.1 "What is normal is not effective", discusses that, although, bad presentations can be considered somewhat of a norm, they should not be accepted, because it is not effective communications. Then, some views on what created this problem in the first place are shared and why it continues to exist; making presentations is in a way too easy, and we are too busy to do them right, among other things. After that, the cost of bad presentations will be evaluated. And, finally, it is stated, that creating a presentation, is not needed for all business occasions. In fact, some occasions could benefit from not having any.

Chapter 2.1.2. "The best presentations arouse curiosity, interest or emotion", discusses what a good presentation should aim to do, what is a good presentation like. Then, it is stated, that to have an impact in general, but also with presentations, requires moving others—the audience needs to be somehow moved after the presentation. Finally, data about the financial benefit that a design-oriented approach can bring companies is presented.

This research sprung from a strong interest of the author in the topic of presentations and visual communication in general. Years of client work and presentation building for both internal and external purposes have contributed to identifying both the problem being discussed, and possible ways of solving it. Presentations have become a part of business people's everyday life and, for better or worse, are one of the most used communication tools. Due to hecticness of business life and lack of training in presentation design, professionals have gotten away with subpar creations. As it has been allowed to become a norm, bad visual communication behaviour has spread like a disease.

2.1.1 What is normal is not effective

A presentation is an opportunity to make an impact and set oneself apart from the rest, whether a presentation is about a company or a cause. That is already reason enough, not to do a presentation like everyone else does. (Reynolds 2012, 35). The basics of communication, which seem like common sense, have not changed much since the times of Aristotle, and yet the basics are forgotten in today's presentations (Reynolds 2012, 7). As American author and speaker Carmine Gallo (2010, xi) states, most of the millions of presentations held worldwide are really bad.

Gallo quotes presentation guru Nancy Duarte in saying that presentations are considered a widely accepted, standard, business communication tool, and the quality of presentations may decide whether a company gets started, a product launched or the climate system saved. On an individual level it may be that a poor presentation cuts a career short or shoots down an idea that could have otherwise flown, only due to ineffective communication. (Gallo 2010, xi.)

Because most presentations are poorly delivered, that is seen as the normal way of giving them. Yet, what is normal, may not be effective, and what is normal will not jump out from the crowd. How presentations are normally given, is not aligned with how people learn and communicate (Reynolds 2012, 7). This is not beneficial for the presenter nor the audience, hence, the normal needs to be forgotten for us to move onto something better and more effective (Reynolds 2012, 7).

This requires breaking of bad habits, because the problem rarely is the tools we use, which, although have differences, can also be used effectively (Reynolds 2012, 25). Marketing guru Seth Godin points out that the communicational failure comes from using PowerPoint as Microsoft wants it to be used, instead of the right way. (Reynolds 2012, 20.)

Next, it will be discussed, why it's a bad thing, that making charts with presentation tools is easy for anyone to do. After that, it is discussed, how the business—or busyness—life of so many of us, make it difficult, if not impossible, to do a presentation right. Then the consequences of not striving to make a truly audience friendly presentation are considered. And finally, there will be a reminder, that although for most of us, the weapon of our choice in business communications is a digital presentation, it is not always the right choice.

Making charts is too easy

Most presentations include numbers, data, that the presenter finds interesting and hopes will have an impact on the audience. Most presenters, though, fail to make the numbers interesting or meaningful to the audience (Gallo 2010, 109). But numbers only become significant when put in relation to something (Tufte 1998, 44), giving a perspective or reference point to the audience for consideration. Hence, we use visual design to help us communicate numbers in a context, but without sufficient knowledge of visual design, often the attempt fails and the action we hoped to aspire the audience to take, is left untaken, says information technology innovator Stephen Few (2004, 117).

Having PowerPoint or other presentation tools at our exposal does not automatically help the situation. In fact, many times it may do the exact opposite. For the sake of simplicity, the term 'PowerPoint' is to henceforth to be used to refer to all presentation tools, as it is undoubtedly the most widely used of all options. It is for sure, that PowerPoint on its own, has had a massive impact on the amount of visual aids companies use today (Jay & Jay 2004, 53). Reynolds tells us, how we ended up with PowerPoint in the first place:

> It seems that computer-generated slide presentations have been around forever, but in truth they've only been in common use for about 20 to 25 years. PowerPoint 1.0 was created in Silicon Valley in 1987 by Robert Gaskins and Dennis Austin as a way to display presentations on a Mac. It was cool. And it worked. They sold the application later that year to Microsoft. A version for Windows hit the market a couple years later, and (oy vey!) the world hasn't been the same since. As popular author Seth Godin–who's seen more bad presentations than any man should be subjected to–says in his 2001 e-book Really Bad PowerPoint (the best-selling e-book of that year): 'PowerPoint could be the most powerful tool on your computer, but it's not. It's actually a dismal failure. Almost every PowerPoint presentation sucks rotten eggs.' (Reynolds 2012, 10.)

A tool on its own does nothing; it needs to be used the right way. Just as giving a person a brush and some paint will not make him or her Monet, giving a business person PowerPoint, will not make them experts in visual communication. Nor will they become experts in communication techniques or presenting—these skills have hardly improved during the times of PowerPoint (Jay & Jay 2004, viii). Few drives the point further:

> When chart-producing software hit the scene, however, many of us who would have never before taken the time to draw a graph suddenly became Rembrandts of the X and Y axes – or so we thought. Like kids in a toy store, we went crazy over all the available colors and cool effects, thrilled with the new means of techno-artistic expression. Through the magic of computers, making tables and graphs became easy – perhaps too easy. (Few 2004, 9.)

Charts, i.e. tables, graphs and diagrams, are a great way to visualise numbers and relationships, and therefore give context and a perspective. The challenge is, that people who create them, don't know when to stop with data and effects (Jay & Jay 2004, 76). A point that could be made absolutely clear with the help of a chart gets drowned out by adding more data, data that is not necessary for that single important point; and more effects, effects that instead of emphasizing the point, end up de-emphasizing it. Statistician Edward Tufte reminds us to: "Above else show the data" (Few 2004, 117).

Used correctly, PowerPoint, can enhance presentations by making things more clear and memorable (Reynolds 2012, 11). There is no way around the fact that there are right and wrong ways to show data, and the wrong ways may even obscure the truth that is, or is not, seen through the data (Tufte 1998, 45). We must be ruthless in getting rid of everything that does not support the point we want to make, even if it looks nice or required a lot of work and took a lot of time (Few 2004, 118).

Equally, a contrary problem is oversimplifying designs, by perhaps not displaying scale, orientation or labels, which would—just like in maps for centuries—enhance understanding through visualisation (Tufte 1998, 20). Staying true to the data through statistical integrity is as important in visual presentations as it is in statistics (Tufte 1998, 35). Tufte continues to describe some of the worst examples that most likely took place especially after PowerPoint was fresh out the oven, and had barely been in use ten years:

> Such masking of content resembles the obscurantist foolings around of too much contemporary graphic design. Paul Rand describes the triumph of decoration over information, similar to the mishmash of chartjunk for statistical graphics: ...a collage of chaos and confusion, swaying between high tech and low art, and wrapped in a cloak of arrogance: squiggles, pixels, doodles, dingbats, ziggurats, and aimlessly sprinkled Lilliputian squares; turquoise, peach, pea green, and lavender; corny woodcuts on moody browns and russets; art deco rip-offs, high-gloss finishes, sleazy textures; halos and airbrush effects; tiny color photos surrounded by acres of white space; indecipherable, zany typography; tiny type with miles of leading… (Tufte 1998, 65.)

Busyness kills potentially powerful presentations

To do presentations, and all the charts they include, right, means using a lot of time and effort on them, as well as first acquiring the knowledge of how to do them right. It is no wonder then, that most who create and deliver presentations, decide to do so with the minimum preparation time possible. We also try to kill two birds with one stone, by creating slides for our presentation that also work as a document, also known as "slideuments", as designer Garr Reynolds calls them (Gallo 2010, 89). By trying to be efficient like this hurts the presentation and the message (Gallo 2010, 89).

Giving a poorly prepared 1-hour presentation to 200 people is like wasting 200 hours of time (figure 1), but putting 25-30 hours of your own time crafting your message and slides, is like giving 200 hours worth of a good memorable experience (Reynolds 2012, 128). It is no wonder, then, that presenters, who cram everything on a few slides, are called lazy (Gallo 2010, 88). They have chosen to waste others' time, instead of investing their own in order to give others a pleasant and useful presentation.

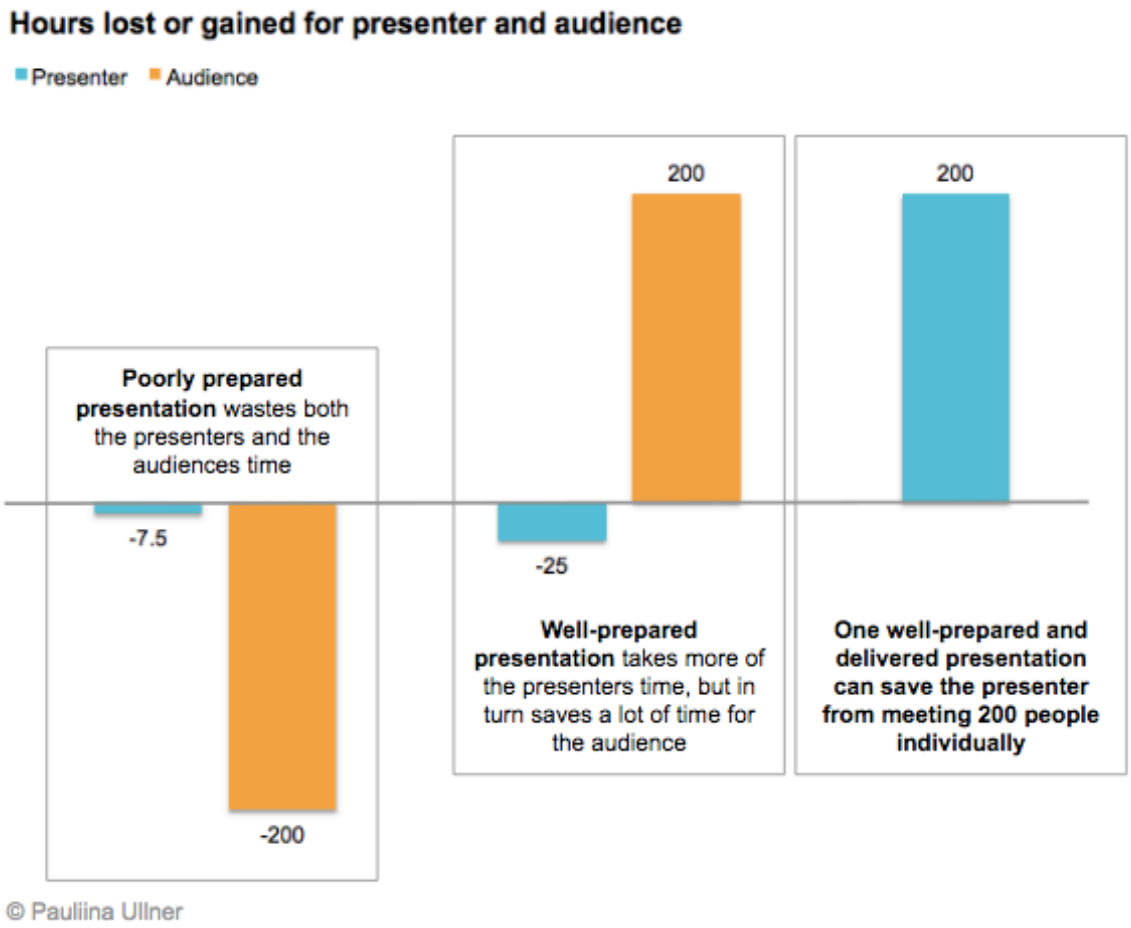

Figure 1. Hours lost or gained for presenter and audience.

Sadly, there also seems to be this idea that the fact that you have a lot of information on your slides, means that you know your topic. Slides, instead of making it easy and comfortable for the audience to take the message in, are there to prove that you have done your research. Text- and chart-filled slides show you are a serious employee in the business world, or student in the academic world—as Reynolds puts it "if it looks complicated, it must be 'good'" (Reynolds 2012, 142).

Let's then say, that you are not lazy, and you know that doing your research well should lead to displaying only key concepts and core messages on your slides, instead of everything you know—but you are too busy. Busyness is the enemy of creativity and we need creativity to make an engaging, appealing, consistent and clear presentation, that can then lead to fruitful conversations (Reynolds 2012, 55-56).

It is a paradox of using time to save time; using your time to prepare a presentation well, will potentially save you even more time and effort, because you managed to impress potentially hundreds of new clients in one go (figure 1), instead of having to do hours and hours worth of leg work for sales, as you would have anyway had to without a presentation. The audience is equally busy as you are, and will resent you for wasting their time with a poorly prepared presentation. The only smart thing to do then, is to take time away from busyness to create something worthwhile (Reynolds 2012, 55-56).

Baffling the audience carries a huge hidden cost

Whether it is the misuse of our presentation tools, or being too busy, lazy or serious, we are basically asking our audiences not to pay attention. When we put too much content, especially text, on our slides, we force the audience to either listen to us or block us out in order to take in the slide. Often, the audience starts to read the slide automatically, perhaps even taking notes, both situations ending in the fact that the audience is not listening to us, not focusing on us and what we are saying. If what is on the slide cannot be processed and understood in 5 to 10 seconds, the audiences' focus will stay on what is on the slide (Bradbury 2010, 100).

For some reason, we all also have a strong urge to take notes, especially when someone puts up bullet points, and once again, it is as though the presenter is saying that writing the displayed points down is more important than listening to the person speaking (Gallo 2010, 89).

Of course, some presenters may like it this way, if they don't like attention on them, but then, why are you there at all? Nonetheless, it is an awkward position we put the audience in. Having to choose between listening and reading or writing, is a similar experience to when we have too much on our plate at work; we easily lose focus and don't know what to concentrate on.

Whatever the presenter displays, the audience will immediately begin to organise what they are seeing in order to understand it (Few 2004, 120). And as life is increasingly complex and options plentiful, all we want is clarity and ease, and the importance of simplicity is more important than ever, and highly appreciated when encountered (Reynolds 2012, 42). On the other hand, poorly produced presentations, "slideuments", and documents are so common that, according to document design expert Karen A. Schriver, it is almost a required skills to be able to decode bad writing and bad visual design (Few 2004, 4).

We often believe our data can speak for itself, but if our audience is baffled by our poor visual communication and information design, the audience ends up trying to understand the data, instead of using the same time and energy on taking the desired action. This bears huge hidden costs for many companies. (Few 2004, 3.)

A presentation is not meant to work on its own, without a presenter there. As marketing specialist Guy Kawasaki says: "Good slides should enhance a live talk; slides are not meant to tell the whole story without you there" (Reynolds 2012, x). Nor should slides be displayed without referring to them in the speech. The slides are supposed to support the verbal presentation, to make it easier for the audience to understand the message. Sometimes a slide with a picture helps understand what is verbally explained, and other times speech helps understand a complex chart.

For example, slides can help explain complex concepts, which can be easily processed through the eyes with the help of pictures, but are hard to grasp solely by listening to an explanation (Jay & Jay 2004, 70). In the other case above, unless a slide's content and connection to the speech is completely obvious, what is displayed needs explaining, perhaps even talking through it (Jay & Jay 2004, 58).

Being lazy and not learning one's own presentation material, and instead creating very text-heavy slides for the purpose of having lecture notes for oneself (Jay & Jay 2004, 72), carries several disadvantages, as explained by Ros and Antony Jay:

> The verbal slide is a slide consisting of whole statements, sometimes several of them numbered sequentially on a single slide. It is a killer. It is a killer because, as we have already agreed, words are what presenters are there for, and what they are

> uniquely equipped to utter. But it is a killer for other reasons as well. In the first place, people all listen at the same speed—the speed of the speaker—but they all read at different speeds, so you immediately split your audience into groups who are mentally out of touch with both you and each other. In the second place, what are you to say while the words are on the screen? If you repeat the words verbatim, why have them on the slide? Are you trying to teach your audience to read? If you shut up completely, some will finish and be bored while others are still reading. If you say something different from the slide, you are making a basic communication howler, since no one can take in different verbal information simultaneously through eyes and ears. You cannot win. (Jay & Jay 2004, 72.)

Slides are not always appropriate

As discussed earlier, slides are easy, perhaps too easy and quick to produce, and therefore we create them almost by default to any and all situations (Jay & Jay 2004, 53). Sometimes, though, the situations would benefit from not having any. If, for example, you want to discuss something very data-heavy with a small group of people, it may be more appropriate to handout the material to the group and then discuss it (Reynolds 2012, 9). Other times, instead of a displayed presentation, you may want to use a whiteboard to support your talk (Reynolds 2012, 9). And then there are the times, when you just want to share facts as they are, with no discussion or special desire to have an impact, and that is what emails are good for.

From presentations, people want something more human than just sharing facts, they want to hear the story behind the facts (Reynolds 2012, 92). The presentation is where you can connect emotionally with the audience, and sell the core idea; a document on the other hand is something you can provide later to the more critical or information hungry audience members (Reynolds 2012, 21).

The question to ask oneself is, what is the situation, and are slides appropriate. There are disadvantages and advantages to them. The disadvantages of having visual aids are the time and effort, and/or money, it takes to create them; also, they take attention away from what is being said to how it is said; they decrease flexibility; and if done wrong, they create confusion and perhaps humiliate the presenter (Jay & Jay 2004, 69).

The advantages include saving time, creating interest, bringing variety, adding impact, as well as the fact that a picture is often worth a thousand words; and with pictures or charts, one can portray things visually in an instant, things which would be impossible to convey verbally; last but definitely not least, visually presented things stay in the memory much longer than words ever will (Jay & Jay 2004, 69).

2.1.2 The best presentations arouse curiosity, interest or emotion

According to the McKinsey Global institute, the typical American hears or reads more than one hundred thousand words each day (Pink 2013, 159). Hence, as stated earlier, brevity and clarity will be appreciated in presentations. Clarity begins in the planning phase. When starting to prepare a presentation, one needs to know why they are giving the presentation, for example, is it to inform or to influence (Jay & Jay 2004, xi).

Good preparation and structure as well as clear and concise language, and the use of one's imagination throughout the process, are what great presentations are build on, instead of a collection of slides, only because they are easy to make (Jay & Jay 2004, 54). It is important to remain ruthless and cut out all content that does not support the core message, because by trying to say too much we end up saying too little (Few 2004, 119). Few points out that: "By subtracting what is not required to support the message, we bring our communication one step closer to elegance. The word elegance comes originally from the Latin term eligere, which means to choose out or to select carefully." (Few 2004, 118-119.)

After the key message is crafted, one can move onto choosing the right visuals or visualisations to support it. Nowadays, it takes more than the ability to read and write to be an effective communicator; one must also understand visual communication (Reynolds 2012, 22). One must make sure the audience sees whatever one wants them to remember, as the old proverb goes 'I hear and forget, I see and remember' (Jay & Jay 2004, 22-23).

A presentation can be considered a success if it has aroused curiosity and interest for more information (Jay & Jay 2004, xiii), but the most engaging presentations touch the audiences hearts, teach them something new and present things in ways that they'll never forget it (Gallo 2014, 8). In some sense, this should not be so hard to do, as we are, all of us, natural storytellers. We tell stories all the time in our personal lives, but for some reason our corporate environment strips this quality away and forces us to presentation mode when giving presentations (Gallo 2014, 66). And that may be the hardest bad habit to break.

Another larger problem is the backwards thinking regarding design. Many confuse design with decoration. Decoration will be noticed and sometimes it may be nice, but other times just irritating. Whereas, good design you barely even notice is there, because the only thing you notice is that you got what you needed from it, for example signage at an airport directs you where you need to go. Design thinking is something one should have from the

beginning. One cannot apply it afterwards on top of an otherwise ready presentation; it goes hand in hand with the purpose and content of the presentation from the start of the preparation. Even designing slides starts on paper, not on the computer. (Reynolds 2012, 16.)

In the next two chapters, it is stated, that if we truly want to make a difference, to aspire some desired action in others, we need to touch minds and hearts; we need to move others. Furthermore, two studies are presented to show, how much more profitable can design-oriented companies be, compared to "your-everyday-corporations."

To have an impact requires moving others

Gallo quotes American neuroscientist and psychologist, professor Gregory Berns, by telling us that a person can have a great, different, new idea, but it will not matter much unless they can convince enough other people (Gallo 2010, ix). According to Peter Drucker a person needs to be able to convince others with the spoken and written word in order to be effective (Gallo 2010, xiii). In the professional environment we take it one more step forward with presentations, or visual aids.

Bradbury reveals that presenters who use visual aids are perceived more professional and persuasive compared to only telling their idea with words (Bradbury 2010, 89). TED talks represent some of the best presentations held in the world. The presenters share ideas and inspire their audiences with simple and effective spoken word and visual aids.

> TED represents the end of PowerPoint as we know it. Since we're all sick of "Death by PowerPoint," it's time to kill it permanently. Let me be clear—I'm not advocating the end of PowerPoint as a tool, but the end of traditional PowerPoint design cluttered with text and bullet points. The average PowerPoint slide has 40 words. It's nearly impossible to find one slide in a TED presentation that contains anywhere near 40 words, and these presentations are considered among the best in the world. (Gallo 2014, 211.)

Gallo (2014, 1) advocates, that the currency of the twenty-first century are ideas, and that ideas shared effectively can change the world. Good communicators are generally more successful, but great ones can even start movements (Gallo 2014, 11). Good communication is crucial for one's own success as well as getting ideas through to others. In theory chapters 2.2 and 2.3, presentations are explored from a neuroscientific and psychological perspective of the audience, and learn how presentations should be created and delivered in order for them to have a fighting chance to have any impact at all.

It may be that the importance of presentations or persuasion does not resonate with everyone. On the other hand, we may all be in the business of persuasion whether we like it or not. In fact, Daniel H. Pink, author of books about work, business and behavioural science, claims that we are all in sales now, either traditional sales or in non-sales (Pink 2013, 25). Non-sales refers to for example giving presentations to our colleagues, and traditional sales pitching to new clients (Pink 2013, 19). Conventional economics highlights producing and consuming as its two strongest pillars, but looking at how time is spent nowadays in work life suggests that moving others carries a lot of weight as well (Pink 2013, 20).

Pink commissioned a survey in order to discover how much time and energy people use to move others, including so called non-sales selling, which means selling where no one ends up making an actual purchase. The survey received 9,057 responses from around the world. (Pink 2013, 20.)

The survey uncovered that people spend roughly 40 percent of their time at work in non-sales selling, which means twenty-four minutes each hour persuading, influencing and convincing others, in situations that do not lead to a sales transaction. Respondents considered this aspect of their work vital to their professional success. (Pink 2013, 21.)

Technologies that once posed a threat to the sales profession clearly did not do what was forecasted, and have, on the contrary, turned more people into sales people (Pink 2013, 30). It is more and more common in companies to share the responsibility of sales, in the sense that traditional sales may not be anyone's job, but it's everyone's job (Pink 2013, 34).

During the last ten to fifteen years organisations have become flatter and job descriptions wider, with fewer people doing more work than before (Pink 2013, 35). Instead of fixed skills, this environment requires elastic skills such as moving others (Pink 2013, 36). Pink claims that we are all naturally salespeople, because we are human and have a selling instinct, and therefore can easily master at least the basics of moving others (Pink 2013, 63).

Both sales and non-sales selling call for "creative, heuristic, problem-finding skills of artists", instead of "reductive, algorithmic, problem-solving skills of technicians", says Pink (Pink 2013, 129). Before sales people had access to information their clients did not have, today clients have access, but can benefit from someone curating the information for them; additionally, in the past, sales people needed to give answers to clients, whereas

now, it may be more useful to ask the right questions, to help ones client (Pink 2013, 132). As simple, transactional tasks are automated, moving others requires more refined skills, a lot of intellect and creativity (Pink 2013, 62). At the core of it, it is about being strategic by being human (Pink 2013, 79).

Design-centric companies outperform others

Design and better business performance go hand in hand. Businesses that invest in design increase their chances of increasing their turnover. Also businesses that consider design essential are more than twice as likely to grow rapidly, compared to others. (Design Council 2007, 11.) Design Council proves that companies, which use design effectively perform significantly better than others, more than 200 percent better, to be more exact (figure 2). The comparison was made during 1994 and 2004 between Design Index, 61 design-led companies, and the FTSE 100. The Financial Times Stock Exchange index includes 100 companies with the highest market capitalisation listed in the London Stock Exchange. (Design Council 2007, 14.)

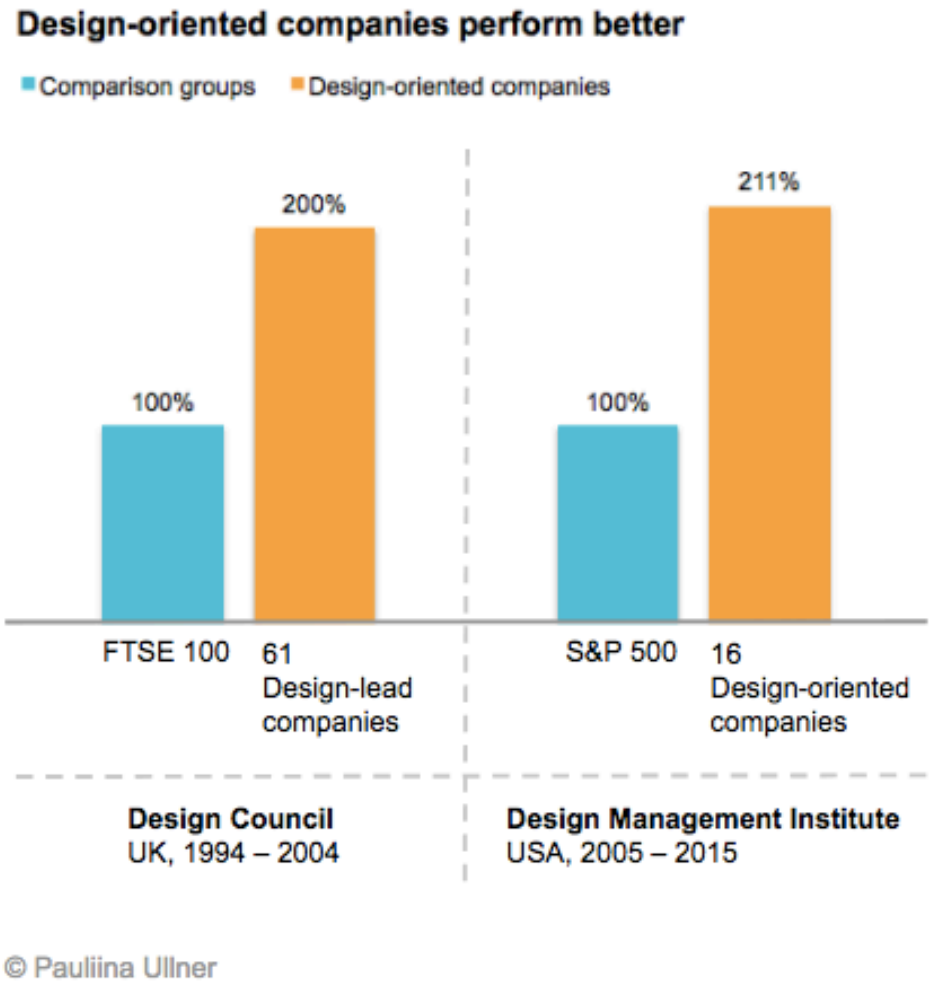

Figure 2. Design-oriented companies perform better.

Also, the Design Management Institute shows that design-centric companies outperform others with 211 percent more returns, as reported by the Design Value Index 2015, or DVI for short (figure 2). The comparison was done during 2005 to 2015 between 16 design-oriented companies and S&P 500, which lists 500 companies in the American stock market. (The Design Management Institute 2016.)

Between 2010 and March 2015, 27 companies, which were founded by designers were bought by larger companies, such as Google, Facebook, Adobe and LinkedIn. Out of all companies that have venture capital funding and have raised money between 2013 and March 2015, had designers as co-founders in 20 percent of them. Also, for the first time ever, six venture capital firms hired designers, in 2014. (Rhodes 2015.)

Venture capitalists see a lot of presentations. Joseph Flaherty (2018) from Founder Collective, an American venture capital firm, reminds about the importance of the first slide, because it is the slide that is most often displayed for the longest time. He compares it to a movie poster, as it should not give the whole plot away, but it should arouse interest (Flaherty 2018). Bill Gurley, from Benchmark Capital, another American venture capital company, recommends having a “killer presentation”, if one wishes to have an optimal fund raising process. A well-organised deck, that ensures the delivery of all key points, is more likely to be beneficial for the goal of getting funding, than an impromptu conversation. (Gurley 2015.)

Venture capitalists believe that good storytellers are good entrepreneurs. They have an unfair competitive advantage. They will recruit better; be loved by the media; raise more money more easily; close amazing partnerships; have a strong company culture; and are more likely to deliver return on investment. (Gurley 2015.)

Investors want companies to have pitch decks, because they are not only evaluating the company’s story but also the ability to tell that story. Companies need to efficiently communicate their strategy, business model and competitive edge among other things. One should display numbers as charts, graphs, and tables as they portray complex numerical arguments better than words. (Gurley 2015.)

To really do a presentation well, requires some knowledge, and for some, it may be good to seek out specialists to help them. In fact, presentation design is an area of expertise. The Presentation Guild, an organisation promoting presentation design and production industry as a profession, recognises nine areas of expertise that a presentation designer

should master. These are: audio and video, branding, color, data visualisation, functionality, images, layout, motion and typography. (Presentation Guild 2018a; Presentation Guild 2018b.) Some of these areas are addressed in the following chapters.

2.2 Vision is the strongest sense for humans

This chapter discusses the significance of visuality, in the context of receiving information from all around us, and processing it, as well as learning and recollection. Our perspective is that of biologists and psychologists. It is important to understand the points made in this chapter, to understand design choices, whether in presentations or in other medias.

Chapter 2.2.1, presents how visuals help learning and recollection; which visual elements our subconscious pick up on; and discusses how emotional events last longer in our memory. Chapter 2.2.2 defines the role of visualisation, as a tool to help others understand our message; it states, that every element in a visual design carries a message of some kind. It also discusses how we naturally assign meaning to just about anything and everything; and, that while highlighting the most important things in our message or design is important, it may also be needed to low light, or tone down, all other, less essential, elements.

Chapter 2.2.3, presents, that although vision is our strongest sense, the best result of learning and remembering comes from utilising both visual and verbal language. Therefore, it also discusses how and when our visual and verbal systems are used. In addition, the chapter explores ways to ease the cognitive process with the use of rhetorical devices; and how, yet again, there can be a measurable monetary upside, when done right. First, though, it takes a look at the human senses.

Scientists have learned more about the human brain in the last ten to fifteen years, than they had before, during the whole time humans have been around (Gallo 2014, 49). Although our tools and methods, for example in presenting, may vary and renew from time to time, the fundamentals of how we should present visual information does not change, as our eyes and brains still work the same as they have for thousands of years (Koponen, Hildén & Vapaasalo 2016, 15-16).

Our most powerful and efficient way of receiving information is our vision (Few 2004, 92). It separates us from other mammals, to which a sense of hearing and smell has greater importance in sensing the world around them (Koponen et al. 2016, 17).

Humans sense their surroundings through sight significantly faster and more accurately than with any other senses at our disposal (Koponen et al. 2016, 17). It has been estimated that our eyesight transmits eight times more information to our brains (figure 3) than all the other senses put together (Koponen et al. 2016, 17).

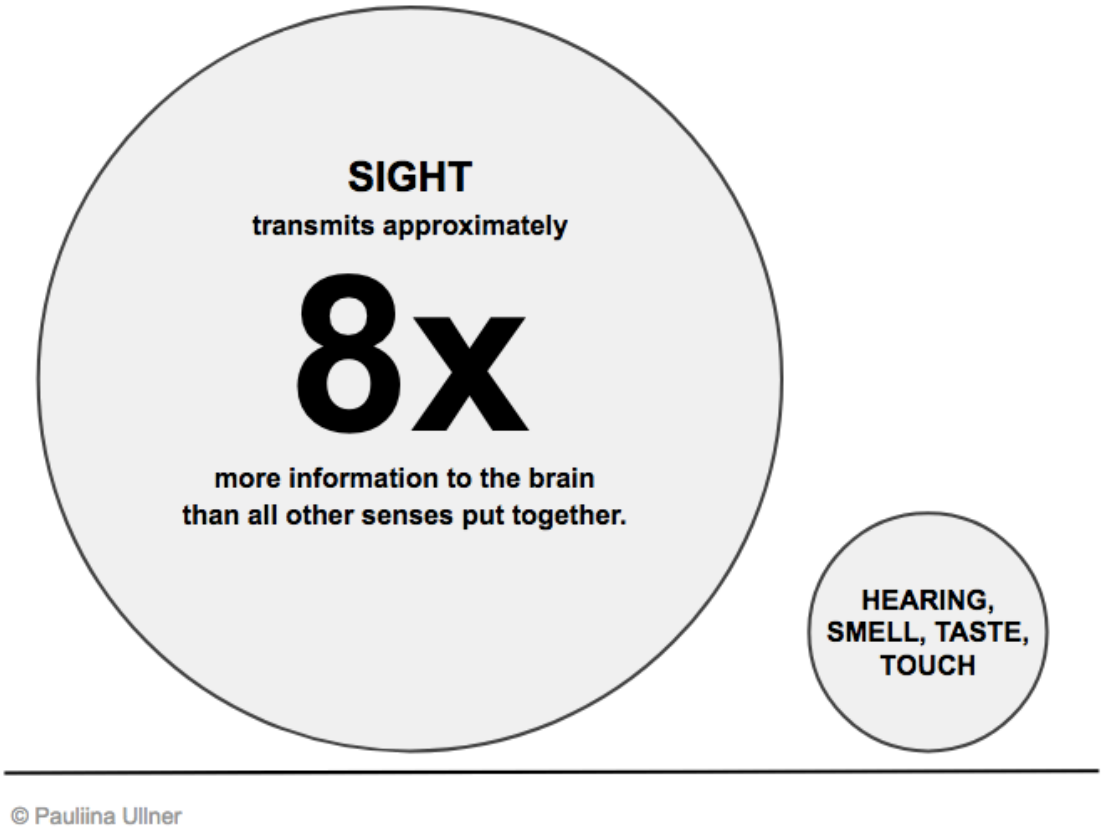

Figure 3. Ratio of information transmission through sight compared to other senses.

In our bodies, roughly 70% of all the sense receptors are dedicated to vision (Few 2004, 92). In our brains, over 25% of the cells in our cerebral cortex are dedicated to processing the signals received through the eyes (Koponen et al. 2016, 17). The cerebral cortex of a human is larger than all other parts of the brain put together, which are dedicated to processing other perceptions (Koponen et al. 2016, 17).

What increases further the importance of vision, is the upsurge of information available to us and the concurrent visual communication happening all around all the time. We are constantly bombarded with visual messages, and, hence, out of everything we sense around us, with all our senses, 90% of it reaches the brain through vision. (Koponen et al. 2016, 11.)

For a visual marketer seeking to grab attention, it is useful to know that faces or things that remind us of faces get our attention (Reynolds 2012, 163). Sometimes we even see faces where there are none, because we recognise a pattern that resembles a face (Reynolds 2012, 163). We also instinctively look at where others are looking (Reynolds 2012, 163). Similarly, our eyes cannot help but follow pointers, things like arrows, asterisks and check marks, and see what it is they point at (Few 2004, 124).

Finally, only a tiny fraction of everything we see, actually reaches our conscious mind, and from that perspective the vision ceases to be insurmountably overpowering compared to all other senses. Nonetheless, vision is the fastest way to absorb new information and the strongest sense we humans have. (Koponen et al. 2016, 17.)

2.2.1 Visuals help learning and increase recollection

Molecular biologist John Medina assures us that multitasking is a myth when it comes to paying attention. We are not able, biologically, to process more than one thing, that requires concentration, at a time. For example, we cannot follow a lecture or a presentation happening in front of us at the same time as a conversation happening next to us. We also cannot follow, or process, speech and written text at the same time. (Gallo 2014, 213.) We can however glance at a picture presented to us by the presenter and not lose focus of what they are saying at the same time (Duarte 2012, 113).

We process visual information in several channels instead of one, which makes processing pictures very different from processing text and sound. It is called multimodal learning and it enables a deeper and more meaningful encoding experience for our brains. (Gallo 2014, 214.) Cognitive sciences doctor Pascale Michelon states that we should transform as much as possible of our verbal information to visual information in order to boost the memory. In addition, we should use very concrete examples instead of more abstract ones as the brain cannot really grasp anything abstract. Especially in sales presentations, we should use concrete examples to help our clients picture a situation in their mind's eye. (Gallo 2014, 226.) “The brain can’t tell the difference between what it actually sees and what it imagines,” as author Carmine Gallo tell us (2014, 226).

It is natural for humans to understand and communicate with images. No matter what age we are, we use pictures, drawn, painted or photographed, as a way to show others our idea or view on something. (Reynolds 2012, 144.) It is against nature, to present anything text-heavy, and it is against nature to try and process it while someone talks at the same time. Images are powerful learning and remembering tools, compared to “witnessing someone read words of a screen”, as Garr Reynolds puts it (2012, 144).

Pictures are remembered better than words, especially if the information is exposed casually and for a limited time, according to picture superiority effect, or PSE for short. The effect applies when at least 30 seconds has passed from the exposure to the information. Common and concrete things in pictures make the greatest effect. (Reynolds 2012, 144.)

In addition, concepts are more likelier remembered if they were presented as pictures, rather than words (Gallo 2014, 213). We remember six times more information when some of the information is passed to us through pictures. According to scientists, three days after receiving information, our recall rate can be 65 percent with pictures, and only 10 percent if we only hear the information. (Gallo 2014, 213.)

Next, we look into visual elements more specifically, from the perspective of what they tell us, i.e. what associations we experience with different visual attributions. Then we answer the question: Why is the connection between visual experiences and remembering such a powerful one?

Some visual elements inform the subconscious mind

Information technology innovator Stephen Few explains the concept of preattentive processing as the early stage of visual perception, which happens extremely fast on an unconscious level and is hardwired to detect a specific set of visual attributes (Few 2004, 98).

Visualisation researcher Colin Ware divides these attributes into four categories: form, color, spatial position, and motion (Few 2004, 98). The latter is a significant attention grabber thanks to evolution making us highly susceptible to anything that moves or suddenly appears in our field of vision (Few 2004, 101).

The visual attributes that can be preattentively processed include line length, and 2-D position, which can be perceived quantitative; line width, size, and intensity, which can be perceived somewhat quantitative; and orientation, shape, curvature, added marks, enclosure, and hue, which mostly are not perceived quantitatively (Few 2004, 115).

To give an example of this, we would perceive a longer line expressing a larger value than a shorter line (Few 2004, 102). Similarly, hue, i.e. colour, can be perceived quantitatively with the help of its saturation and lightness, when for example more saturation means a larger value, and more lightness means a smaller value (Few 2004, 102).

Line width can also be perceived quantitatively in text and tables by boldfaced text, and in graphs through thicker lines. Size can be perceived quantitatively in text and tables through larger tables or larger fonts, and in graphs as through bigger graphs or wider bars, or bigger symbol shapes. 2-D position can be perceived quantitatively in text, tables and graphs through positioning at the top, at the left or in the center. (Few 2004, 123.)

There are limits to the power of preattentive processing. When the amount of elements increases, our ability to preattentively process decreases. In graphs, we can differentiate preattentively approximately eight different hues, about four different orientations, and more or less five different sizes. Other visual attributes should stay below 10 distinct values. However, Few recommends keeping all distinctions, other than hues and shapes, to a maximum of four. (Few 2004, 106.)

Emotional events last longer in our memory

Visuals bring about visceral reactions, they arouse emotion and people make snap judgments about attractiveness, trustworthiness and professionalism among other things (Reynolds 2012, 132). Emotional events are experienced more vividly and remembered better thanks to the amygdala, norepinephrine and the visual cortex.

According to molecular scientist John Medina, an emotionally charged event—or more scientifically emotional competent stimulus, ECS for short—is the “best-processed kind of external stimulus ever measured.” We remember emotionally charged events more accurately and the memories of them last longer than neutral memories. This is due to something that happens in our prefrontal cortex by our amygdala. Our amygdala is full of the neurotransmitter dopamine, which it releases every time the brain detects an emotionally charged event. Dopamine helps information processing and remembering, hence emotionally charged events leave more of a lasting impression on us. (Gallo 2014, 139.)

When we are emotionally aroused, our brains release more norepinephrine, also known as noradrenaline, and stress hormones. Being emotionally aroused deepens the experience of the event itself, which also contributes to the memory of the event lasting longer. (Gallo 2014, 142.) Emotionally important events in turn are encoded in a richer way in our memory compared to more neutral events. This is partly due to the amygdala in the front of the brain noting the ECS’s to the vision, enabling visual cortex in the back of the brain, which then increases its activity and allows for a more vivid experience of the event. (Gallo 2014, 142.)

2.2.2 A visualisation creates understanding

Seeing, thinking and understanding are intertwined activities and hence we often describe understanding with words like insight and enlightenment, and we express understanding by saying “I see” (Few 2004, 92). Aiding understanding is the purpose of visualisations, not producing pictures, as computer scientist Ben Shneiderman reminds us (Koponen et al. 2016, 15). Visualising is therefore a tool, not something to pursue or create only for the sake of itself (Koponen et al. 2016, 18), or for something that can be said in one sentence (Koponen et al. 2016, 31).

Visualisation researcher Colin Ware states that most of our thinking is done in an interaction with methods and tools that aid thinking and information processing done by our brains (Koponen et al. 2016, 15). Robert Kosara, also a visualisation researcher, defines visualisation as something that is based on non-visual data, which, through the visualisation process, becomes a picture which can be recognised and interpreted (Koponen et al. 2016, 23). A picture that mirrors visual perception exactly, such as a photograph, is not a visualisation (Koponen et al. 2016, 23).

Materials that are portrayed visually often reveal things, that would’ve otherwise gone unnoticed, for example in text or in a table (Koponen et al. 2016, 18). A visualisation can be complemented with texts that explain matters further (Koponen et al. 2016, 23). A successful visualisation is clear at what it portrays and helps to understand the material, and provides answers to the audiences or readers questions (Koponen et al. 2016, 30).

An important point to consider before visualising numbers and figures, is what kind of comparison should the audience be able to make on the basis of them. Numbers and figures only mean something when they are put to perspective by comparing them to other numbers and figures. If the audience has to read or listen to certain figures being mentioned, they would need to rely on their memory and mental calculation to be able to compare the figures. In a visualised material this burdensome activity is cast away and numbers can be automatically compared with ease. (Koponen et al. 2016, 25-26.) Another crucial question is what content should be ruled out completely, so that what is truly important can be seen (Koponen et al. 2016, 28), because graphics that describe everything, describes nothing (Koponen et al. 2016, 30).

When communicating quantitative information, one must understand the numbers and be able to display them so that the message they carry can be accurately and efficiently understood by others (Few 2004, 10). Stephen Few asserts, that “the purpose of quantitative

tables and graphs in business is to communicate important information effectively. That's it. Not to entertain, not to indulge in self-expression, not to make numbers interesting through flash-and-dazzle that you would otherwise deem boring" (Few 2004, 10). In addition, Tufte insists, that "If the statistics are boring, then you've got the wrong numbers" (Few 2004, 10).

Graphs work well to describe spatial and geographical relationships, principles, chronologies and numeral information (Koponen et al. 2016, 30). We perceive graphs nearly completely with our visual system and, in a sense, make use of a visual language, that consists of a variety of symbols placed in a two-dimensional space, to communicate patterns and relationships (Few 2004, 12). Seeing patterns and relationships is a hardwired feature of our visual perception (Few 2004, 12). Statistician Edward Tufte recommends using tables when there are less than 20 figures to be displayed, as producing graphics is much more time consuming than text or tables, especially if and when there are not a lot of resources to use for it (Koponen et al. 2016, 31).

Charts, whether its tables, graphs or diagrams, should make it clear to the viewer what the action is that they can take on the basis of the displayed information. For evolutionary reasons, we are always looking at things from the perspective of what we can do with them; in the current context, how to use e.g. tables and graphs to interpret them right and take suitable action. (Few 2004, 97-98.)

In the next two chapters, the theme of associations rising from visual attributions continues, and is taken further to discover our natural tendency to assign meaning to practically everything. Later on, it is discussed, what it really means for visual attributions and design, if we follow one of the main goals of slides, which is to make the main point clear, and highlight what matters most.

Everything says something

Every choice matters in the design of visual communication, from the purpose and connotations to every last little visual detail (Koponen et al. 2016, 12). For example, shapes, colours and differences between objects provide information (Koponen et al. 2016, 11). The word 'contrast' is a noun and a verb, and as a verb it means to compare. We compare all the time, automatically, everything that appears in our field of vision. Our vision can perceive differences in values, not absolute values, based on a comparison between everything we see at a given moment (Few 2004, 104). Any kind of visual contrast makes the contrasting information, the different value of some sort, stand out from the mass of

other things which blend together (Few 2004, 123). Contrast includes but is not limited to colour. According to Few, there are twelve hues, that are distinct enough from each other, that can be used together. These colours are: Red, green, yellow, blue, black, white, pink, cyan, gray, orange, brown, purple. (Few 2004, 108.) Text is easiest to read when it is black on a white background. White text on a black background works pretty well too, but red or blue text on a white background already starts to lose the power of contrast (Few 2004, 105).

Before presenting to an international audience, it is good to figure out what connotations the colours carry, for example in western cultures red is often used in warnings, but in China it signifies good fortune. (Few 2004, 108.) Colours can carry connotations, and colours can affect us psychophysically. Strong colours are exciting and get our attention, and hence work for highlighting something. More neutral colours, such as light versions of the colours found in nature, are soothing and work well for example in tables and graphs for data or elements that are should not stand out too much. Then again, also bold and bright versions of nature's colours can be used to highlight, as well. (Few 2004, 108.)

With larger audiences it starts to be likely that there are people present with some degree of colour blindness. Approximately ten percent of men and one percent of women are not able to distinguish between some colours; for most the trouble is distinguishing between red and green, as both colours seem brown to them. This is due to lacking color receptors, cones, for seeing certain hues. If possible, one should avoid using both colours, red and green, in a graph. If one must use both, they should have different intensity to the hue. (Few 2004, 109.) Jay and Jay recommend keeping red and green far away from each other if the audience includes fifteen to twenty men (Jay & Jay 2004, 75).

We have a natural instinct to assign meaning

The smallest misalignment of elements catches our attention and forces us to assign meaning to that contrast. Alignment is usually vertically and horizontally inspected on all text and objects. (Few 2004, 124.) Misalignment takes our focus away from what matters and puts our energy into deciphering why a text or an element is out of place.

Another important point to remember with positioning text is to position it where it is needed (Few 2004, 127). For example when there is a graph, the legend of the graph needs to be placed as close as possible, so that the viewers eye does not have to travel back and forth. Their short-term memory will not hold the legend in mind, not even for the short moment, when the graph is viewed. (Few 2004, 128.)

The placing of objects, e.g. near or far from each other, informs us of a pattern or structure (Leborg 2006, 18). A composition can include areas that have many objects and areas that have only a few—either area can be visually dominant depending on the execution (Leborg 2006, 66). When objects or areas do not stand out from each other, they are perceived neutral in comparison to each other, as well as the whole composition is seen as neutral (Leborg 2006, 68). By placing text or objects in the upper area, of the slide for example, one can hint towards the sky, or to flying or lightness; consequently, using the lower area, one can hint towards the earth or heaviness (Leborg 2006, 65). One can even create a feeling of movement of some sorts with inherently static visuals by for example placing them in a sequence (Leborg 2006, 39).

The Gestalt School of Psychology is one of the most important scientific studies to have ever contributed to understanding visual perception. Gestalt is a German word, and means pattern. What we see, we try to make sense of by organising it. The study began in 1912 with the goal to understand how humans perceive pattern, form, and organisation in what we see. The result of the study is a set of Gestalt principles of perception, which are still today considered valid in their description of visual behaviour. The principles show, how we group objects according to their visual attributes. (Few 2004, 110.)

Next the researcher brings forth six principles that give examples on just how easily we assign meaning to visual attributes. These principles are relevant to any visual communication case, including presentations. The principles are of proximity, connection, enclosure, continuity, similarity, and closure.

The principle of proximity means that we perceive objects to belong together and form a group if they are in close proximity to each other, and consequently to not belong together if they are far from each other. This is especially true with tables, as we can direct the viewer's eye to scan mainly rows or columns of data by spacing the data to emphasize the groups being formed either in the rows or the columns. (Few 2004, 110.)

The principle of connection signifies, that objects connected, for example, by a line are thought of as a group (Few 2004, 116). Similarly objects, which are enclosed, by, for example, a line or a field of colour, are seen as creating a group in the principle of enclosure (Few 2004, 111). In the principle of continuity, objects that are aligned together or appear to continue from one another are understood as being a group (Few 2004, 116).

Even just being the same shape, colour, size or in a certain orientation, groups objects together in our eyes, in the principle of similarity (Few 2004, 111). Possibly the most interesting, out of the few presented principles, is the principle of closure. This principle points out our dislike for loose ends and the need to see things as a whole, even if a an ambiguous object could be seen as open or incomplete, we choose to see it as closed, whole and in a regular form (Few 2004, 112).

To highlight something, tone down everything else

The main goal of visual communication is to present content to the audience in a way, which highlights the most important things and pieces the story together in easily understandable parts (Few 2004, 117). For the important things to stand out, other elements need to be toned down, because as Few puts it: “When everything stands out, nothing stands out” (Few 2004, 119).

The supporting elements around the most important content can be described as non-data ink. Non-data ink are for example supporting elements such as grid lines or ornamental components that play no role in supporting the data (Few 2004, 119). Ornamental components, also known as decorations, must never compete for attention with the actual content (Koponen et al. 2016, 29). Non-data ink should be noticeable enough to just stand out enough from the background to do its job, but not so that it takes any attention away from the important content, like, for example, a thin line or soft neutral colour such as light grey on a white background (Few 2004, 119).

Our eyes will do everything they can to seek out all the contrasts around, so to tone down the non-data ink even more, one should keep as consistent as possible with all non-data ink, so none of it ends up standing out. If a visual design includes several of the same kind of components, such as tables or graphs, they should always be carried out exactly the same way. A slight change will be detected by the viewer's eye and automatically given meaning to. (Few 2004, 119.)

To make the important content, perhaps data, stand out, one can de-emphasize non-data ink, but also emphasize data ink. There are preattentive attributes that are especially useful for this purpose in tables and graphs. These are line width, orientation, size, enclosure, hue and colour intensity. Thicker lines stand out more than thin lines, and thick lines can also mean boldfaced words and numbers. Slanted, also known as italic, words and numbers stand out more, if the majority of the content is oriented normally, i.e. vertically. Bigger objects, words and numbers stand out more than smaller ones. Enclosed objects,

words and numbers stand out more than non-enclosed ones. Objects, words and numbers, that have a different colour than the norm, stand out. Objects, words and numbers that are bright stand out more than light or pale colours. (Few 2004, 120.)

Salesforce studied colour themes using charts with a light colour background theme and a dark colour background theme. Respondents had better first impressions and preferred light background colour scheme. They also valued them higher and would've been willing to pay more for those charts, as opposed to the dark themed charts. In another study, Salesforce discovered that while subtle colour variations may be appealing, they are more difficult to distinguish in a chart. A colour palette that appears least aesthetically appealing will be more functional and thus appreciated by the viewer. (Fadden & Geyer 2018.)

2.2.3 Mastering both visual and verbal language brings best results

Images are recalled better on their own compared to text on its own, but the best recollections come from presenting the same information both in text and images, therefore allowing it to be processed in two systems instead of one (figure 4). This statement rests on psychologist Allan Paivio's double-coded theory, which explains that visual information is captured as mental images in the non-verbal system and verbal information in the verbal system as concepts. As a result the recollection is stronger. (Koponen et al. 2016, 19.) "We tend to better remember what has been presented to us in both pictures and words," as Stephen Few concurs (2004, 126).

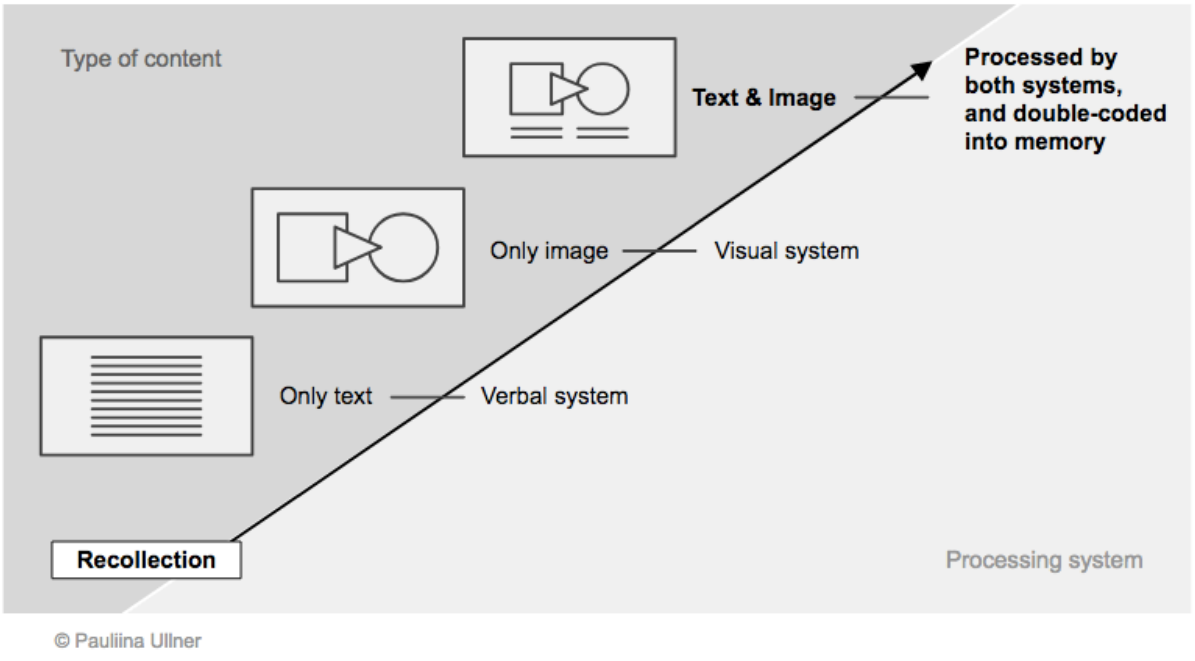

Figure 4. Comparing usage of different content types from perspective of recollection.

Psychology professor Dr. Richard Mayer has also discovered, with the help of his students, that those, who had seen text, pictures, animation and video, always remembered the information much more accurately, than the students who had only heard or read the information, once more enforcing the argument for allowing the brain to build both a mental and verbal model. (Gallo 2014, 205.) Educational psychologist, John Sweller, who formulated the cognitive load theory in 1980s, points out that it is more difficult to process information if it is simultaneously presented to us both verbally and in written form. People cannot listen and read properly at the same time, hence a presenter should not display a lot of text. Visual information, such as visualisations of quantitative information can, though, be processed while listening to the presenter speak about it. (Reynolds 2012, 10.)

No matter what a presentation is about—for example pitching a new idea, selling a service, launching a product, explaining new processes or guidelines, teaching students, training employees, or asking investors for money—a multisensory experience will most likely bring the best results. An audience, big or small, is a group of human beings who are not immune to the behaviour driving psychology. No matter how skeptical they may at first seem, they will respond to visual, auditory, and tactile stimulation. (Gallo 2014, 206.)

Things represent themselves to us through our five senses: sight, sound, feeling/touch, smell and taste. The channel, which we most notice when gathering, and processing information, can be called our foremost representational system. The foremost system may vary depending on the context, hence author Andrew Bradbury suggests us to refer to e.g. visual or auditory modes rather than dividing people into “visual people” or “auditory people”. Bradbury adds that it is not ruled out that some could even use two systems more or less simultaneously. (Bradbury 2010, 22.)

Author Carmine Gallo tells about visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. According to Gallo roughly 40 percent of people are visual learners and roughly 20 to 30 percent are auditory learners. For kinesthetic learners, Gallo does not offer a percentage of people, but if 60 to 70 percent of people already are ruled out, as they belong to visual or auditory learners, that leaves 30 to 40 percent who are either kinesthetic or possibly another variety of learners. Nonetheless, with this and other data provided, we can trust that so called visual learners are a dominating group or learners. (Gallo 2010, 147.)

Visual learners learn through seeing and can retain highly visual information. This group will not respond to, connect with or internalise a display full of text. Instead a presentation should have only a few words and a lot of pictures, if one wishes this group to act on the message. Auditory learners learn through listening and benefit from verbal and rhetorical

techniques, as well as from vivid examples and personal stories. Kinesthetic learners learn by doing, moving and touching. To keep them engaged in a presentation, one should include activities such as passing an object around or provide a change to participate in a demonstration. (Gallo 2010, 147.)

Every presentation entails some form of learning, and since a presenter cannot always know how their audience members learn best, they can work towards catering to the three basic learning styles: Show me, tell me, and let me try it myself. People can, generally, effectively remember 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they hear and see, and 70 percent of what they do. (Bradbury 2010, 52-53.)

Bradbury elaborates further by explaining how information recall declines after three hours has passed after a presentation, and after three days has passed. After a purely verbal presentation, the audience will remember roughly 70 percent after three hours, and only 10 percent after three days. After a purely visual presentation, the audience will remember roughly 75 percent after three hours, and only 20 percent three days later. After a presentation utilising both verbal and visual means, the audience will remember about 85 percent after three hours, and a whopping 66 percent after three days. (Bradbury 2010, 89.)

Next, the important matter of associations is continued, but this time from the perspective of the words we use. Then, a perhaps surprising fact, is presented, about which of our systems, visual or verbal, addresses tables and typography. First, however, the fascinating world of rhetorical devices and cognitive poetics, is discussed, and how they have a very real impact in persuasion. And, what is the connection with cognitive ease and a company's stock value?

Rhetorical devices and cognitive poetics ease processing

Audiences tune out phrases they've heard many times before and are immune to overused words, such as 'leading', 'solutions', and 'ecosystem'. Brain scans show us that different parts of the brain are stimulated when people hear a detailed description, a metaphor that evokes memories or feelings, or an emotional discussion between characters. It only takes someone saying 'the smell of lavender' to get the area of the brain involved with smell activated. When telling a story, there are benefits to using rhetorical and linguistic devices, such as metaphors, analogies and vivid language, but one should avoid clichés, jargon and buzzwords. (Gallo 2014, 68.)

Literature professor Joseph Campbell has said, that “if you want to change the world, change the metaphor.” Metaphors are a great way to describe something that is otherwise hard to describe. With metaphors you harness the understanding of an already known concept by using it to elaborate the new, difficult to explain, concept. (Cialdini 2016, 105-106.)

Recent psycholinguistic analysis suggests that the primary purpose of language is to influence, not to express or describe. A communicator can use language that carries mental associations, which supports his or her view, to direct attention to a desired area of reality. (Cialdini 2016, 105-106.)

While a metaphor is quite indirect—a figure of speech that perhaps implies something—an analogy is a more direct comparison between two things, and often uses words such as ‘like’ or ‘as’ to indicate the similarities. To point out an effective parallel saves a lot of explanation and visual aids (Jay & Jay 2004, 44). Analogy shows similarity between two things, and is a good way to put numbers into a context (Gallo 2010, 108). A well-chosen analogy, for example between two ideas or products, is worth sticking to and repeating to help customers remember it (Gallo 2010, 122).

Viewers and audiences are automatically and instantly trying to categorise an idea, a product or a service being explained, and put it in a mental bucket. The presenter needs to create that mental bucket, so that the audience’s brains do not have to work too hard for it. Psychology professor Dr. Gregory Berns tells us that the brain wants to consume as little energy as it can possibly get away with. The brain does not want to work too hard to make sense of what someone is trying to tell it. The brain will take shortcuts to preserve energy and analogies are great shortcuts. (Gallo 2010, 124.)

Another excellent rhetorical device is an anaphora, which means repeating the same word or words in subsequent sentences. As author Carmine Gallo reminds, “think of Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream that . . . I have a dream . . . I have a dream today.” Throughout history and still today powerful speeches use this tool to structure strong arguments. (Gallo 2010, 217.) Whatever the linguistic or rhetorical device, they help audiences to categorise and understand new concepts, by making something intangible and difficult to grasp, tangible, clear and understandable (Gallo 2014, 143).

To further ease the processing of information, linguists and cognitive scientists bring up rhymes, as rhymes are well liked, fluently processed and associated with reason (Pink 2013, 165). Something that can be processed fluently, i.e. fast and easy, we tend to like

and believe to be true. Cognitive poetics researchers have found that rhyme enhances persuasion, which is why “caution and measure win you treasure” is seen as a more valid argument than “caution and measure will win you riches”, as Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing Robert Cialdini states. Cialdini continues to nail down the point by saying “to make it climb, make it rhyme.” (Cialdini 2016, 112.) Pink similarly reminds: “pitches that rhyme are more sublime” (Pink 2013, 166).

Easy to pronounce may not be the same thing as easy to process, but it has had a measurable positive effect on the stock value of companies that have easy-to-pronounce names. Cialdini tells about an analysis of 89 randomly selected companies that joined the New York Stock Exchange between 1990 and 2004, and a comparative analysis on the American Stock Exchange. The results of both analysis concur that companies with easy-to-pronounce three-letter stock ticker codes, such as KAR, outperformed difficult-to-pronounce codes, such as RDO. (Cialdini 2016, 113.) Easy to pronounce and easy to process are linguistic and cognitive aspects to take seriously in business.

It pays to choose words carefully

The brain’s operations are based on raw associations (Cialdini 2016, 99). Language should be seen as a persuasion tool—instead of merely a means for explaining a position—to persuade an audience, using words with association beneficial to our point, of the concept or to at least to act according to it (Cialdini 2016, 100). As writer Joseph Conrad has said: “He who wants to persuade should put his trust not in the right argument, but in the right word” (Cialdini 2016, 102).

Subtle exposure of words with connotations of achievement, such as winning, succeeding and mastering, increase performance on assigned tasks and more than doubles a person's willingness to keep at it (Cialdini 2016, 103). Being exposed in passing to simple words or images can have an impact on later actions, that are only associated with said words or images (Cialdini 2016, 104). Using individual words to stimulate related actions appears to be most successful when being connected to highly valued goals (Cialdini 2016, 353).

On the flip side are the words with negative associations, that can spur exactly the opposite actions that was intended. This is why used-car salespeople do not use the word “used”, which associates with wear and tear. Instead they describe the cars as “pre-owned”, which is associated with possession and ownership. (Cialdini 2016, 109.)

In information technology services, salespeople do not talk about “cost” or “price”, associated with loss of resources, but of “purchase” or “investment”, associated with gain. In air travel we do not arrive to our “final destinations”, but to “destinations”. (Cialdini 2016, 109.)

Nouns should be concrete, verbs should be active, words and sentences should be short and the kind you yourself use in a conversation. Technical terms should be avoided, if there’s a possibility that not all in the audience knows all the terms. Also jargon and buzzwords should be avoided, as not everyone uses exactly the same jargon, therefore the presenter may lose the audience's attention by confusing them. (Jay & Jay 2004, 40.) Each unnecessary word will only go to waste as the mind has limits to what it can process (Reynolds 2012, 250).

There is a list of 65 words that are referred to as the semantic primes and belong to the Natural Semantic Metalanguage approach, or NSM for short. It was originated by linguist Anna Wierzbicka for cross-cultural and cross-linguistic semantics, and is considered the most comprehensive and practical approach. NSM has been applied to over 30 languages around the world. (Griffith University.)

The NSM is founded on the understanding and evidence that there is a small core group of words that have universal meanings and can be expressed in all languages. They are useful when explaining complex and culture-specific words, communicating values or attitudes, for example. NSM enables to create text that is clear, precise, cross-translatable, non-Anglocentric, and understandable to all. (Griffith University.)

The idea of NSM is that we make an effort to describe complex things in more understandable and simple terms, using simpler words (Griffith University 2014). The 65 semantic primes are useful for anyone who wishes to speak and write in a way that ensures the delivery of the message (Torkki & Vanhatalo 2014).

Headlines and titles should tell at a glance what e.g. the chapter or presentation or document contains (Few 2004, 128). In order to be memorable, they should be short, possibly provocative, and definitely repeatable phrases that could be and likely are tweeted or posted elsewhere in social media, and possibly repeated by the media (Gallo 2014, 153). Words used should be concrete, because audiences do not have the luxury of stopping and making sense of a sentence (Jay & Jay 2004, 39). As Jay & Jay put it, “the concrete noun is a precision tool, the abstract noun a blunt instrument” (Jay & Jay 2004, 40).

Verbal system processes tables and visual system typography

Just like text, we process tables of information mainly with our verbal system. We process the contents of the table moving, a row at a time, or from up to down a column at a time, we compare data one pair at a time. Graphs, on the other hand, we process mainly with our visual system, which requires more bandwidth as we take in multiple simultaneous input of data and process a lot of quantitative data at once. Regardless, one cannot say that graphs are better than tables, or vice versa, but that each has a time and place to be used. (Few 2004, 12.)

If tables and graphs are used, they should exhibit certain attributes and adhere to design standards. They should be used for a real need, strive for effective communication, be easy to learn and save time. They should demonstrate most effective design practices, evolve freely when new information is gained, and never restrain creativity when that creativity can actually improve communication. (Few 2004, 238.)

How we process tables is the same as how we process a newspaper with columns, we start from up left and move a column at a time scanning a column from top to bottom at a time, and then move on to the next column on the right (Few 2004, 125). This method works best with textual content, but also to some extent with graphs, or other non-text objects (Few 2004, 125).

In tables and graphs, the role of text is to complement or enhance them, by labeling, introducing, explaining, reinforcing, highlighting, sequencing, recommending and inquiring (Few 2004, 125). It should be noted that recommendations for action work best with words (Few 2004, 127).

The eye understands the outlines of words in a text, and hence sees them as sort of images (Loiri 2004, 30). The eye can distinct words or parts of them as wholes, instead of something that is put together by letters (Loiri 2004, 30). The distinction of lower case letters occurs mainly on the basis of the top of the characters (Loiri 2004, 31).

This is why typography is important. Typography has everything to do with the readability and legability of a text. Readability refers to how easy it is to understand the text, and legability refers to the clarity of the typesetting or composition of the text (Loiri 2004, 31). In fact, typography includes not only choosing of the font, but also designing how the text is laid out, and what surrounds it, for example pictures (Loiri 2004, 9).

If there is a lot of text, the readability and legability of it should be the main driver in choosing a font, also known as typeface. With long texts it is often recommended to use so called roman typefaces, which have serifs that give the letters a bit of distance from each other thus making the text breath more, and helping the eye see the word images. More modern grotesque typefaces achieve almost the same levels of readability and legability. (Loiri 2004, 108-109.)

Screens bring their own challenge to defining typography and often very simplified sans serifs top traditional typefaces. When digital materials are printed on paper, the typography needs to work in both environments, with possibly some compromises. Aesthetics and readability do not always come in the same package. (Loiri 2004, 113.)

When choosing a font, one should also decide lengths of lines, number of columns, spacing between them and other marginals around. In addition the amount of characters on a line is defined, the minimum of which is usually considered 28-32, as a newspaper may have. Ideally a short column would accommodate 33-36 characters, a longer one 60-64 characters, and a novel 78-85 characters per line. (Loiri 2004, 71-73.)

Sometimes perfecting a column of text requires manual work, by working on the text line by line hyphenating it or moving words one line down (Loiri 2004, 86). Distinguishing between words becomes more difficult when the words are hyphenated (Loiri 2004, 31). Sometimes hyphenation is needed and there are certain best practices to keep in mind when doing so. Firstly, headlines and subheadlines should never be hyphenated (Loiri 2004, 89). Secondly, when hyphenating, one should avoid having over four lines under each other each ending in a hyphenated word, and that after a few hyphenated lines, there should be a few lines ending with intact words (Loiri 2004, 82). It is even better not to have two consecutive lines, which end in a hyphenation (Loiri 2004, 87).

It is best to keep lines of text more or less the same length and avoid having the lines create a clear pattern, such as when several lines after another would be longer or shorter than the average line. Letting one line somewhere in the middle of the text be significantly shorter than the rest, may act as a powerful accent—but it should not be the last line. Having some lines reach out clearly from an otherwise stable column, is never a good idea. Thinking of the rhythm of the narration, helps finding the natural places for pauses, and cutting the lines accordingly. (Loiri 2004, 87.) Also, special attention must be paid to how the last line settles with the words it contains, as for example too large spaces between the words would be noticed easier, than in the middle of a text (Loiri 2004, 82).

2.3 Limits set creativity free

Chapter 2.2 discussed some important points for visual communication and for persuasion overall through both our verbal and visual systems. The perspective of which was mainly biological and psychological point of view. This chapter looks at more important factors of good presentations and persuasion. The perspective is still that of psychologists, but it also shifts more towards a designers and a persuader's point of view.

Chapter 2.3.1, discusses the creative process, and how restrictions actually liberate us. It is stated, that being clear with our message is more important than being comprehensive; also, how striving to keep a message brief will help find the point; and how the points should be expressed in a conversational manner to grab our audiences' attention.

Chapter 2.3.2 starts with the realisation, that although empathy is a highly important skill to have, in persuasion perspective taking is more beneficial. The chapter also presents how we can persuade others already before our actual presentation. In addition, the chapter digs a little deeper in the ways of getting and keeping our audiences attention. Then, authentic storytelling is discussed, and selling fulfillment and potential, instead of a products or services, is encouraged.

Chapter 2.3.3, discusses how presentations actually have more in common with cinema, than with documents. It is concluded that design, in fact, is a tool for persuasion, and one very important example of that is the significance of typography, which is stated to be every bit as important as the message it carries. First, however, the process of presentation making is discussed.

Slides or no slides, creating a presentation is an act of creativity and requires old-fashioned ideation. Designers usually plan on paper, but business people often plan in the presentation software (Reynolds 2012, 48). However, as Nancy Duarte tells us "presentation software was never intended to be a brainstorming or drawing tool." Her recommendation is to ideate on sticky notes, one idea per note written with a marker. If one sticky note is not enough or the marker is too thick to draw the details, then the idea is too complex. One should also not settle for the first few ideas that bubbled up instantly, but wait for the good ones to avoid clichés and come up with something original. (Reynolds 2012, 102.)

The best ideas actually do not come from total freedom, but from having restrictions, which is also why the presentation technique known as Pecha kucha works with it's concept of 'restrictions as liberators' (Reynolds 2012, 38-41). Alan Kay, inventor of the Graphical User interface, has said: "If you have ideas, you can do a lot without machinery. Once you have those ideas, the machinery starts working for you… Most ideas you can do pretty darn well with a stick in the sand" (Reynolds 2012, 49).

We are born creative and still are creative, despite career choices, and can express that creativity in many ways, such as with creating and delivering a presentation. Designing a presentation is a whole-minded activity, that engages both the left and the right parts of the brain. It is not only about compiling facts after facts in a linear manner. (Reynolds 2012, 31-32.) To create a good presentation, one needs to act like a designer and get away from the computer and other people, to achieve clarity and see the big picture (Reynolds 2012, 56). Author Ester Buchholz has said: "Others inspire us, information feeds us, practice improves our performance, but we need quiet time to figure things out, to emerge with new discoveries, to unearth original answers." (Reynolds 2012, 57.)

Nancy Duarte recommends that one spends ninety hours creating an hour-long presentation with thirty slides. Two thirds of the time should be spent researching the topic, interviewing experts, organizing ideas, working with colleagues and drafting the structure. The remaining thirty hours should be used on the slides themselves. (Gallo 2010, 3-4.)

2.3.1 Clarity trumps comprehensiveness

A presentation needs to have a goal. The goal can be a single sentence, which tells what idea or impression one wants to leave the audience with (Jay & Jay 2004, 2-3). The goal does not need to be something like moving others, so that they embrace the presented idea straight away, but to start a conversation by attracting interest in the topic (Pink 2013, 158). If the goal does not include the main message or messages, then one should define those as well, simply and shortly (Reynolds 2012, 45).

A presentation does not always need to include slides, but if it does, expert presenter David S. Rose recommends that one never hand out prints of the slides, especially not before the presentation, as they would only distract the audience. Slides are meant to support the speaker—not to replace them—and therefore should not work on their own at all. (Reynolds 2012, 68.) One can also create a detailed document of the topic to be read later (Reynolds 2012, 70). An effective solution can be to create impactful visuals to support the talk and hand out a document for later reviewing (Reynolds 2012, 71).

An argument has a structure, so does a story, a speech and a presentation. The structures do not differ from each other drastically, and knowing one of the structures can benefit in creating any piece of content. All of the following structures are three or five steps, that guide a presenter to create interest, pose a problem or describe a struggle, suggest a solution, explain benefits of joining a cause and call others to action. Even stories include these steps although they are brought to the audience differently than in a direct classic argument.

One way to structure an argument, is Aristotle's way, which also Steve Jobs followed. It has five steps and starts with delivering a story or statement that arouses interest. It continues to posing a problem or question that needs an answer. In the third step, a solution is offered. In the fourth, the benefits of following the suggested course of action are explained. Finally, the audience is called to action. (Gallo 2010, 13.)

Nancy Duarte explains a story's structure as follows. In the beginning, there is a relatable and likable hero that begins an adventure of some kind. In the middle, the hero faces obstacles that test his or her dedication. In the end, the hero reaches their goal having being transformed by the ordeal. (Duarte 2016, 53.)

Speeches can also be structured in three key steps. Here is how Duarte structures a speech: First, one describes the current state of things, or the world, and what is at stake if no new action is taken. This is called the "what is" stage. Second, one portrays a potential future and thus creates a gap between "what is" and "what could be." Third, the posed imbalance of what is and what could be is resolved, the gap is closed, and the audience is made aware of the benefits they will enjoy by acting to create a better future. (Duarte 2016, 51.)

Jay and Jay state that "all good presentations have the same structure" (Jay & Jay 2004, 8), which is preface, position, problem, possibilities and postscript (Jay & Jay 2004, 11). The end of the presentation can include a summary of key facts, arguments and visuals; a call-to-action, possibly on a detailed level including target dates; and possibly sharing of supporting literature and inviting questions (Jay & Jay 2004, 12). Structuring a presentation would also include planning what multimedia is used, how long sessions are, when to have breaks and possibly having the audience participate in some parts (Jay & Jay 2004, 16-22).

No matter, which of the above described structures one would use, it will always include discussing a problem. The problem may be obvious to the audience or they may be made aware of it in the presentation. Nonetheless, before one can discuss a solution, a problem needs to be established. Scientist John Medina tells us that the brain is wired to see the big picture, and will first and foremost require knowing the meaning of something and be able to categorise the idea or solution (Gallo 2010, 68-69). Gallo (2010, 71) gives us one more simple way to structure an argument, and that is by giving a one-sentence answer to these questions: What do you do? What problem do you solve? How are you different? Why should I care?

Structure goes hand in hand with scope. Both influence each other. One could argue, that to have a clear, easy to follow, structure to something like a presentation, requires a focused, even narrow, scope. Next up is scope, i.e. what should a presentation include and not include.

A presentation is not supposed to be comprehensive. Instead, it should only include the most interesting and important things. Supporting facts, which only some individuals in the audience may be interested in, should be left out, and possibly provided as a handout, for the interested individuals to read on their own, if they so desire. (Jay & Jay 2004, 14.) Creating a detailed document allows one to only focus on the points which matter most to a particular audience in a particular presentation (Reynolds 2012, 68). To truly make a presentation memorable requires defining the one thing, theme, or feeling that the audience is supposed to walk away with (Gallo 2010, 154).

Sticking to only key points in the presentation is good for learning. Adding additional or irrelevant information only prevents learning. When making a point, show connected words and images together to allow for the brain to build two mental representations of it. As discussed earlier, the mental connections are stronger when both verbal and visual models are catered for. Words are best spoken rather than displayed on screen for reading. And too many words only overload the brain. (Gallo 2010, 94-95.) As author and advertising expert Paul Arden reminds us, “people go to a presentation to see you, not to read your words” and “the more strikingly visual your presentation is, the more people will remember it” (Gallo 2010, 103).

A presenter cannot and should not tell everything they know about the topic. At the same time, the audience may not know a lot about the topic. Hence, one may want to drop some pieces of background information elegantly, without insulting the audience’s intelligence, by using expressions such as “broadly speaking, for the most part, in general, with

certain exceptions" (Jay & Jay 2004, 46). The same expressions guard the presenter against over enthusiastic audience members that are looking for excuses to pick holes in any visualisations that are stripped from unnecessary-to-the-main-point facts (Jay & Jay 2004, 75).

As crucial it is to include important things, it is to exclude everything that is secondary for the purposes of the audience (Few 2004, 119). Through this minimalistic approach, a presentation will include only essentials, be clear and direct, and in a certain sense, simple (Reynolds 2012, 115). As Richard Powell has said:

> Do only what is necessary to convey what is essential. Carefully eliminate elements that distract from the essential whole, elements that obstruct and obscure… Clutter, bulk, and erudition confuse perception and stifle comprehension, whereas simplicity allows clear and direct attention. (Reynolds 2012, 42.)

In the next two chapters, it is explained, how forcing ourselves to say something briefly, will actually help us define what we want to say. Then, the reality of how utterly drawn we are to conversations and stories, is presented. In fact, it is almost like we cannot help it at all.

Forcing brevity brings clarity

There are several models for creating a pitch. The models can give a pitch a structure or just a length restriction. Most pitches would benefit from putting restrictions on their length, so that the pitch is stripped of everything unnecessary and the main message remains. The "Pixar pitch" mainly gives a structure to a pitch and by filling in the blanks, one is left with a pretty good start at least. The Pixar pitch goes as follows: "Once upon a time____. Every day,____. One day_____. Because of that,_____. Because of that,_____. Until finally_____" (Pink 2013, 171).

The "Twitter pitch" on the other hand forces the pitch into 140 characters or less. According to Daniel H. Pink, when people have been asked to rate tweets, self-promoting tweets, i.e. sales pitches, got high ratings, if the tweet provided useful information as a part of it. This should not be used as a Twitter marketing strategy, though, as the highest ratings were given to tweets that ask questions from followers or provided novel information or links. (Pink 2013, 168-169.)

The most extreme short pitch, is the one-word pitch. Advertising agency co-founder, Maurice Saatchi, argues that as attention spans nearly disappear the only way to get noticed is to strive for "one-word equity." The objective is to define the most important characteris-

tic that one wants to be associated with and own that word. Companies need to compete of the ownership of that word on a global scale, so that when anyone thinks of the company, they say that word, or when someone says that word, everyone thinks of that company. Critics could say that this approach is too simplistic and dumbs-down the pitch. But experts would understand the fruitfulness of the process of getting to that one word, through discipline and clarity. (Pink 2013, 160-161.) Last but not least Pink lists the question pitch as one to consider:

> By making people work just a little harder, question pitches prompt people to come up with their own reasons for agreeing (or not). And when people summon their own reasons for believing something, they endorse the belief more strongly and become more likely to act on it. (Pink 2013, 163.)

The ideal length of a presentation is eighteen minutes, tells TED curator Chris Anderson: "It is long enough to be serious and short enough to hold people's attention." It forces the speaker to invoke discipline and get clear on the main messages. A longer presentation risks overloading the audience's "cognitive backlog" by pushing too much information and ultimately preventing transmission of ideas. If a presentation has to be longer than eighteen minutes, it should include soft breaks brought by telling of stories, showing videos or doing demonstrations. A video of an eighteen-minute presentation can also easily go viral, as one can easily watch and share it during a coffee break at work. (Gallo 2014, 184.)

Concentrating and critical listening is a draining exercise for the brain. Brain cells require two times more energy than other cells, which is why mental activity consumes a lot of glucose. A long and possibly confusing presentation forces the brain to work hard and is overall physically exhausting to the audience. An eighteen-minute presentation, on the other hand, leaves energy also for contemplating what was presented, share it and act on it. Shorter presentations are also remembered more easily. (Gallo 2014, 185-187.) As Gallo puts it: "Eighteen minutes is thought-provoking. Three hours is mind-numbing" (Gallo 2014, 188).

Author Matthew May explains that creativity fares best under intelligent constraints. The restrictions bring focus and a framework. Creativity is at it's best when it faces limits and encounters obstacles. Going through the process and even if only attempting to compress one's previously long presentation to eighteen minutes, may make the presentation much more impactful. (Gallo 2014, 189.)

Whether it is striving for a short concise pitch or presentation, it is good to remember also the limits set by our memory. We can successfully remember three things, but no more without retention suffering significantly (Gallo 2014, 191).

This is known as “the rule of three.” The rule of three helps at the very least to organise content, for example, instead of listing ten benefits a service brings a company, one would list three, which the client has a change at remembering.

Also, it is said that we forget anything and everything that does not seem vital for our survival (Reynolds 2012, 84). Not many things in business life actually have to do with our immediate survival, as people or as companies, but it is wise to dig deeper into arguments, which reveal at the very least, the indirect impact that a product or service may have.

In their book Made to stick, authors and professors, Dan and Chip Heath, describe good and memorable ideas as “sticky.” According to the Heath brothers, sticky ideas have six principles in common: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotions, and stories. (Reynolds 2012, 78.)

The principle of simplicity aims to define the key point, the core message, and why something matters. It does not mean dumbing down, but truly acknowledging the most important thing, because if everything is important, nothing is important. The principle of unexpectedness inspires us to find something surprising to present, something that will get and sustain interest. A presenter can “make the audience aware of having a gap in their knowledge and then fill that gap with the answers,” as Reynolds says. The principle of concreteness pounds into our heads, how the mind cannot truly comprehend abstractions. One must talk about concrete things using real life examples. Also, natural speech and using proverbs is good. (Reynolds 2012, 79.)

The last three principles are credibility, emotions and stories. The principle of credibility does not only demand us to prove our points with data, but to put it in context, so that our audience can visualise what it means. The principle of emotion reminds us that we are all emotional beings and to move our minds, we must move our hearts. Images work well in evoking a visceral reaction and emotional connection with what is presented to us. Lastly, the principle of stories states that we are natural storytellers, it’s how we communicate. We are interested in stories and we remember stories, and great presentations include stories. (Reynolds 2012, 80-81.)

Conversations and stories draw us in

We pay attention to narratives, especially well-spoken and natural ones, done with a conversational voice. It might be due to our brains not being able to differentiate between actually being in a conversation with someone, and listening to or reading a narrative. A conversation forces us to be engaged because we are active participants of it, and maybe this is why also listening to a narrative engages us. (Reynolds 2012, 93.) The spoken word is unparalleled in touching hearts, as it conveys both information and emotion powerfully (Duarte 2016, 47). Stories are a great way to engage people and satisfy our need for logic, structure and emotion. Not only do we love to get information in a narrative form, we also remember it better when it comes to us in narrative form. This is no surprise, really, since we've shared information visually and aurally much longer than in written form. (Reynolds 2012, 84.)

Stories have always been around to help us understand and remember experiences. They come naturally to us, unlike for example lists and bullet points, which we have a habit of forgetting. The brain tends to remember experiences and stories with strong emotions connected to them. (Reynolds 2012, 87.) Stories give us mental models, which help make sense of the world and describe it. Stories help us orientate where we are, where we came from and where we're going. (Duarte 2016, 54.) Screenwriting coach Robert McKee says that telling a story is the best way to connect an idea with an emotion, as stories share information and stir up emotion and energy effectively (Reynolds 2012, 85). McKee states that the struggles we face in life, the "dark side", are what makes life interesting and deepens our experience of living (Reynolds 2012, 85).

Discussing problems and solutions, the "dark side" and the "light side," are contrasts that we describe through storytelling. Thus contrast is not only applied in graphic design, it is applied in the story itself, and it is important to apply because humans are hardwired to notice differences (Reynolds 2012, 86). And contrasts are by definition differences. When preparing a presentation one should identify in their story, what is the before and what is the after; what is the past, what is the future; what is the now, and what is the then; where is the growth, and where is the decline, and so on. (Reynolds 2012, 86.) According to Reynolds, "Good stories have interesting, clear beginnings; provocative, engaging content in the middle; and a clear conclusion (Reynolds 2012, 84)." He suggests including three elements to a story, which are identifying a problem, identifying the causes of the problem—including examples of conflict around the problem—and showing how and why the problem was solved, and therefore concluding the conflict (Reynolds 2012, 86).

To dive deeper into compelling storytelling, Cialdini explains the ingredients of the most intriguing stories. The best stories begin with a mystery, that pulls the audience or reader into the material (Cialdini 2016, 90-91). We cannot resist because we are naturally drawn to unresolved issues (Cialdini 2016, 91). Hence the six steps Cialdini would suggest taking in storytelling is, posing a mystery, deepening the mystery, approaching what would explain the mystery and giving evidence which rules out other explanations, providing a clue about the correct explanation, solving the mystery and considering its consequences (Cialdini 2016, 92-95).

The researcher would put it in other words as so; encountering a mystery means having a lot of questions. The storyteller may pose the questions in various ways, more or less directly, nonetheless, they are there. As with any conversation, story, or presentation, if we only hear a statement, we can receive it passively, but a question will engage us. If a question is asked, rhetorical or not, we feel compelled to respond out loud or inside our heads. A question makes us process the message more intensively.

It is up for debate if just anyone can be a great storyteller, but perhaps everyone can be a good one. Good stories include whatever any good communication should; clarity of thought, logical structure, vivid examples, understandable language, and humor (Cialdini 2016, 90-91). Humor helps in making messages novel and is something the brain is hardwired to notice (Gallo 2014, 163). In business presentations, humor can be incorporated through anecdotes and curious observations that are in fact short stories designed to make the speaker appeal to the audience by putting a little smile on their faces (Gallo 2014, 167).

Coming up with or crafting stories can be challenging, but making sure we use understandable language, is a bit of an easier task. Jargon and anything else, except understandable everyday language, risk throwing an audience off and losing the whole opportunity one had to move, or even budge, others (Gallo 2010, 117).

Pitches are destroyed with buzzwords and complexity. Audiences are not impressed by fancy words or phrases, such as cutting-edge products or lean and agile solutions. People disengage once they hear the same overused trendy words again and again. Instead one should use words that make people feel good and this way connect the product or service at hand to those words. As Gallo says: “People cannot follow your vision or share your enthusiasm if they get lost in the fog.” (Gallo 2010, 124.)

Whenever Steve Jobs announced new products, he used simple, concrete and emotion evoking words. Simple language is free of jargon and has few syllables. Concrete words and phrases help describe something in a short and tangible way. Emotional expressions can be for example descriptive adjectives. (Gallo 2010, 118.)

Godin explains, that “stories make it easier to understand the world. Stories are the only way we know to spread an idea. Marketers didn’t invent storytelling. They just perfected it.“ (2005, 2). People buy the story, not the facts (Godin 2005, 6), and what they want instead of what they need, whether they are businesses or consumers (Godin 2005, 7). A story needs to reach a key crowd in order to fly. Watering down a story, in order for it to appeal to everyone, is a losing strategy. The core crowd, which a story reaches, needs to feel that the story fits their worldview. After that, the core crowd spreads the story. (Godin 2005, 10.)

Great stories agree with our worldview, and with what we already believe and therefore make us feel smart. We are comforted by great stories, because they bring a feeling of security by confirming that we were right all along. This is why, according to Godin, the best stories actually do not teach us anything new. (Godin 2005, 11.)

People like and embrace their worldview, and do not want to change it (Godin 2005, 48). They make every decision from the standpoint of their worldview (Godin 2005, 53). The storyteller must frame their story to fit that worldview and only then it will be heard (Godin 2005, 60). As an example, euphemisms may seem to be nothing else than political correctness, but they enable getting past people’s biases, thus giving the speaker a shot at telling a story (Godin 2005, 49).

The capability to tell stories about one’s inventions is equal in importance to actually inventing something. These are the two areas in which today’s organisations either win or fall. (Godin 2005, 29.) Successful storytelling makes the inventions, the products or services, better (Godin 2005, 96).

When we’ve succeeded in reaching our core crowd with our story, they become very interested in all of the details of the stories delivery. Everything that amplifies the story, the words, colours, typefaces, images, media, packaging, pricing—to name a few—start to be very important, even more important than the story itself. (Godin 2005, 48.) Copywriting, web design and photography are important, and so is how sales people dress and speak (Godin 2005, 49). A story only works if one is completely dedicated to it (Godin 2005, 16).

Godin calls the best marketers artists, who know to create a want, no matter what they are selling; a product, a service, a religion, a candidate (Godin 2005, 61). They are not afraid of being extremists in their storytelling, because that is what catches the eye or ear of the core crowd to persuade, and afterwards the product or service can be shifted to the middle to reach people who listen to their friends recommendations and not the original storyteller's (Godin 2005, 133).

2.3.2 Perspective tops empathy in persuasion

In the planning phase of a presentation, it is good to try and get inside the audience's minds and build the presentation on the audience's knowledge, attitudes, experience and needs. It is wise to think about, how to use the audience's opinions and prejudices to one's own advantage without directly calling them out. (Jay & Jay 2004, 88.)

Moving others requires understanding their perspective and knowing what or how they think. Taking a perspective is mostly about thinking. Empathy is also important, but in this context overshadowed by the cognitive capacity of perspective-taking. People with power should be warned, though. Having power, even if just a bit of it, decreases the ability to take another person's perspective. According to researchers power makes people stick more sternly to their own point of view, resulting in an incapability to adjust to others' perspective. Having less power makes one more attuned to the surrounding context and enables accurate understanding of others' viewpoint. What may initially seem like a weakness, can be used as a strength; a strength that can move others. (Pink 2013, 69-74.)

The perspectives we take, may change according to our physical surroundings. Robert Cialdini discovered, while working on a book, that where he did his writing had a huge impact on his writing style. He was writing a book for the general audience, and although he knew on some level what kind of writing the general audience would prefer, he could not write appropriately to that target group from just anywhere. Whenever he wrote at his workplace, at the university, his writing took a turn to a more academic style of writing, with its special vocabulary. He discovered that the writing he did at home was much better and more appropriate for the goal, than the writing he did at his workplace. Being in the university environment gave cues of an academic approach and had an influence in how he wrote, whether he liked it, or not. (Cialdini 2016, 117.)

Having the right audience in sight and in mind should also make it easier to get to the bottom of the "Why?" It is already challenging enough for most presenters to summarise their key message and to communicate it to others in plain English, but to then also be able to tell why anyone should care about it, is a whole other thing. Many struggle to tell their au-

dience why it matters. Maybe it is because they themselves are too close to the subject matter, that to them it is so obvious, that they merely forget to communicate it to others. At the same time, it may be the most important thing the audience really just wants to hear. (Reynolds 2012, 64.)

Next, the topic of decision making is discussed; more precisely, how we make decisions on what is important, as well as how to direct attention and where the audience's focus is. After, a perspective on what people really want to buy, is given, whether it is an emotional buy-in, or an actual purchase. It is stated, that there's almost nothing more intriguing than "what could be."

Persuasion starts before conscious processing

We scan our surroundings constantly for changes. We compare everything we encounter to the status quo and automatically evaluate if it's something new or not; and if not, we ignore it. If it is new or different, and we start paying attention to it, we first try to figure out how it came to be, and come up with a rule or theory about it. Then we try to predict what happens next and if we predict correctly, our brain thinks that the surprises are over and now it can relax and ignore things again. The brain will try to keep up its smooth sailing mode by focusing on events it agrees on, and do its best to ignore all contradicting information for as long as it can. (Godin 2005, 62-68.) "We need to see explanations where there are none, because our brains are too restless to live with randomness. In the face of random behaviour, people make up their own lies." (Godin 2005, 66.)

In English we talk about "paying" attention, which implies that giving one's attention to something bears a cost. The cost is losing attention on everything else happening at the same time. Cognitive functioning research shows us that the conscious awareness can only hold one thing at a time. There is always multiple information tracks available, so we consciously select the one we follow at a given moment. Otherwise our brains—meaning we—would be overwhelmed. (Cialdini 2016, 28.)

We try to handle the multiple channels of information by attempting to pay attention to more than one at a time, but this is physically impossible. Robert Cialdini actually calls it an illusion. All we end up doing is rapidly switching our focus from one channel or thing to another and back again. When we focus our attention on one thing, we close the other from our conscious. (Cialdini 2016, 28.)

We pay for focusing on one thing, and we pay for switching focus between things. During the switch, for approximately a half a second, we go through a mental dead spot. It is an attentional blink, during which we cannot register new information consciously. (Cialdini 2016, 29.)

When we are in the company of other people, whether it is a conversation with a friend or a presentation to an audience, and our conversation partner or audience switches off from us to pay attention to something else, it has a toll of its own. It gives us the impression, that the other person or audience finds something else more important at that moment. It gives the same impression to our conversation partner or audience. This is because whatever we choose to pay attention to, does in fact appear to be more important to us at that moment. So, whether we tuned off from the first channel of information consciously or not, our brain will believe the new channel of information is now more important. (Cialdini 2016, 29-30.)

Anything that gets our attention, may make us overestimate its importance. Even objects closer to us seem more important, than when they're farther away, according to research. Research also shows our basic tendency to give more weight to whatever is focal or central to our attention. As Daniel Kahneman has said: "Nothing in life is as important as you think it is *while* you are thinking about it." (Cialdini 2016, 30-33.)

Cialdini writes about another interesting factor of persuasion, the agenda-setting theory. The theory states that the media influences public agendas indirectly, by selecting what issues to cover and how. When the audience, then, ends up giving one topic more attention than another, they are unconsciously ruling it the more important issue at hand. As political scientist Bernard Cohen has written: "The press may not be successful most of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling them what to think about." (Cialdini 2016, 34.)

Sometimes whatever we are focused on actually is the most important thing at that moment. Other species have this same tendency to narrow focus on the most important thing considering the situation, for example to focus their attention on a strange noise in the dark. This detection system is not perfect, though. We can be made to believe that something is important only by getting us to focus our narrowed attention to it. (Cialdini 2016, 35.)

A topic or thing that catches our attention is perceived important. Correspondingly, something that we fail to orientate our attention to, we assume to be relatively unimportant. (Cialdini 2016, 48.) In addition, a topic or thing that catches our attention is perceived causal. They are seen as causes, as reasons for something or sources of something, that answer the question “why?” In this way, something that has our attention has initial weight assigned to it, twice over. (Cialdini 2016, 51.) In practice, the significance of these findings to communicators is that they can have their audience consider certain aspects of a message before they consciously process them (Cialdini 2016, 66).

Studies on online wallpapers and banner ads, have confirmed that something that is presented in the background, which would appear easy to dismiss, does also get attention to the extent of allowing an influence to be had. This is an important discovery for any communications process. (Cialdini 2016, 40.)

Buy attention with a multisensory experience

Our brains tune out boring things (Gallo 2014, 204). Hence a presenter should spot and remove all the boring parts of their presentation, and potentially add those to a supporting document (Jay & Jay 2004, 18). In addition, our brain also seems to follow a timing pattern for tuning out (Gallo 2010, 83). Our brains get bored and audiences stop paying attention after ten minutes, according to cognitive functioning research (Gallo 2010, 83). Boredom can be reduced and attention levels increased by varying the ways to present information, says psychiatrist Bruce Perry. Using metaphors, stories, and techniques from literature and film, build and release dramatic attention, thus keeping us engaged. (Duarte 2016, 54.)

Also, beautiful and captivating images, videos, words, and intriguing props, as well as more than one voices telling the story, engages people. Audiences love multisensory experiences and presentations with multisensory elements, because that is what the brain craves. The audience may not consciously understand that this is the reason they love certain presentations, but they will appreciate experiencing one. (Gallo 2014, 204.)

In a 40-minute presentation, according to psychologists, the audience’s attention is at its highest point in the beginning, and high again for the last five minutes of the presentation. After the start of the presentation, attention drops slowly for the first ten minutes, and then more dramatically, reaching its lowest point after around 30 minutes has passed. After this, the attention rises steeply to focus for the last few minutes, but only if the audience is aware that the end of the presentation is nearing. (Jay & Jay 2004, 19.)

Knowing how attention peaks and drops, a presenter should present their most important points in the beginning and end of a presentation. Also, each section of a presentation should end in an important image and phrase, as they stay a bit longer in the mind. Holding a pause slightly longer at these points can further help recall of the material. The middle of a presentation is the optimal time for providing a multisensory experience, such as a demonstration. (Jay & Jay 2004, 19.) The presenter can benefit greatly from the moment of heightened attention between telling the audience that there will now be a demonstration, and actually starting it (Jay & Jay 2004, 21).

A good way to keep interest and attention high is to have short enough sections (Jay & Jay 2004, 25). Though, too many short sections after one another may prove to be self-defeating and lose the audience's interest (Jay & Jay 2004, 19). This is also why having a shorter presentation, for example 25 to 30 minutes instead of 40, has its own pitfalls (Jay & Jay 2004, 19). Another way to keep audiences alert is to increase the frequency of showing visuals towards the end of the presentation, but this too is not without a potential pitfall, as overdoing it can have a backlash effect on interest (Jay & Jay 2004, 69).

When working on the texture and variety of a presentation, it is important to make sure that the overall message does not suffer in the process. Interest adding elements still need to be relevant for the topic. The presenter must make sure that the audience remembers the most important message after the presentation. (Jay & Jay 2004, 25.)

Duarte suggests delivering a speech when the goal is to provide important persuasive information and call the audience to action. Speeches can be formal addresses to large groups of people, or informal remarks to a small group. A speech can hold an audience's attention, building and releasing tension just like stories do. A persuasive speech moves between what is and what could be, and resolves the tension by presenting a new bliss. (Duarte 2016, 49-50.)

There are a few things that make following a speech or a presentation easier for the audience. One is natural speech. It means that it's best to speak as you would to a couple of friends, keeping the same facial expressions, movement and gestures of the body; volume, vocal pitch, pace and pauses of speech. (Jay & Jay 2004, 48.) Because a spoken presentation is different from a written paper, an inexperienced speaker should first structure their points, then speak them into a recorder, and finally transcribe them (Jay & Jay 2004, 6).

Another thing that helps audiences follow a speech or a presentation is the order in which we present things, starting from how we put together a sentence. Ordinarily, when we speak with people, we present our main thought first, or near the beginning of a sentence or argument (Jay & Jay 2004, 42). Also, the order of words should be so that whatever is being said, can be instantly processed, instead of waiting to the end of a sentence for it to make sense. Otherwise, the audience needs to backtrack the whole point. It is an unnecessary mental effort, and the presenter should at least be aware of asking for such a thing if they decide to do so. (Jay & Jay 2004, 41.) A third way to help audiences is to provide signposts. Signposts are hints about what is coming next. A signpost can summarise in one sentence the last part, and introduce the next (Jay & Jay 2004, 43).

The size of the audience matters from a few perspectives. Firstly, a really large audience has varying levels of pre-existing knowledge of the topic, as well as different experience, level of intelligence and interests, which means, it is not a time for very detailed argumentation, because it may be relevant to only a few. Secondly, a larger audience becomes more homogeneous. Thirdly, a larger crowd reacts more to the presenter than what is being presented. (Jay & Jay 2004, 81-83.)

The last point is connected to a challenge microphones pose us. If a presenter can speak the same way to 500 people with a microphone, as they would to 50 people without one, the presentation may feel flat. Jay & Jay recommend trying to reach the whole audience without a microphone and only use it as an insurance. (Jay & Jay 2004, 84.)

Getting feedback from a larger audience is often possible only through the level of energy in their applause. But for a good presentation given to a small audience, the amount of questions afterwards and the time spent on answering them, tells about the success. (Jay & Jay 2004, 92.)

Tell authentic stories and sell potential

We have a natural psychological response to choose familiar, easily accessible and attractively presented options. On the other hand, we also sometimes deep dive into extensive analysis, before choosing an option, which takes time, energy, and motivation. Sometimes when we feel, that we do not have these resources, it that takes a toll on the process as we end up taking shortcuts in the decision making. At times, this allows us to choose fast and effectively; at other times, the strategy does not fair so well. (Cialdini 2016, 145.)

Author Malcolm Gladwell proves how we often make decisions with almost no data and stick to them in spite of there being contradicting information, that could prove us wrong (Godin 2005, 71). As Godin says: “Humans are able to make extremely sophisticated judgments in a fraction of a second. And once they’ve drawn that conclusion, they resist changing it” (Godin 2005, 76).

This goes back to our evolutionary psychology and our ancestors having to make split-second decisions to survive (Godin 2005, 71). Nowadays, it is more about surviving never-ending choices on almost anything we might look for in life and work. We judge anything, and anyone in a heartbeat, based on how they look, smell, talk, stand or dress (Godin 2005, 72).

Every detail works for or against the story that companies tell about themselves. If a story feels impossible, contradictory or confusing, people panic and ignore it. On the other hand, if a story is compelling and speaks to our fears, need of acceptance or desire for power, or to some other basic want, we might engage with the story. (Godin 2005, 72.)

According to Godin, 99 percent of the time a first impression is actually no impression at all. First impressions are hugely important, but we cannot know, in fact, when they occur. A first contact between a person and a company is unlikely to be the first impression. This is why stories need to be authentic and consistent, because one never knows how and when they are stumbled upon and experienced. (Godin 2005, 73.)

Also, authentic personal interaction is more powerful than facts, and that is why political candidates still need to shake hands with voters (Godin 2005, 75). We make big decisions by looking others in the eye and experiencing them firsthand without filters (Godin 2005, 113).

Additionally, in business the buyers are first and foremost people, who have their own agendas when making purchasing decisions, and do not make decisions based on product superiority (Godin 2005, 82). We care about the buying process; the packaging, peer approval and new product experiences (Godin 2005, 83). We sell and buy stories, not products or services, because stories can be used to fill desires (Godin 2005, 84).

> In order to be believed, you must present enough of a change that the consumer chooses to notice it. But then you have to tell a story, not give a lecture. You have to hint at the facts, not announce them. You cannot prove your way into a sale—you gain a customer when the *customer* proves to herself that you’re a good choice. The process of *discovery* is more powerful than being told the right answer—because of course there is no right answer, and because even if there were, the consumer wouldn’t believe you! (Godin 2005, 89.)

Authentic human-to-human marketing works, and so does a story that is in line with what the product or service does for its clients, and that is how lasting brands and businesses can be built (Godin 2005, 105). An untrue story will only disappoint buyers and decrease credibility (Godin 2005, 110).

Storytellers, whether people or companies, need to come up with something worth noticing and make the story come true. Godin recommends creating a story, which you enjoy telling yourself, because that is what must be done before the story can be shared with others, let alone the Internet. (Godin 2005, 114.) The story has to be your own, because telling a competitor's story won't work (Godin 2005, 123).

The best stories promise to make the buyers wishes come true; the wishes that spring from their worldview. A story may promise a shortcut, social success, safety, money, or belonging, or something else worth pursuing; or promise to avoid the opposites of these—as we know, fear is a great motivator. (Godin 2005, 121.) Once a buyer has bought one story, it will be difficult to persuade them to adopt another story, as that would be the equivalent of having them admit that they were wrong the first time; and people do not like admitting they are wrong (Godin 2005, 124).

Words and images are essential in storytelling, and at times creating an oxymoron from them turns out to be a success. Godin gives as examples of cliché oxymorons; jumbo shrimp and military intelligence. The point of creating oxymorons—putting together two seemingly conflicting things—is creating something unique to address a small group of people to whom both parts are desirable. Unsuccessful oxymorons get ignored. (Godin 2005, 159.)

When a story is used to make a sale, it matters if it addresses the potential clients actual desires. Pink (2013, 40) tells about a high school teacher, Larry Ferlazzo, who discusses irritation and agitation in the process of persuading others to do something. Irritation, according to Ferlazzo, is about challenging others to do something that we want them to do; whereas agitation is about challenging others to do something they want to do. In Ferlazzo's experience irritation might work in the short term, but to move others more fundamentally requires making others full participants of the process. (Pink 2013, 40.)

The story should take into consideration the order of things. What is presented first influences how what follows is perceived (Cialdini 2016, 4). For example, if a person is asked if they see themselves as flexible, as someone who can adjust their position on a matter,

having learned new information on it, the person is likely to agree and see themselves as flexible. The question focuses the person on flexibility, and ensures that the person finds memories of events that confirm the statement inside the question. This is because one typically looks for confirmation rather than disconfirmation, as registering what is present is easier than what is not. (Cialdini 2016, 22.)

This phenomenon is called “positive test strategy” and it can guide behaviour. For example, researchers looking for volunteers to take part in a research, got more volunteers by first asking the people if they consider themselves helpful people. The choices we make are often based on something that we’ve been made to think about. To change another person’s behaviour, one must first change a feature of that person to fit the desired behaviour. (Cialdini 2016, 25.)

Reducing choices can increase sales. Today’s sales people can act as curators of available choices, of the options their clients’ have to choose from. They can present their clients fewer options to begin with, or frame certain options in a way that narrows clients’ focus to help them see those choices clearer. It is beneficial to frame a purchase as an experience because it is likely that the client will be more satisfied in the end and buy again. (Pink 2013, 135-141.)

Material purchases are primarily tangible objects that are kept in possession and which we quickly get used to and possibly lose interest in. Experiential purchases, on the other hand, are intangible things that one lives through and which bring people much more satisfaction than material things. Experiences give us something to talk about and thus help to connect with others and affirm our identity, both of which further increase satisfaction. In addition, people are more fascinated by potential than past accomplishments, as potential is more uncertain. Today’s sales people should thus curate choices, frame purchases as experiences and paint a picture of potential. (Pink 2013, 135-141.)

2.3.3 Think cinema rather than document

Designer Garr Reynolds says that PowerPoint presentations will cease to be slides filled with bullet points and start to be more about giving examples through telling stories, using sound and showing evocative images (Reynolds 2012, 94). With the possibilities that slides and multimedia bring, modern presentations should be more like cinema or comics than written documents (Reynolds 2012, 147). Both are visually oriented forms of storytelling, and where the other has a spoken narrative, the other has text; both of which can be found in presentations (Reynolds 2012, 147).

Reynolds also draws inspiration to presentations from kamishibai, which is a participatory form of visual storytelling, where a live presenter narrates and draws visuals by hand at the same time. From kamishibai, we learn that visuals should be big, clear and easy to see; they should be active instead of merely decoration; graphic elements can use the whole space and bleed outside the edges; details should be minimal; and both narration and creating the visuals can be participatory. (Reynolds 2012, 88.)

When starting to think about visuals for a presentation, it is wise to first consider what is the one thing the audience should remember after the presentation. Once that point is clear, it becomes the one slide that must be included and made as memorable as possible. It should be the most memorable image in the presentation, that also gets repeated, and possible left up when finishing. (Jay & Jay 2004, 71.) A research by MIT researchers finds that images of enclosed spaces with visible faces of people are memorable, whereas aesthetically pleasing peaceful scenes are not, nor are unusual scenes. (Isola, Parikh, Torralba & Oliva 2011.)

Jay & Jay divide visuals into three categories which are explanatory, corroborative and impact. According to the authors, impact visuals are most often forgotten, although they should be the first and last pictures shown. They are the visuals the audience should remember afterwards. (Jay & Jay 2004, 22.) It is important to vet one's visuals and ensure that words haven't replaced visuals. Jay and Jay give their unwavering opinion on the matter: If I could engrave a single sentence on every presenter's heart it would be this: Words are not visuals." It helps if the presenter asks themself, "What does this slide show?", instead of "What does this slide say?" (Jay & Jay 2004, 70.)

What a slide shows, does not necessarily need to be self-explanatory. In fact, it can be more effective if the speaker has to explain it through. After all, slides are not meant to replace the speaker, but to support them. (Jay & Jay 2004, 73.) Many types of content that we face in business-to-business presentations can be effectively presented when splitting them into smaller parts first.

Presenting processes is usually easier for both parties if the parts of it are displayed in a sequenced manner, either on one slide or on multiple slides. Colour coding helps, for example, by lowlighting parts that have been gone through. (Jay & Jay 2004, 78.) If it is challenging to show something using only one slide, the presenter should use multiple slides to build step by step what needs to be shown (Jay & Jay 2004, 73).

Slides are an inexhaustible resource, after all. Furthermore, if a topic is potentially complex or multidimensional, such as an industrial machine, one should not ask, nor explain, how the machine works, but what aspect or feature of it is actually relevant to explain (Jay & Jay 2004, 77).

Whichever the case—a process or something else multifaceted—the presenter should give the subject the slides it needs to be shown understandably, and the time it needs to be explained appropriately. It is also good to signpost along the way, telling the audience what has been covered and what will be covered next. (Jay & Jay 2004, 78.)

Just like parts of a process can be highlighted or lowlighted to help the viewer keep up, sections of the whole presentation can be colour coded. Complete sections of a presentation (Jay & Jay 2004, 74), or slides that begin a section (Reynolds 2012, 100) can have a different background colour from other slides. Being aware of design principles helps keep the presentation understandable and easy on the eyes. If the goal is that an audience would remember something after a presentation and act on it, then text and bullet points on their own is the worst way possible to try and achieve that, as it is highly ineffective (Gallo 2010, 4).

It is always best to consider first, what is the best way to support the message, before deciding to use bullet points (Reynolds 2012, 143). If other ways, such as proper visualisations, are not an option, then bullet points can be acceptable to use in listing things that do not have a natural sequence among them, but if they do then a numbered list is more appropriate (Bradbury 2010, 98). In any case, using three to four bullet points with three to five words on each will beat a screen full of text (Bradbury 2010, 97).

Other guidelines regarding amount of text on slides, include not putting more than what one would put on a t-shirt (figure 5) and to make words as big as possible (Jay & Jay 2004, 73), as well as making sure that the text can be seen from the back of the audience (Jay & Jay 2004, 79). If the presentation includes anything more than keywords or phrases, then the presentation is not ready, but needs editing (Bradbury 2010, 98). Seth Godin recommends:

> First, make slides that reinforce your words, not repeat them. Create slides that demonstrate with emotional proof, that what you're saying is true, not just accurate. No more than six words on a slide. Ever. There is no presentation so complex that this rule needs to be broken." (Reynolds 2012, 20.)

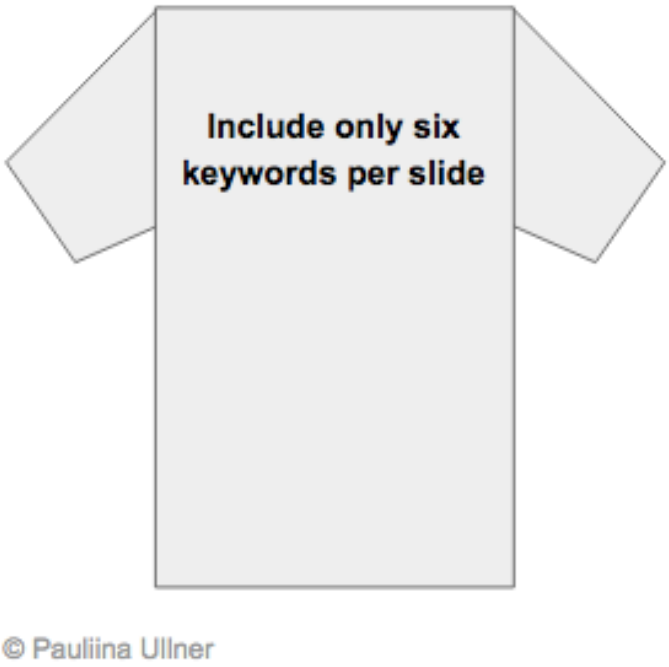

Figure 5. A combination of presentation experts' recommendations for text on a slide.

One more text related guideline is to always display text horizontally. It is how we are taught to read and write, and therefore the only intuitive way. Some pictures and graphs are allowed to be exceptions to the rule. If it is necessary to make a visible connection between an object and an explanatory text, it should be done with clear lines, arrows or colour coding, not by changing the angle of the explanatory text, because that never works. (Jay & Jay 2004, 73-74.)

The last two chapters discuss how design is a force to be reckoned with in persuasion, and typography is raised once more as an important design element of its own. Also, typography is discussed in more detail, i.e. what it includes, and what principles and best practices there are to take note of.

Design is a tool for persuasion

Design is not decoration, but a crucially important way to organise information, so that it becomes clearer, and therefore easier for the audience to internalise and act on. Design is a persuasion tool. But its significance does not stop there; good design must have a positive impact on people's lives. (Reynolds 2012, 132.)

Next, symbols are discussed, as they are examples of design, which we encounter in our everyday lives, perhaps when they guide us at the airport, or indicate to us how to use various machines. Then, about ten different design principles are presented.

Like design, images or stories are not used in presentations for entertainment or decoration, so aren't symbols. Symbols, which can also be images, make meaning tangible. Symbols can be visual, auditory, spatial and physical. They express ideas, values and emotions. For the purpose of presentations, the visual and auditory kind are especially accessible to the presenter. Visual symbols are possibly the most concrete ones and can be portrayed through images and objects. Auditory symbols are conveyed through words, sounds or group expression. (Duarte 2016, 49-58.)

Designer Garr Reynolds lists seven principles that are especially relevant for presentations: signal-to-noise-ratio, picture superiority effect, empty space, contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity.

In the context of presentations, signal-to-noise-ratio, or SNR for short, refers to the ratio between relevant and irrelevant pieces of information or other elements on a slide. The goal is to have the highest possible ratio, i.e. significantly more signal, i.e. relevant elements, than noise, i.e. irrelevant elements. If something can be taken away without hurting the message, then it is likely best to be removed. (Reynolds 2012, 134.) As Reynolds put it: "Slide real estate is limited as it is, so don't clutter it with logos, trademarks, footers, and so on" (Reynolds 2012, 141).

Picture superiority effect, addressed in chapter 2.2.1 Visuals help learning and increase recollection, Reynolds (2012, 144) states, that pictures, especially common and concrete things, are remembered better than words. The phenomenon occurs especially when the information is exposed casually and for a limited time, and a minimum of 30 seconds has passed from the exposure.

Empty space, also known as white or negative space, gives an impression of clarity and a sense of elegance. It can convey quality and importance. Having empty space is hugely important, as it gives power to the elements left on the slide. (Reynolds 2012, 161.)

After eliminating everything that is unnecessary, slides start to have empty space. Everything that does not support the delivery of the main point of the slide, is unnecessary. Equal attention must be placed on both the visual elements on the slide as well as the empty space. As Nancy Duarte says "clutter is a failure in design." Clutter burdens your

audience, where as empty space does not—instead it allows the slides to breath. (Gallo 2010, 97.) The elements and how they are displayed on a slide, guide the audience's gaze. It is important to consider how the viewer's eye is lead through the design (Reynolds 2012, 163). A slide done correctly has a clear starting point and a hierarchy between elements that makes the viewers look at the right things in the right order, from most to least important thing displayed (Reynolds 2012, 166).

Deliberate use of empty space can give an illusion of motion, and asymmetrical design can make a design feel more dynamic. Asymmetricity activates the empty space and makes the design more interesting and informal. Correspondingly, symmetrical design is more static and gives a feeling of formality and stability. Symmetrical balance means that a design is vertically centered and the same on both sides. (Reynolds 2012, 166.)

The "golden mean" or "golden ratio" is something we find in nature and which has been used for centuries by artists and designers in their work. It is believed to naturally draw us in. The "rule of thirds" is derived from the golden mean and helps add balance to a design, making it aesthetically more pleasing and even more beautiful. To get close to the golden mean in a design can be accomplished by drawing four lines on top of an area, e.g. slide, and making nine boxes. The four points where the lines cross each other are also known as "power points", and are good spots to place the main subject of a slide. (Reynolds 2012, 169.)

The last four principles, or as Reynolds calls them "the big four", are contrast, repetition, alignment, proximity. Contrast is something we are constantly looking for. We look for similarities and differences, patterns if you will, whether we are aware of it or not. Anything can be contrasted with anything else. Good design has a clear focal point, something that is obviously the dominant, i.e. the main, thing. Strong contrasts attract interest and help the viewer see and understand easier and faster what a design is about. Weak contrast makes getting the point more difficult, and loses our interest—if it even got our attention in the first place. Art director Paul Rand has said that "without contrast you are dead." (Reynolds 2012, 173-174.)

Repetition means using the same or similar elements more than once in a design. Repetition gives a feeling of unity, consistency, as well as cohesiveness. Also, alignment is related to the feeling of unity, for example when aligning elements on a slide among each other. (Reynolds 2012, 175-177.)

Even a small misalignment of elements, gives the whole slide a less professional and sophisticated feel. Misaligned elements distract the viewer from the matter at hand, where as aligned ones help the viewer understand a message more easily. Proximity refers to the distance between elements, how close or far they are from each other, and the organised look it gives the slide. (Reynolds 2012, 175-177.)

The quality of a design comes from intellectual quality (Tufte 1998, 53). As Edward Tufte has stated: “When principles of design replicate principles of thought, the act of arranging information becomes and act of insight” (Tufte 1998, 9). Information, especially when very data-heavy, is often good to visualise for the audience, in order for them to take it in more efficiently. A graph, for instance, is most powerful when it is the focus of attention (Bradbury 2010, 97). A good rule of thumb is, if viewing and reading the graph takes more than six seconds, then it is not ready yet (Bradbury 2010, 97).

We think a lot about numbers and constantly assess approximate or exact quantities, sizes and scales of things (Tufte 1998, 13). As discussed earlier, numbers on their own do not yet tell us anything. Tufte suggests that the fundamental question of statistical analysis is “Compared with what?” (Tufte 1998, 30). Only then, do we grasp the context and meaning of numbers.

Reasoning about data should direct the course of the visual representation, as seeing and thinking are intimately intertwined (Tufte 1998, 53). When displaying data, it should be ensured that the data is displayed truthfully and accurately with appropriate comparisons and context (Tufte 1998, 70).

Cialdini calls it the contrast principle, which essentially means that we understand something, such as numbers, better when it is compared to something else (Pink 2013, 134). People who cannot grasp in, at least some, context the numbers presented to them, will not be moved by them, regardless of industry (Gallo 2010, 112). A comparison the audience can relate to will make the message more interesting and impactful (Gallo 2010, 112). Tufte gives a good tip on how to test one’s impact: “Sometimes we have a clear empirical test of visual truth-telling: Was a wise decision made and prudent action taken on the basis of the displayed information?” (Tufte 1998, 70).

Most industries have a lot of figures they wish to share; a lot of numerical data that they want to display somehow. All in all, if possible, one should avoid using tables on slides, and rather use visualisations through charts or diagrams (Jay & Jay 2004, 78).

Tables will often either be confusing, by not highlighting what is actually important in the data it shows; or, they can be a tad too interesting and attract the audience to read and explore them, consequently taking their focus off the presenter (Jay & Jay 2004, 78).

On top of the seven principles presented by Reynolds, we add to the list three more from Tufte. The first one is the concept of the smallest effective difference, which calls for all visual differences to be subtle, yet clear. A barely noticeable distinction is not enough, but a notable distinction is. Differentiations need to be clear but not overused. When we do not overdo it, by making a lot of distinctions for the sake of making a distinction, it allows for more information to be displayed. This principle is helpful when designing secondary elements as well as structural elements of a slide, like for example boxes, lines, legends, arrows and highlights. When these supporting elements are dimmed down, primary information and elements shine brighter. Following this idea, one can create a slide with an inactive background, calm secondary elements and noteworthy content. (Tufte 1998, 73-74.)

The second additional principle from Tufte is parallelism, having to do with repetition and change, as well as comparison and surprise. It is about connecting elements, for example images, through their position, orientation, overlap, synchronisation, and similarities in content. Structural compatibility across various images provides a context in which the eye can see and assess variation in data. Parallelism in design can have as its guiding principle “good form is clear but not a spectacle.” (Tufte 1998, 82.) Parallelism enables structural consistency for organising information and elements, as well as learning from them. The structure brings a rhythm and relationships among the elements, which becomes a sort of “poetry of visual information”, as Tufte puts it. (Tufte 1998, 103.)

The third and last principle presented from Tufte in this context is “multiples in space and time.” Multiples are not separate from parallels, on the contrary, they uncover repetition, change, pattern and surprise. Multiples have a multitude of use cases. They offer comparisons and enable statistical thinking. Multiples can bring a sense of dimensions in otherwise flat depictions of paper and screens. They may even portray motion. Multiples allow for visual lists of for example objects, activities, words, helping the viewer to understand, analyze, compare and decide. They strengthen the meaning of images. (Tufte 1998, 105.)

Multiples are helpful in a variety of applications, such as in medicine, finance, engineering, because they enable seeing at a glance what is relevant in a sea of information known as data (Tufte 1998, 110).

Both glancing as well as careful examinations of multiples can provide information (Tufte 1998, 112). The thing to take into account when using multiples, or when doing any kind of design, is how, when and where the information is used (Tufte 1998, 115).

Typography is as important as the message itself

The word typography has its roots in Greek language, where typos means style and graphien means to write (Loiri 2004, 145). Typography is, then, writing, but writing is not typography (Loiri 2004, 29). It is about dressing up words, and just like a person dressing up appropriately for a certain occasion requires knowledge of the etiquette, so does typography (Loiri 2004, 145). A designer of typography needs to know what is the nature of the text and what kind of a situation is it for (Loiri 2004, 145).

Typography refers to graphic appearance. Planning typography includes choosing a font style, designing the typesetting, defining the immediate surrounding of the content, as well as choosing illustrations and the background colour. Well-designed typography is aesthetic and easy to read. It is in itself already a message. Typography implies something about the text it has dressed up. Perhaps it reveals the time the text comes from and the spirit of it. In the right hands it can be as powerful as the message itself and ensures that the message is received. (Loiri 2004, 9.)

Typography is more important than ever because of the overflow of information of today. If one is to have any chance to reach people, they must take care of fine tuning their typography. (Loiri 2004, 145.) Successfully crafted typography grabs the viewers attention and invites to read. When reading is easy and pleasant, the typography is done well. (Loiri 2004, 9.) Thus, every typographic choice has a direct impact on how the information transmits (Loiri 2004, 35). Typography can, in a very subtle way, manifestate associations, which support the narrative (Loiri 2004, 34).

Skillfully crafted typography supports and enforces what is accentuated in the text and defines the level of the narrative (Loiri 2004, 10). Typographical accents are like nuances in speech; they make the message clearer by highlighting certain parts (Loiri 2004, 127). Visually speaking, they can also be effective in creating the style and atmosphere of the text (Loiri 2004, 127). They also carry a benefit for easier visual structuring of a text (Loiri 2004, 127).

With certain choices, typography can make a text imply lightness of being or a lightness of attitude, or conversely bring an oppressive feeling with a cramped design, or it can have a classic or a modern feel to it (Loiri 2004, 34). It all comes down to choices that are made in the planning phase. Typographer Erik Spiekermann teaches that if one wants their font to fly, it must have a ready purpose for it (Loiri 2004, 27-28). One must always evaluate carefully what is the relationship of the content and the typography, and what is the context (Loiri 2004, 29). For example, is the content and context an instruction, an announcement, an advertisement, a novel, a brochure or something else (Loiri 2004, 29).

Writing becomes typography in the process of defining columns, headlines, leading paragraphs; in choosing fonts, font sizes, bolding or other accentuations. Sometimes even the positioning of images, as well as formatting of them, are seen as a part of the typographic planning. (Loiri 2004, 29.)

Information design applies a hierarchy and so does typography. It asks, what is most important, what comes second, and so on. In typography we can highlight certain parts of text through, for example, italics, bolding or capitals. There are also other ways to influence the order in which a text is read. Typographical hierarchy is especially important in cases where a viewer has perhaps a whole poster full of information to process, with many short text sections and their headlines. This also applies to lecture slides, as the audience needs to simultaneously follow the speaker as well as view the material shown to them. Hierarchy should also be taken into consideration with headlines and how many levels of them there are. The general rule is to keep the hierarchy as limited as possible, because a viewer can only manage three, maximum four, levels of headlines. (Loiri 2004, 76-78.)

Principles of contrast apply in design in general, and, hence, also in typography. Here contrast is discussed through size, strength, surfaces, colours, shapes and between used and empty space. Possibly the most common way to evoke contrast is through size differences, whether it is placing a large and a small image next to each other for a strong effect, or using large and small text side by side. (Loiri 2004, 98-99.)

Contrast through strength comes from using thin and bolded letters. This contrast is based on the impression of the degree of grey colour against a white background. The darker a text is, the more it needs empty space around it. Contrast occurs also among different kind of surfaces, and between used surface and empty space. The empty space should be planned and therefore active, which puts it in an interaction with the typographical content and becomes an essential part of it. (Loiri 2004, 98-100.)

Colour is another widely used way to bring about contrast. It can be created between a light background, grey text and colour (Loiri 2004, 99). Another way is placing a vibrantly colourful image in a black and white surrounding (Loiri 2004, 99). Colour brings up points that one needs to take into consideration for the sake of readability. Text placed on a dark or colored, perhaps a multicolored, element or background, becomes harder to read (Loiri 2004, 115). It is always easiest to read dark text from a light background (Loiri 2004, 115). If some text is to be placed on top of a multicolored background, it should be white, as it is much easier to read than dark text (Loiri 2004, 115). But again, it will lose in readability to dark text on a light, clean, background (Loiri 2004, 115).

Typographic contrast in shape refers to contrast between antique and grotesque fonts, normal vertically standing letters versus italics side by side or on the same page or display (Loiri 2004, 99). Choosing a font for a company is apart of defining the company's identity (Loiri 2004, 112). Antique fonts are often seen as having more personality whereas grotesques seem more one-sided (Loiri 2004, 109). Grotesques may appear stiff and everyday, and possibly for that reason work well in scientific publications (Loiri 2004, 109). The sans serif form of grotesques, which means not having small strokes at the end of the letters' larger strokes, may give the text a credible feel (Loiri 2004, 109).

The appearance of a grotesque font makes it feel mathematically readable (Loiri 2004, 110). Also when tightened, it accommodates for a lot of text, and is therefore good for tables of information (Loiri 2004, 110). The development of displays has affected which font type works best. It used to be so that sans serif fonts, fonts without distinctive strokes, were harder to distinguish on a display and made reading more difficult (Tufte 1998, 65). Times have changed and it appears so that grotesques are easier to perceive on a display (Loiri 2004, 110).

For typographical planning, it is also good to know that using upper case letter as a means to accentuate something is not recommended, neither are they good for headlines (Loiri 2004, 78). Using upper case letters is a style decision, not a highlight (Loiri 2004, 78). If upper case letters are used, it is good to know that they can be made to appear more even through slightly sparsing them apart (Loiri 2004, 121). Upper case letters are actually more suitable for sparsing than lower case letters (Loiri 2004, 121). Small capitals, letters with characteristics of upper case letters in the size of lower case letters, are typically best to sparse more than the average copy text (Loiri 2004, 132).

A headline is always a visual and graphical element, that deserves attention from its creator. It is not a bad idea to involve the typographer or graphic designer in the editorial process, to define headlines and influence whether they should be short or long, or on one or two lines. Traditionally a three-line-headline will have its middle line be the longest. A headline with two or three lines, will typically include a definition of the direction. The headline then refers, with its structure, to something on the graphically designed surface. This is especially notable when the whole includes illustration. (Loiri 2004, 118.)

Dividing a headline into several lines should be influenced both by the graphical outlook as well as the content. A two-lined headline should mainly follow the content, so that the message will be perceived with just a glance. Whether the headline is aligned to the left or centered, is a matter of making a decision on desired style. (Loiri 2004, 121.) Headlines can be set with tighter spacing between words and, if needed, between lines. One should also check spacing between letters. If needed, lines starting with an A, T, J, V, W or with a quotation mark can be corrected. Two same length lines should be avoided. Full stop can never end a headline, but a question or exclamation mark can. A headline should never be hyphenated, not even in the case of compound words. (Loiri 2004, 122.)

Hyphenation carries a set of rules as well. In Finnish language, for example, it is best to set the text so that four-letter and longer words get hyphenated. However, hyphenation should not be done, when a hyphenated word would end in a vowel in the first syllable, and start with a vowel in the second syllable; a word has two of the same letters in a syllable; one letter would be stranded alone on a line of text; when there's danger of the meaning of a word changing when split into two lines. Usually the best spot to hyphenate a compound word is between the two words, which on their own carry a meaning. One should anyway manually check all hyphenations, so that the hyphenation did not create an unrelated word that has a meaning, and so that there are not several lines after each other ending in hyphenation. (Loiri 2004, 101-102.)

There are also recommendations and rules regarding characters. For example, one line of text should not exceed 88 to 92 characters (Loiri 2004, 74). It is somewhat influenced by the size, shape and width of a font, but nonetheless, this is a limit that should not be gone over, unless there are only one or two lines of text, like in a caption of an image (Loiri 2004, 74). Also, it must be remembered that although a full stop, exclamation or question mark are placed before a quotation mark in a quotation, that comma is placed after it (Loiri 2004, 133). It should be noted, that different languages use different quotation marks or the same marks but differently (Loiri 2004, 133). There are best practices for image captions as well. A good caption complements the pictures and adds depth. It can give more

information or tell an additional story. The caption can help the viewer make observations about the image and notice something they may not have noticed otherwise. If the copy text is antique, then the caption could be grotesque. The size or width of the font can be smaller or larger that the copy's, but it should have the same spacing between lines. (Loiri 2004, 126.)

2.4 Summary of the literature review

The first theory chapter, 2.1, announced that poorly constructed presentations are a widespread problem in business life. It discussed the problems around presentations, what are the reasons for the problems existing, and what is the implication for persuasion. After looking at the problems, attention was turned to what presentations should aim at, and what can be the benefit of an overall design-oriented approach in business. The sources of the chapter included author and speaker Carmine Gallo, presentation experts Garr Reynolds, and Ros and Anthony Jay, information technology innovator Stephen Few, statistician Edward Tufte, authors Andrew Bradbury, and Daniel H. Pink, Wired journalist Margaret Rhodes, venture capitalists Joseph Flaherty, and Bill Gurley, and Design Council, Design Management Institute, and Presentation Guild.

The second theory chapter, 2.2, took a step back from business life and explored human senses, processing of information, learning and recollection from a biological and psychological perspective. It was important to go through this information in order to understand better, why currently mostly text-driven presentations should be visually driven instead. The chapter ended in the realisation that the best recollection comes from combining text with images. Sources in the chapter included again previously mentioned Gallo, Few, Reynolds, Bradbury, Jay and Jay, and Pink, as well as presentation expert Nancy Duarte, persuasion expert Robert Cialdini, information designers Koponen, Hildén and Vapaasalo, author Juhana Torkki and filologist Ulla Vanhatalo, graphic designer Pekka Loiri, author Christian Leborg, Salesforce directors Steve Fadden and Mark Geyer, and Griffith University.

The third theory chapter, 2.3, built on top of the previous two, by discussing the creative process, presenting more aspects of persuasion and opening up some design principles. At times, a subject, such as learning, recollection, associations or typography, was discussed in more than one subchapter. This is because the subject is relevant from many perspectives. The sources in the last theory chapter included the already mentioned Reynolds, Gallo, Jay and Jay, Pink, Duarte, Few, Cialdini, Bradbury, Tufte, Loiri, as well as marketing expert Seth Godin, and researchers Phillip Isola, Devi Parikh, Antonio Torralba and Aude Oliva.

3 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the thesis (figure 6) is constructed around three key themes. The first is from the point of view of what should be the goal of all business presentations; to arouse curiosity, interest and emotion and ultimately sell an idea, product or service, internally in an organisation or externally from one organisation to another.

The second key theme is the scientific perspective stemming from biology and psychology, and studies conducted in the areas. The theory presents findings having to do with processing, learning and recollection of information.

The third key theme involves how to evoke creativity and what design principles there are, that are useful in presentation design. After all, if the goal is to create effective presentations, one must master design principles and tactics, including verbal and visual aspects.

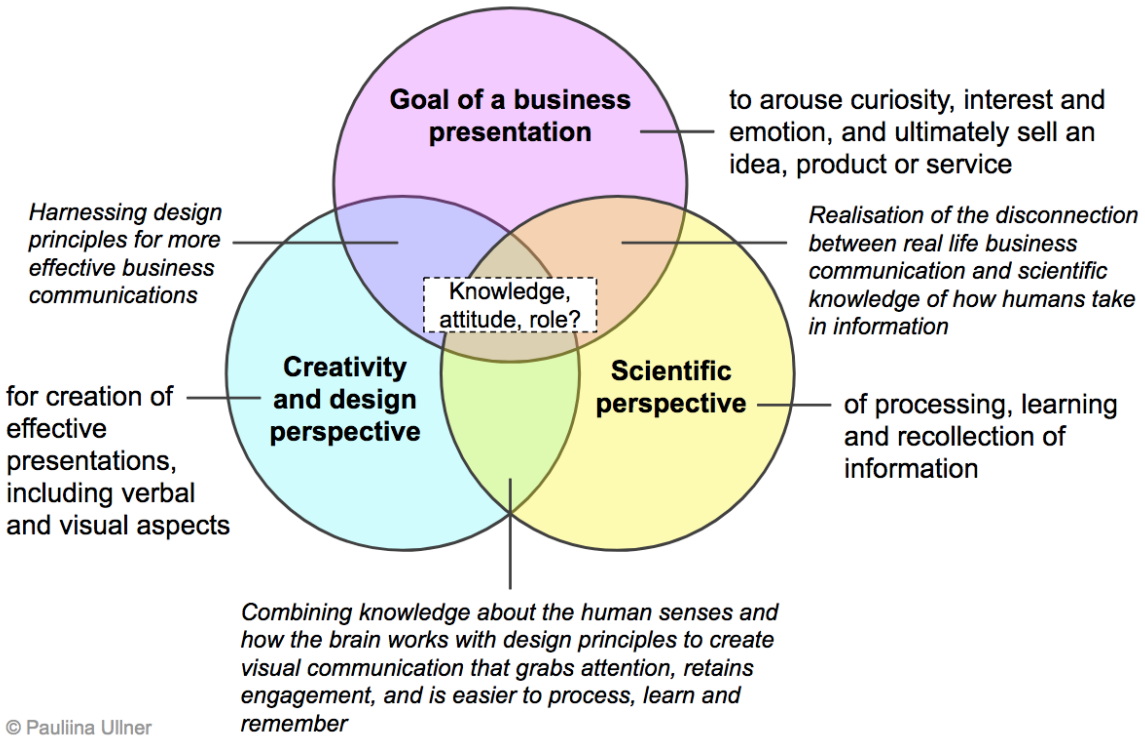

Figure 6. Conceptual framework of the study (source: author).

Where the first and second key themes overlap, resides the realisation of just how disconnected the real life business communication often is from scientific knowledge of how humans take in information. Where the second and third key themes overlap, is the practical design principles that lean on scientific knowledge.

Furthermore, where the third and first key themes overlap, is where the opportunity lies for businesses; knowing and using design principles leads to more effective communication, instead of the sub-par presentations that many see even on a daily basis.

In the middle, the three themes meet, and thus the basis of the thesis is founded. From the core of the conceptual framework, rises the question; if we, as business professionals, have a goal for our presentations, that they lead to some kind of action by the audience, such as buying our idea and our services; and if we have all of this scientifically proven knowledge about how to get audiences attention, how audiences learn and recall best; and if we are aware of best design principles; why don't our presentations reflect that?

This in turn raises questions, such as, what is the general level of knowledge regarding design principles and presentation design; if people know, don't they care; and, do some professionals know and care more than others? These questions ultimately led to the research question "Is there a relationship between level of knowledge, attitude and business role, when it comes to presentations?"

4 Researching knowledge, attitudes and business roles

This research focused on learning about the level of presentation design knowledge in the researcher's network and as a secondary goal, or as a side discovery, learn about the attitudes towards presentations, and, if there was a relationship between the two.

In addition, the researcher wanted to explore if the two impact each other to a greater or lesser degree with different business roles. For example, do people who have appreciation and belief in the significance of presentations also have more knowledge about best presentation practices, and are these people typically in a certain business role, e.g. sales, marketing or communications, or in a certain level of influence from a organisational hierarchy perspective. Hence, the research question was “Is there a relationship between level of knowledge, attitude and business role, when it comes to presentations?”

Sub-questions include,

- What is the level of knowledge in general among the respondents?
- Is there a relationship between level of knowledge and an attitude towards presentations?
- Are there notable differences in the level of knowledge between groups of professionals, divided by for example role, industry or size of the company they work for?

The researcher has experience in both creating and presenting, as well as seeing a lot of presentations from others, and could suggest that many, if not most, business presentations are subpar. In fact, it is a widely accepted fact among business people, that most presentations are bad, both content-wise and visually. They are bad for the audience and bad for the presenter. Often, presentations do not accomplish what they are supposed to accomplish. They are supposed to support the speaker in informing or inspiring an audience, and as a result influence the audience somehow. They are supposed to help the audience understand the speaker's message easily, without confusion about the topic or desired actions.

It is easy to understand that most business people have more to do in their daily work than they have time for. Corners get cut and something that is perceived less important, like presentations, as opposed to more concrete actions, such as closing a sales deal, get bumped to second place. Presentations are probably among the last things an employee can use their time on, if pushed to choose between other important and possibly urgent tasks. Creating an impressive presentation to influence others may be seen as important, but is hardly ever an urgent task.

Furthermore, the success of a presentation is hard to define, but a call to a prospective client that ends in a deal, is more concrete and even measurable. Who's to say that a well done presentation could not convince more than one potential client at a time? Results of presentations as well as how to do them efficiently and make them effective, is a question mark for many. Yet, every company has an endless amount of presentations for various situations, audiences and purposes. And almost all employees have to create them for one purpose or another.

There are many aspects, which one could research in regard to presentations. This research covers studying attitudes, possibly shining through from opinions, and the level of theoretical or practical knowledge, which should become evident when asking almost three dozen questions from a wide range of detailed knowledge only someone who has studied the matter, in one way or another, would know.

Time may be one of the biggest challenges and reasons for most to piece together their presentations haphazardly, but one may beg to differ, that it's the lack of knowledge that really stands in the way of creating a good presentation. Even with a time constraint, an expert can produce something up to par, and stand out from the crowd of subpar creations. A longer-term objective of the research is to be able to direct sales efforts towards roles that value presentations, and therefore could invest in creating them with a professional, as well as direct knowledge sharing to roles that could benefit from it.

4.1 Planning and conducting the research

This chapter explains how the research was planned and conducted; what were the driving forces, ontology, epistemology and axiology, behind the research philosophy; how the study was approached, and with what strategy and time horizon; how data was collected, and, finally, how the data was analysed.

4.1.1 Ontology, epistemology, axiology and philosophy

The assumption is that most people who create or give presentations do not have sufficient knowledge about visual communication and persuasion, to make presentations as effective as they could be. The research objects are the people who took part in the research, by answering the questionnaire and sharing their views, and, thus, shedding light on the level of knowledge they have around the topic. Views by their very nature can be varying, as varying as respondents as individuals are. This makes the overall observable external reality complex and rich with detail and nuances (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016, 137).

The research topic and questions start from the assumption that the participants have personally experienced the knowledge that they have. Some part of it may have also been acquired through studying the subject matter. This observable knowledge can be measured through data, resulting in numerically driven insights allowing careful generalisations. The situations, in which presentations are used, are so numerous, that differing answers to a question may all be true from the perspectives the answers were given from. Nonetheless, the study is more concerned of general best practices and hard scientific data about learning and memory, thus making some views more correct than others.

The researcher needs to accept perceptions and differences of perceptions that may rise from the questionnaire answers, because the idea is also to learn from them and develop the researcher's own craft. The social reality of the research is that there may be as many perceptions and opinions as there are participants. However, some trends in the answers are expected.

The higher, long-term, goal of the thesis is to enable the creation of effective, and therefore successful, presentations; by studying theories and gathering knowledge of industry experts, and by gathering the practical knowledge of the respondents. The thesis focuses on the problem of the widespread phenomenon of subpar business presentations, and on the best practices of presentation design to combat the problem. It aims to solve the problem of why the phenomenon exists by studying and possibly proving, that there, in fact, is a lack of theoretical knowledge, that could bring practical solutions in order to anyone to create successful presentations. (Saunders et al. 2016, 137.)

The research is value-driven. The researcher values sharing, hearing and discussing experiences about presentations, and learning through the process, to become a better presentation designer themselves. The researcher also values expert opinions and learning from multiple fields of scientific study, to build a comprehensive understanding about how visual communication attributes to persuasion. The survey itself does not yet allow discussion—as that is not the purpose of it—but it provides a starting point to many discussions that can take place outside the research afterwards.

The researcher sees that the state of business presentations is out of place and should be corrected by first investigating the root of the problem, and then aim to propose practical solutions to solve the problem (Saunders et al. 2016, 143). The research rose from the researcher's belief (Saunders et al. 2016, 137), that most business professionals lack knowledge of effective visual communication, and the theories and studies referenced in the theory chapters, which then leads to the poor state of many business presentations.

The research philosophy is pragmatism. The research followed a research problem and question, aiming to achieve a practical outcome (Saunders et al. 2016, 137). The outcome consists of an understanding of the level of knowledge the respondents have in the subject matter selected as the scope of the research theory; the attitudes they may have towards presentations; and if some background factors, such as business role, have an impact on the two first mentioned; as well as, a practical solution to combat the acknowledged problem.

Objectivity and subjectivity may be intertwined in the research, as on the other hand the researcher has a subjective view on the researched topic, but also objectively builds the basis of the research on top of proven theories and expert knowledge on the subject matter; and, on the other hand, does not influence the research by being present when respondents answer the web questionnaire, which is described in detail in the following chapters. Also, accurate data, for example from referenced previous research, and perceptions of respondents, as well as the researcher's values, co-exist and influence a practical outcome of the research. Knowledge matters as it enables successful actions, and whether the knowledge comes from the researcher's or respondents' experiences or hard data and proved theories, is secondary to solving a real problem practically. (Saunders et al. 2016, 143.)

4.1.2 Approach, strategy and time horizon

The research approach is deductive. It starts from looking into theories and pre-existing knowledge about the subject matter, and then moves onto a quantitative study with a large sample of answers to a questionnaire. The tentative suspicion was that there is actual lack of knowledge when it comes to presentation design.

The aim was to be able to determine this relationship between lack of knowledge and a possible corresponding lack of appreciation towards presentations, which on their own or as a combined reason would explain the poor state of most professional presentations.

The methodological choice was mono-method quantitative, and the strategy was to do a survey. The survey was shared mainly within the researchers professional network, but efforts were made to reach professionals outside of it as well. The goal was to get an idea of the state of knowledge regarding presentation design, and thoughts and attitudes around the topic. The researcher would then objectively report and analyse answers, and see if any relationships surface from the raw data. The time horizon of the research is cross sectional, and therefore brings only a fleeting analysis of the studied phenomena instead of a longer-term research (Saunders et al. 2016, 200).

4.1.3 Data collection method

The desire was to reach a lot of people to get a broad view of the beliefs around the topic. For this reason, it also made sense to gather responses from both inside and outside Finland, from as many countries that it was possible to get answers from. Same idea applied for the working roles and organisation sizes of respondents. The hope was, that a versatile and large set of answers would enable discovering the earlier mentioned relationships.

This is why the chosen data gathering method was a web questionnaire. Not only was it a very efficient way to gather a large and geographically dispersed set of data, there were many other benefits to it too. The researcher could be very confident that the people that were personally reached out to, were the ones answering the questions. This would also assure that the researchers role as a data gatherer would not contaminate respondents' answers, as they answer in peace without a researcher present. (Saunders et al. 2016, 441.)

The length of the questionnaire may have been more than the equivalent of eight A4-pages, but the fact that the questions were quite simple and closed, made the researcher confident that the questionnaire will not take more than a few minutes to answer. The questionnaire was open for answers for about four weeks. Although, web questionnaires can easily only have a 10 percent response rate, it was the researchers belief that it will be higher. A final and significant upside of the web questionnaire was that it was also free, and data input was automated. (Saunders et al. 2016, 441.)

The intention was that questions would be interpreted in the same way by all respondents, which is what questionnaires in general are suited for (Saunders et al. 2016, 439). In case some questions were misunderstood by only some, the misunderstandings would potentially remain outliers, while truer answers would be found in numbers. If, on the other hand, some questions were misunderstood or hard to understand by many, would it ideally become obvious also through majority answers, for example many answering the closest thing to an "I don't know" answer, which in this case was "Neither agree or disagree." At the very least, this can be called an unsure answer.

The questionnaire was created with Google Form. It was divided into seven sections (appendix 2), out of which the first four were closed rating questions, or more precisely statements, about the subject matter. The subject matter sections were headlined "Statements about presentations", "Statements about persuasion", "Statements about visual design" and "Statements about content design." There were altogether 29 statements;

nine about presentations, eight about persuasion, seven about visual design and five about content design. All statements were directly from the theory covered by the research, and 16 of them were true and 13 false (appendix 1). Mixing true and false statements together helped to ensure that all statements are read before answered to.

Participants were asked to show if, and how much, they agree or disagree with a given statement, by choosing out of five Likert-scale answer options provided; “Strongly agree”, “Agree”, “Neither agree nor disagree”, “Disagree”, and “Strongly disagree”. The idea was to be able to compare answers easily, but also discover variation, and capture nuances of answers, and bring insight to the attitudes and opinions of respondents. It is the researchers belief that rating questions catered to these needs. For example, choosing “Agree” or “Disagree” instead of the polar opposite answer options, may show hesitancy, as opposed to when one has studied the subject matter, one is likely to be more black and white with their answers, and give an affirmative “Strongly agree” or “Strongly disagree.”

The fifth section of the questionnaire, was one open question to allow participants share whatever was one their minds regarding the topic, for example what they find especially important or interesting about presentations, persuasion or visual or content design. Also, the open question may give more insight into the thinking of respondents, and possibly expose attitudes. The text field for the answer was set to “long-answer text” to indicate that longer answers are welcomed. This was the only open question in the substance section of the questionnaire. Later two other open questions are presented, but they are regarding background information of the respondents. Hence, later, when referred to the only open question regarding respondents’ knowledge and attitude, it means the open question explained here.

Last two sections of the questionnaire were for gathering background information. First there was eight questions about the respondents working environment, and then four questions about demographics. Demographic details gathered were highest education, nationality, gender and age, out of which the two last ones were possible to leave undefined.

Questions regarding working environment were mostly provided with answer options, but some also provided the opportunity to write the answer in a free text field. Questions with only answer options were, firstly, to define if the respondent is usually in a role where they are selling something to someone, or if they are more in a buying role; if the respondent has managerial responsibility over other people; what size organisation they work for, and if the company is domestic or international; and finally, who does the presentation’s the

respondent uses in their work. Questions with answer options, as well as a possibility to write your own answer, if the options did not feel sufficient, were; respondent's role in the organisation and the industry of the company. Title was the only question, which was only a free text field.

These questions allow analysis on, for example, are there detectable opinion differences between "buyers" and "sellers"; or general management and marketing or sales; does industry or company size influence something; does highest education have any effect; and do different nationalities have different views, or is one's role more determining?

The web questionnaire was mostly sent as direct private LinkedIn- and Facebook-messages, but also via email, during February 3rd to 7th of 2019. This allowed greater control of who receives and answers the questionnaire (Saunders et al. 2016, 442). Also, the idea was to motivate people to take part in the survey by putting a bit of social pressure on them directly and personally. The survey was personally shared to a total of 603 people: 285 in LinkedIn, 235 in Facebook and 83 via email.

At first it was shared to all business people in the researchers network. At the same time, as the incoming answer were monitored, the researcher quickly saw an overwhelming majority of female respondents, which was natural since the closest network is comprised on mainly women. These responses were more than welcomed, but the researcher also wanted to find balance between the amount of female and male respondents. Hence, the researcher began putting efforts in directing the message to men in the network.

As more and more answers started to roll in, and the need of contacting people lessened at the same time, the researcher started to target messages to certain roles, to make sure that the roles central to the topic were represented. The researcher filtered through LinkedIn-contacts by looking for words like "sales," "marketing," "communications," and "design", as well as the Finnish equivalents. Additionally, the message was targeted similarly to "directors," and "managers."

The questionnaire was also shared on February 7th, to "MarkkinointiKollektiivi", a Facebook page with over 10 000 followers interested in marketing, and to "Tiistai-klubin jäsenet", a closed Facebook-group of currently 99 professional women mostly in the field of sales, marketing and communications. In addition, the survey was published in a LinkedIn post to the researchers network on 8th of February. This post was shared by four people in the network.

Additionally, people were urged to share the questionnaire to other people in their network, with the following: “If you think of someone, who you could share the survey with, it would be great if you share it! You can share it with all influencers and communicators, with sales and marketing people, with bosses and employees—with anyone who has something to do with presentations and persuasion inside and outside an organisation.” Many said they shared or will think about who to share the survey with.

The questionnaire received 301 answers, with a 49,92 percent answer ratio when compared to sent direct messages. It is highly likely that the direct messages brought most of the answers, as they were targeted, and therefore demanded more attention than general announcements and requests in social media. All in all, the questionnaire was open, and answers were gathered between 3rd and 28th of February 2019.

4.1.4 Data analysis techniques

The data received from the statements of the questionnaire was numerical data (Saunders et al. 2016, 500). This data was the main focus of the analysis. Other fields, such as background information of working environment or demographics of respondents, as well as, the one open question after the statements, gave partly quantitative, partly qualitative data.

As stated earlier, 16 of the statements were considered to be true by the researcher, and 13 as false. In order to analyse responses numerically, the data, e.g. an answer “Strongly agree”, was transformed into a numerical value. In statements that were considered true, “Strongly agree” was given the value 5 and “Strongly disagree” was given 1. Correspondingly, all the responses in between were given values as follow: “Agree” 4, “Neither agree nor disagree” 3, “Disagree” 2.

Furthermore, to be able to compare levels of knowledge of respondents, the values of the false statements were conversely assigned values as follow “Strongly agree” 1, “Agree” 2, “Neither agree nor disagree” 3, “Disagree” 4, and “Strongly disagree” 5. Now, the numerical data could be added up and analysed, showing respondents with the highest total sum, i.e. who had a similar view to the researchers on the statements; and the lowest total sum, i.e. who had an opposite view compared to that of the researchers.

The numerical data is more specifically interval data, as one cannot say that a respondent who received the value of 5 in a true statement, i.e. “Strongly agree”, knows five times more than a respondent who received 1, i.e. “Strongly agree” (Saunders et al. 2016, 500).

In two questions, the questionnaire provided a few answer options, but also a possibility to write one's own answer in a free text field, if the respondent felt, that none of the given options were suitable. These questions asked the role of the person and the industry of the company.

In the question regarding role, five answer options were given, which were general management, sales, marketing, communications, and expert, with client or sales responsibility. The options were based on an assumption that the majority of the network, in which the questionnaire was shared in, had broadly speaking more or less these roles. However, results showed an addition of 40 different role inputs from respondents, including one blank answer categorised later as “undisclosed.” Not all were unique, e.g. people in finance roles, may have answered “finance” or “financial”, which turn out as two different values in the raw data. Inputted roles were manually examined and grouped into 15 categories (appendix 4), instead of the original five. New categories include: expert (other), account management, admin & finance, business development, data & analytics, design, human resources, investor, IT & product development, and “undisclosed.”

There was a similar issue with the question and answers regarding the industry of the company. The four answer options given were “Industrial, manufacturing, or similar”, “Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar”, “Ad / Marketing / Digital / Creative / Content agency or similar”, and “B2B-services.” An additional 40 industries were listed, not all of them truly different from one another, including one blank answer. These answers were harmonised into 11 categories (appendix 5), instead of the original 4. New categories include: B2C-services, finance, media, public office & NGO, retail, “other”, and “undisclosed.”

In addition, there were two questions where no answer option was given, but only a free text field. These are separate from the one open question in the substance section of the questionnaire. These questions were about the person’s title and nationality. Titles are so multivariate, that it did not serve any purpose in the research to attempt to quantify them. Rather, they may give interesting additional information and nuances to the results. Nationality on the other hand, is a more fixed factor, and thus could be and was harmonised in the data, but only for three respondents: one “Finnish Russian” was coded in the data as Finnish, one “Russian Finnish” was coded as Russian, and one “Finnish, American, Filipino” was coded as Finnish. One respondent had answered the same questions with “World citizen”, which was then coded as “undisclosed”, as there are no “World passports” either, nor did it enclose any origin, which could be utilised in an analysis regarding possible cultural impact on answers.

There was one respondent who answered only 11 out of 29 questions, leaving 18 questions unanswered. Since they answered only to 38 percent of the questions, the respondent was excluded from the responses that moved onto being analysed. In addition, one response had been recorded twice by the software. This response was noticed due to the email address of the respondent, as it acted as a trustworthy identifier. The answers were identical, which would suggest that this was a glitch in the questionnaire software, instead of a human error of submitting the answers twice. These two eliminations of responses left the research with 299 responses to analyse. All data was coded and analysed in excel, with formulas and pivot-tables. Pivot was an excellent way to look for relationships between scores, which respondents got from the questionnaire, and various background factors gathered at the end of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire received 95 answers to the open question, which was posed after the statements. The question allowed any thoughts to be shared, without asking for any sort of scope. Thus, the answers were very varied and challenging to analyse. After reading all answers, it appeared that they could be divided into three categories. The largest group of answers were regarding the most important things that make a good presentation.

The two other groups were significantly smaller, but each clearly had their own theme. The second group of people wanted to mention the presenter themselves as an equal to the physical or visual presentation, or state that the presenter is actually more important. The third and final group either gave another type of comment, which was difficult to categorise or form its own group around it. The same group also included answers more along the lines of, that the topic is more complex and presentations more situation specific, than what was covered in the research. Hence, the three open answer groups were named: “Ingredients of a good presentation…”, “The presenter is equally, or more, important”, and “‘It’s complicated’ / Other.”

A few answers were also worded through what is wrong with presentations, but these answers were turned to positive statements. For example, if a respondent said “Finns are still creating presentations that are too long and too heavy”, then the same opinion can be said with “good presentations are short and concise.” In this way, these few answers could be added to the largest group of open comments.

These categorisations were not enough to show what aspects respondents shared, and how versatile some of the responses were. Especially, the answers of the largest group, which listed different ingredients of good presentations, did not come through properly

merely via the category. Therefore, all the answers were carefully analysed to find the most important keywords from them, in order to shortly summarise and compare answers. Initially, the plan was to stick to keywords that are used in the theory of the thesis, and, thus, are more in focus with the scope that the research has. But since there were clear trends in the answers, it was more truthful and transparent to include also out-of-scope keywords. For example, presentation skills of the presenter is not covered by the research, but was a clear theme in the open comments. These sort of comments were tagged with keyword “Presenter” and or “Practice”, depending on the larger point made in the individual answer.

To explain further the logic of forming the keywords, it should be said, that if in the responses, getting the audience's attention or making a presentation memorable came up, they were not added as keywords, as those are more or less the goals of any presentation, and not the means, such as presentation skill or slide design. The keywords are more about, what one should focus on, when creating and preparing a presentation, in order to get their audiences attention, sustain engagement, and have the audience remember and act on it after the presentation.

Quite many respondents used the phrase “Less is more” to describe their presentation philosophy. To most of these the set of keywords that was added was “Brevity” and “Clarity”, as less can refer to less text or less slides, which can be seen as being brief, or less detail and complexity, i.e. for example, crystallising a message so that it can be said shortly and clearly. One person mentioned minimalism as a good principle, which also received the same keywords. Other answers, suggested more only brevity, and not so much other interpretations, and thus, brevity was the keyword used.

Some things highlighted by the respondents were unique in the sense that no one else mentioned the same thing, but perhaps one other person mentioned something along the same lines. For example, one person said, that a good presentation is unique and different; and another said, that a good presentation has to be original. To bring these two similar, but not exactly the same, points together in one keyword, the keyword became "Originality." A few responses mentioned keeping to the allocated time, or planning to use the time so that there is time for questions afterwards, and so on. These received the keyword “Time.”

At times, a respondents answer had nuances that suggested that the focus was more on the presenter themselves, or the skills they have, or their energy or attitude. These type of answers received the keyword “Presenter.” In other cases, the answers highlighted more the importance of practicing one’s presentation, and not so much e.g. charisma, and were thus given the keyword “Practice.”

4.2 Presentation of the outcomes

The initial examination of research results left the research with 299 responses to gather insight from and draw conclusions of. In this chapter, first, the responses to the questionnaire are reported as is, more specifically answers to the 29 statements, and one open question; after that the background and demographic information of the respondents is covered; then possible relationships are examined; and, finally, all of the data is summarised. Results are considered and conclusions drawn only in the discussion chapter.

4.2.1 Responses to 29 statements and one open question

Next, it is examined, how responses were divided between five answer options, to show how much the respondent agreed or disagreed with the statement, or if they did neither. Basically if, in the statements that are considered true by the researcher, the responses are mostly agree or strongly agree, then the respondents had a similar view to the matter as the researcher.

Conversely, if, in the statements that are considered false by the researcher, the responses are mostly agree or strongly agree, then the respondents had a differing view to the matter as the researcher. The absolute amounts of responses to each answer option in each statement can be viewed in the appendix 3. Here, mostly percentages are examined, but also numbers of respondents are provided, to give a concrete sense of how small or large the groups of respondents are.

In the first section of the questionnaire, regarding statements about presentations (table 1), the majority of respondents, around 67 to 79 percent, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the first three statements. These statements were seen as false by the researcher, i.e. the majority of the respondents had a very similar view. For the next four statements after that, approximately 64 to 91 percent, agreed or strongly agreed with the statements. These statements included both true and false statements, according to the researcher. For the last two statements, the responses were not as strongly leaned towards one or the other end of the spectrum. These two are considered true by the researcher.

Table 1. Answers to statements about presentations.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 1: Statements about presentations						
1. Audiences have learned to find what is relevant even in bad presentations.	10,74%	**61,41%**	13,09%	14,09%	0,67%	298
2. Including a lot of information and data into your presentation shows that you know the topic.	23,75%	**55,52%**	11,04%	9,03%	0,67%	299
3. The audience can easily switch between listening to the presenter and reading a slide, and get the most important point.	18,06%	**49,50%**	14,05%	16,05%	2,34%	299
4. Presenting slides before discussing something data-heavy with a small group of people is a good practise.	1,00%	6,35%	18,73%	**61,20%**	12,71%	299
5. The purpose of a presentation is to arouse curiosity and emotion.	0,67%	3,01%	19,06%	**54,52%**	22,74%	299
6. The best recollection comes from a combination of words and images.	0,33%	1,67%	7,02%	**51,51%**	39,46%	299
7. A good presentation is a comprehensive portrayal of the topic at hand.	1,68%	15,82%	17,51%	**50,51%**	14,48%	297
8. Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation.	10,03%	**42,47%**	21,07%	22,07%	4,35%	299
9. A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document.	2,34%	20,74%	24,41%	**44,82%**	7,69%	299

The eighth and ninth statements of the first section divided respondents more evenly among all answering options, compared to the first seven statements. In the eight statement, “Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation”, over half, exactly 52,51 percent, i.e. 157, of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (figure 7). In this section, it was the statement with the second most “Neither agree nor disagree” answers, 21,07 percent, i.e. 63 people.

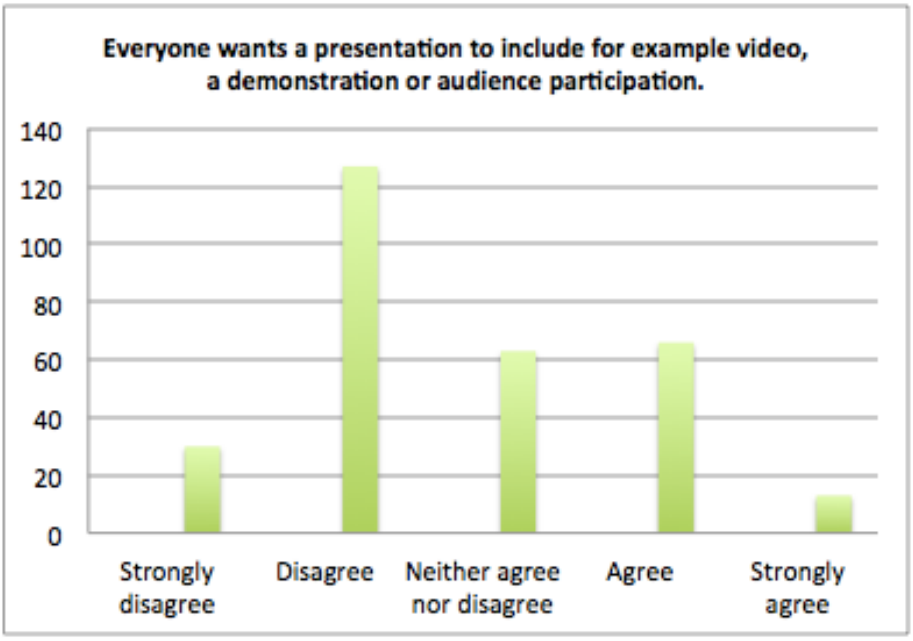

Figure 7. Answers to “Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation.”

In the ninth statement, “A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document”, just over half of the respondents, again exactly 52,51 percent, agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (figure 8). At the same time, this statement had the largest group of “Neither agree nor disagree” answers, almost a fourth of all respondents, exactly 24,41 percent, i.e. 73 people.

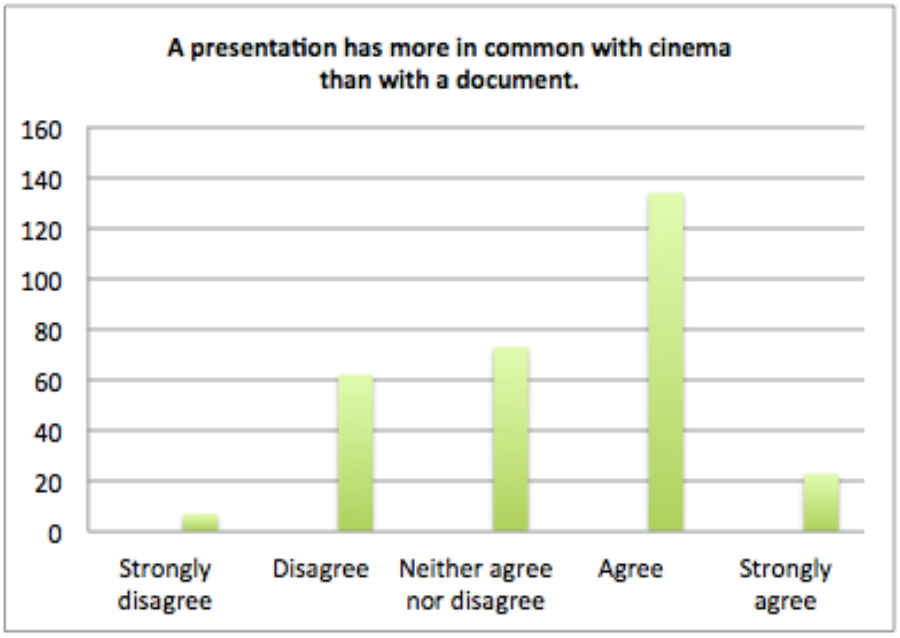

Figure 8. Answers to “A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document.”

In the second questionnaire section, statements about persuasion (table 2), the majority of respondents had similar views to the researcher's in the first four and in the last statement. In the first statement around 65 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The statement is considered false by the researcher. In statements number two to four, and in number eight, from around 74 to 97 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. These statements are all considered true by the researcher. The fifth to the seventh statements have more differing and diverse views, including statement, which are considered either true or false by the researcher.

Table 2. Answers to statements about persuasion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 2: Statements about persuasion						
1. I can have an impact on others without arousing emotion.	12,37%	**52,84%**	14,72%	18,39%	1,67%	299
2. Design, including presentation design, should be at the core of a company.	1,67%	7,69%	16,72%	**57,19%**	16,72%	299
3. We remember emotional moments better than others.	0%	0%	3,02%	35,91%	**61,07%**	298
4. We naturally assign meaning to everything we see or hear.	1,00%	10,70%	13,38%	**62,54%**	12,37%	299
5. Empathy is key in persuasion.	0,33%	6,02%	17,06%	**55,85%**	20,74%	299
6. Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process.	1,34%	16,05%	24,08%	**52,17%**	6,35%	299
7. Potential is more intriguing than experience.	0,67%	20,07%	**46,82%**	28,09%	4,35%	299
8. Design is a persuasion tool.	0,33%	2,68%	10,37%	**64,21%**	22,41%	299

In the fifth statement, "Empathy is key in persuasion", 76,59 percent, i.e. 229, of respondents agreed and strongly agreed, with what is considered a false statement by the researcher (figure 9). In this section, this was among the statements that respondents disagreed the least with, only 6,35 percent, i.e. 19 disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The only statement in which respondents disagreed even less, was statement number eight, only 3,01 percent, nine people.

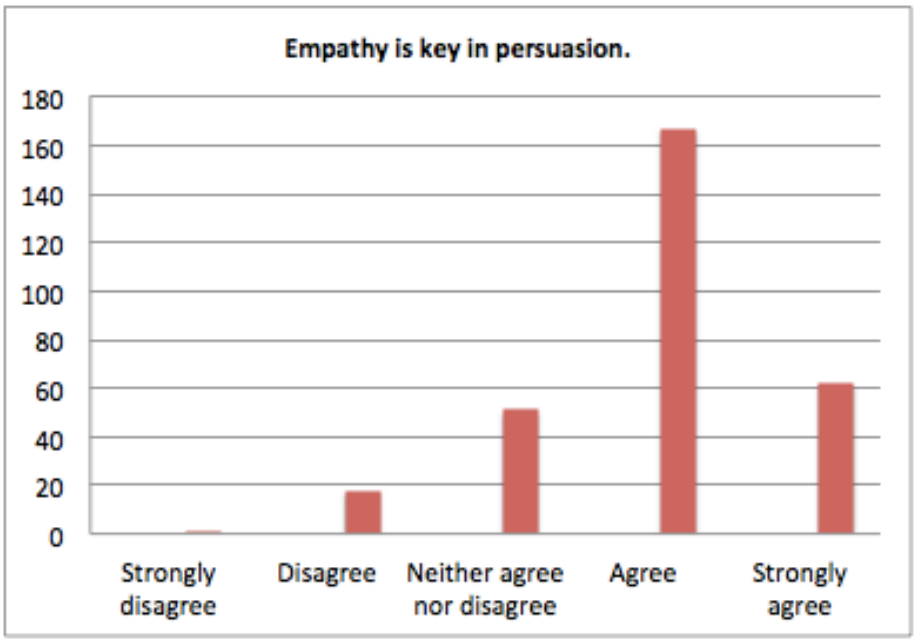

Figure 9. Answers to “Empathy is key in persuasion.”

In the sixth statement, “Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process”, a statement considered to be false by the researcher, had 58,53 percent, i.e. 175, of all respondents agree or strongly agree with it (figure 10). This statement had the second most “Neither agree nor disagree” answers in this section, exactly 24,08 percent, i.e. 72.

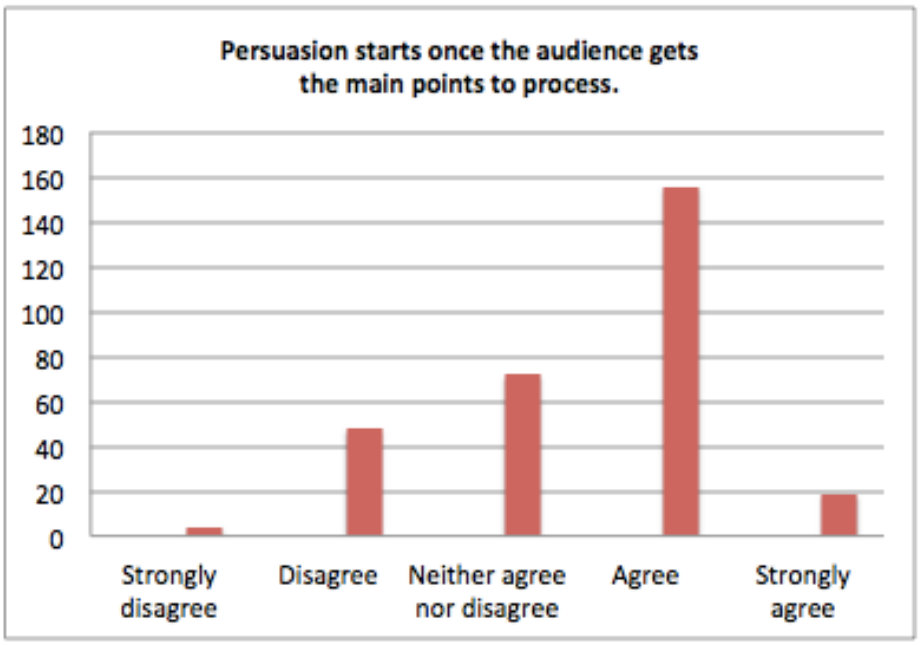

Figure 10. Answers to “Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process.”

In the seventh statement, “Potential is more intriguing than experience”, almost half of all respondents, 46,82 percent, i.e. 140, “Neither agreed or disagreed” (figure 11). No other statement in the whole questionnaire had this many unsure answers. The second largest group of respondents, though, exactly 28,09 percent, i.e. 84, agreed with the statement. Overall, 32,44 percent, i.e. 97 people agreed or strongly agreed.

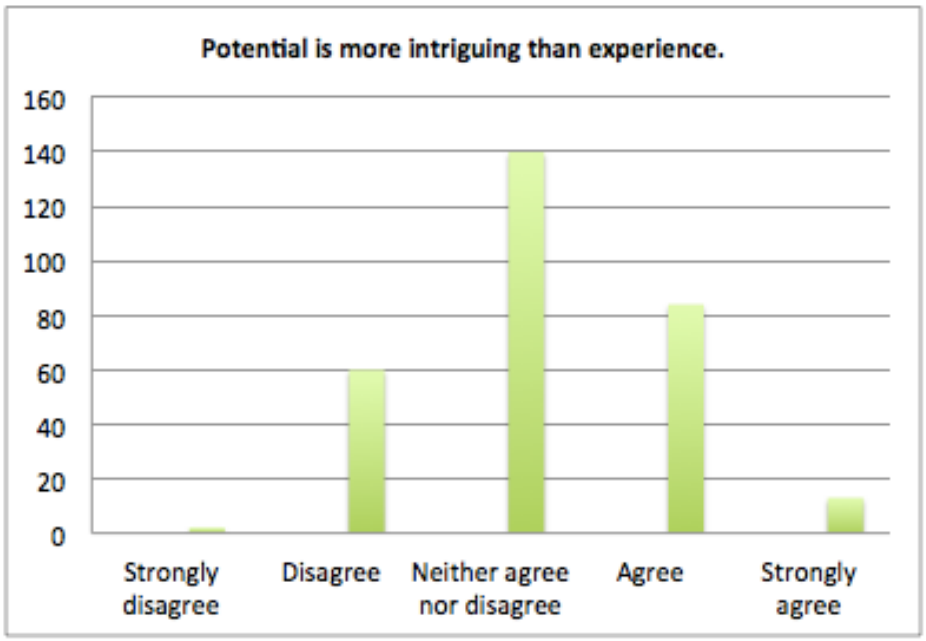

Figure 11. Answers to “Potential is more intriguing than experience.”

In the third section, regarding statements about visual design (table 3), respondents shared the researchers view with statements from number two to number five, with around 80 to 98 percent agreeing or strongly agreeing with them. These statements are considered true by the researcher. The first, last and second to last statements divided respondents more. All of these statements the researcher considers to be false.

Table 3. Answers to statements about visual design.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 3: Statements about visual design						
1. Charts always make a main point clearer.	5,02%	27,76%	29,43%	**31,10%**	6,69%	299
2. Visuals help learning and increase recollection.	0%	0%	1,67%	**55,52%**	42,81%	299
3. The subconscious mind gets information from some visual elements.	0%	0,33%	8,03%	**64,21%**	27,42%	299
4. A visualisations purpose is to create understanding.	0%	1,34%	8,03%	**52,84%**	37,79%	299
5. Every choice matters in the design of visual communication because everything tells something.	0%	5,72%	14,14%	**60,61%**	19,53%	297
6. Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough.	2,34%	31,44%	**38,80%**	26,09%	1,34%	299
7.Typography is not as important as the message itself.	6,02%	**42,47%**	21,74%	25,08%	4,68%	299

The first statement, “Charts always make a main point clearer”, received the most evenly divided set of answers, compared to all other 28 statements (figure 12). In all other statements, one of the answer options has received between 100 and 200 responses to it, most often to agree or disagree. Here, no answer option broke the hundred. It has the fourth most “Neither agree or disagree” answers, exactly 29,43 percent, i.e. 88. The largest group of answers were to agree, with 31,10 percent, i.e. 93 people. Third largest group was the 83 disagreeing respondents, i.e. 27,76 percent of all. This dividing of responses, lead to the polar opposite ends to also have more answers in them, compared to most cases, where at least one of the polar ends has only under 10 responses.

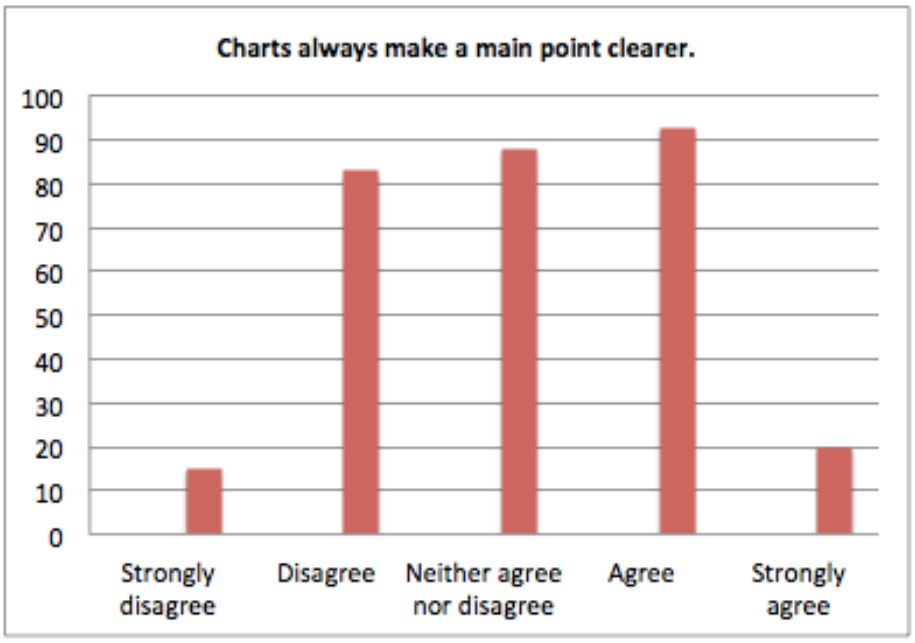

Figure 12. Answers to “Charts always make a main point clearer.”

In the sixth statement, “Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough”, over a third, exactly 38,80 percent, i.e. 116 people, neither agreed or disagreed (figure 13). This was the second largest group of unsure answers to any statement in the questionnaire. Also, 33,78 percent, i.e. 101 respondents, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Leaving 27,42 percent, i.e. 82 to agree or strongly agree.

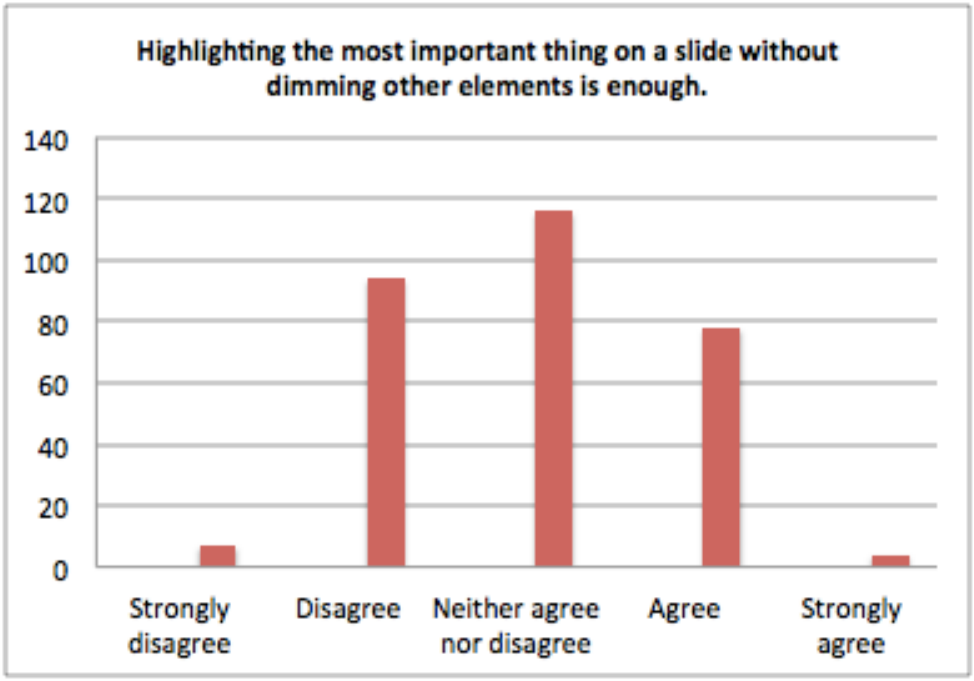

Figure 13. Answers to “Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough.”

In the seventh statement, “Typography is not as important as the message itself”, almost half, exactly 48,49 percent, i.e. 145 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, which means they had the same view as the researcher (figure 14). However, over half of the respondents also either did not know, exactly 21,74 percent, i.e. 65 people, or agreed or strongly agreed, exactly 29,77 percent, i.e. 89 with the statement.

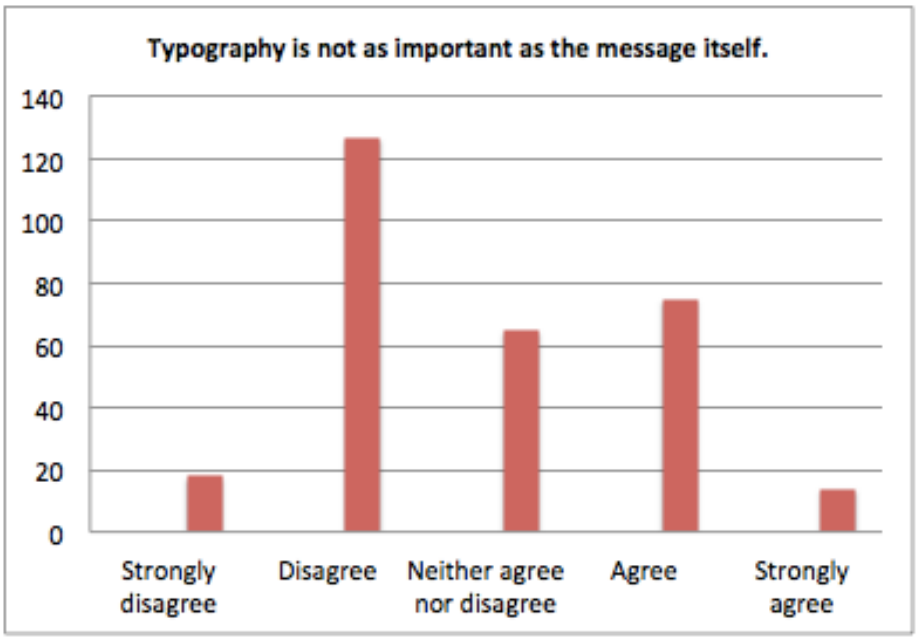

Figure 14. Answers to “Typography is not as important as the message itself.”

In the fourth section, statements about content design (table 4), in three out of five statements, the respondents shared the researchers view. In all of the three true statements, around 78 to 90 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed. The two false statements divided views more.

Table 4. Answers to statements about content design.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 4: Statements about content design						
1. Rhetorical devices, e.g. anecdotes, metaphors, etc., help us understand the message better.	0,33%	4,01%	17,73%	**55,52%**	22,41%	299
2. Nouns should be concrete, verbs should be active, words and sentences should be short.	0,34%	1,01%	12,08%	**57,72%**	28,86%	298
3. Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system.	1,01%	12,42%	35,91%	**46,64%**	4,03%	298
4. Having to create a short sales pitch helps find clarity in the pitch.	0%	1,68%	8,72%	**57,05%**	32,55%	298
5. Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories.	8,72%	**37,58%**	27,18%	16,44%	10,07%	298

In the third statement, “Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system”, just over half, exactly 50,67 percent, i.e. 151, of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed (figure 15). The statement is considered false by the researcher. This statement had the third largest group of unsure answers of all statements in the questionnaire, with 35,91 percent, i.e. 107, answering “Neither agree nor disagree.”

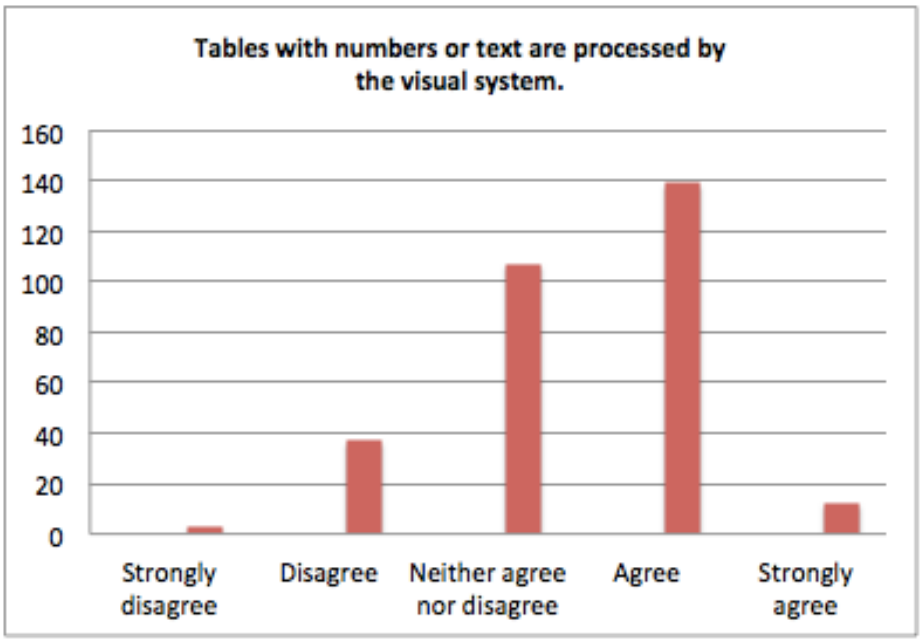

Figure 15. Answers to “Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system.”

In the fifth and last statement, “Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories”, the largest group of answers was “Disagree”, which is along the same lines as the researchers view (figure 16). Together with the strongly disagreeing group, these respondents made up 46,31 percent, i.e. 138, of the respondents. This statement received the fourth most largest group of unsure answers, exactly 27,18 percent, i.e. 81.

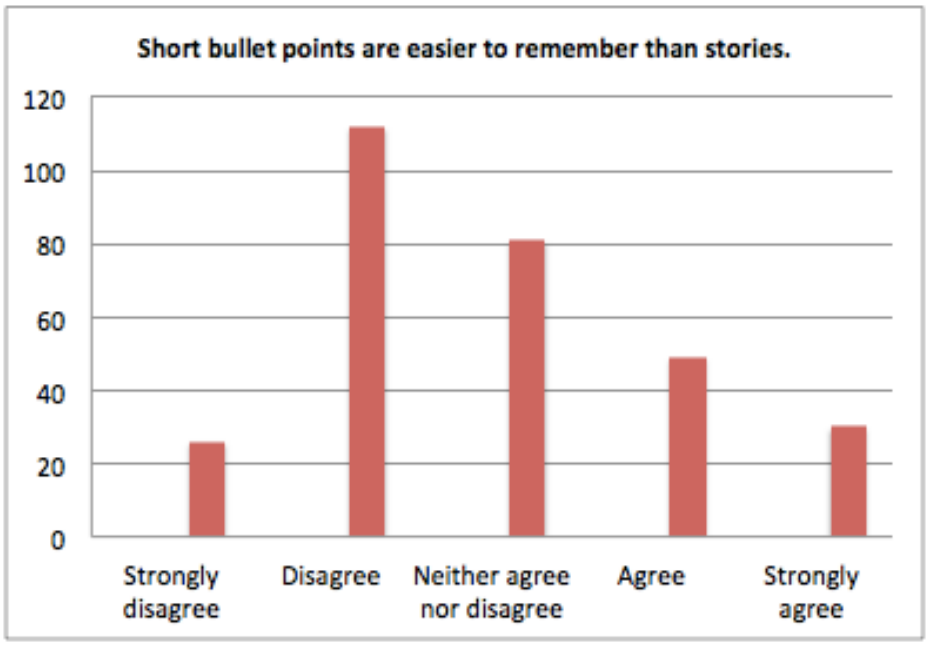

Figure 16. Answers to “Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories.”

Transforming the answer options into numbers allowed comparing answers numerically. If a respondent agreed strongly to all true statements, and disagreed strongly with all false statements, their individual score would be 145. If a respondent, did not feel as strongly, but had a view corresponding that of the researchers, meaning that they agreed with true statements, and disagreed with false ones, their score would be 116.

Conversely, the minimum possible score that was 29, if the respondent strongly agreed with false statements and strongly disagreed with true statements. If a respondent agreed with false statements, and disagreed with true ones, their score would be 58.

Possible average score was 87, when calculated from the absolute maximum 145 and absolute minimum of 29. From the 299 respondents, the highest score was 124 and the lowest 80, making the average 102. The median was 101.

Section five of the questionnaire was only one open question, which asked the respondent to share any thoughts they might have regarding presentations or presenting. There were 95 answers to this question, which means that quite an impressive amount of all respondents, exactly 31,77 percent of them, shared their thoughts in more detail. They highlighted different things with different level of detail. After dividing the answers to three categories, "Ingredients of a good presentation…", "The presenter is equally, or more, important", and "'It's complicated' / Other", and giving each answer one to one to eight keywords, depending on the points that were made, three word clouds could be created.

The word clouds help visualise what things were most often mentioned, and enable comparison between the three categories. Most often used keywords are larger and bright red in colour, and the least used are small and blue in colour. Keywords that land between the two are a shade of colour in between red and blue. Also, their size varies accordingly.

In the largest group of answers, categorised as "Ingredients of a good presentation…", the clearly most often mentioned aspects were brevity, clarity, practice, story, core message, audience, slide design, visual (figure 17). This could be summarised somehow as follows: A good presentation is brief and easy to understand; it has a clear core message targeted to the audience told in the form of a story; and, it uses visuals and carefully designed slides to help carry the message home.

Figure 17. Word cloud of open answers in category "Ingredients of a good presentation…"

In the second group of answers, categorised as "The presenter is equally, or more, important", tells exactly, what the most often used keyword was. In addition to that, this group did acknowledge story and slide design as important factors as well. Other keywords mentioned more than once were: visual, clarity, audience, core message, brevity and charisma (figure 18). This could be summarised somehow as follows: Being visual and providing a clear, brief presentation to deliver your core message tailored to your audience, is important, but equally, or perhaps more important, is the presenter and their presentation skills and charisma.

Figure 18. Word cloud of open answers in category "The presenter is equally, or more, important."

In the third group of answers, categorised as "'It's complicated' / Other", respondents expressed that they feel the topic is more versatile and presentation situations so varying, that it was challenging to merely agree or disagree with the statements in the first four sections of the questionnaire. Also, there were four other type of comments in this group, that discussed the topic, but made a different kind of point, to the majority, which formed the two first answer groups.

This group highlighted the importance of designing a presentation with the audience in mind and customising for them. Keywords formed in this small group, and mentioned more than once, were: audience, core message, context, customisation and goal (figure 19). This could be summarised somehow as follows: Presentation situations and audiences, as well as the goals for the presentations, are different, and therefore, the core message and presentation should be customised.

Figure 19. Word cloud of open answers in category "'It's complicated' / Other."

Going further, the possible relationships between the open answers and the responses to the statements will be discussed. Next, the background information and demographics of the respondents will b examined.

4.2.2 Background information and demographics of respondents

In sections six and seven of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked about background information with eight questions regarding their working environment and four questions about demographics.

First, the answers regarding working environment are presented. When asked, does the respondent usually do the selling or get sold to, 232 say that they are usually the ones who do the selling. That covers 77,56 percent of all respondents. The rest, 65 respondents, usually get sold to; 21,74 percent of all. Two people did not answer the question.

When asked about role, 90 percent, that is 268 of the respondents answered one of the given five options; general management, sales, marketing, communications, or expert, with client or sales responsibility (table 5). The rest, 31 people, making up 10 percent of all respondents, named another main role, including two people who did not answer at all. Largest individual group was people in marketing, 28 percent, and second largest was people in sales, 22 percent.

Table 5. Answers to question about main role in the organisation.

SECTION 6: Background information—working environment

2. What is your (main) role in your organisation?		
General management	49	16%
Sales	66	22%
Marketing	83	28%
Communications	21	7%
Expert, with client or sales responsibility	49	16%
Other	31	10%
Expert (other)	3	
Account management	1	
Admin and finance	2	
Business development	6	
Data and analytics	1	
Design	4	
Human resources	2	
Investor	2	
IT and product development	8	
Undisclosed	2	

In question three of this section, respondents were asked to tell whether they have managerial responsibility over other people. The majority, 58 percent meaning 174 people, answered that they do not. The rest, 125, that is 41,8 percent, does.

The majority works for small or medium sized companies; 140 people, i.e. 46,8 percent. The second largest group is not far behind, with 128 people working for corporations, meaning 42,8 percent. The remaining 10 percent work for startups, 18 people, or work as entrepreneurs or freelancers, 13 people.

The majority, 61,9 percent, work for international companies; i.e. 185 respondents. From the rest, 112 people, i.e. 37,5 percent, work for Finnish companies operating only in Finland, and two work for a foreign company that only operates in its' original market.

The leading industry category was “Technology, Software-as-a-Service or similar”, i.e. technology oriented companies that 80, as in 27 percent, of the respondents work for (table 6). B2B-services as well as different kind of creative or digital agencies, each have 22 percent of the respondents.

Table 6. Answers to question about what industry the company is in.

SECTION 6: Background information—working environment

7. What industry is the company in?		
Industrial, manufacturing, or similar	45	15%
Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar	80	27%
Ad / Marketing / Digital / Creative / Content agency or similar	66	22%
B2B-services	65	22%
Other	43	14%
B2C-services	2	
Finance	16	
Media	7	
Public office & NGO	5	
Retail	5	
Other industries	6	
Undisclosed	2	

When asked about who does the presentations the respondent uses, 252, i.e. 84,3 percent, answered that they do their own presentations. For 41 people, the presentations they use, come more or less from the company as a give. And, for five respondents, people working under them do presentations for them. One person did not answer the question.

Next, the answers to four questions about demographics (table 7) are presented. The majority of respondents, 277, i.e. 93 percent, have a bachelor, master or higher degree. Over half have a masters degree; 155, i.e. 51,8 percent.

Most of the respondents were Finnish, more precisely 251, i.e. 84 percent. The respondents included 12 other nationalities. In the 26 respondents, almost nine percent of all, that disclosed another nationality, seven were Swedish, four Italian, three Danish. The rest of the nationalities had one or two respondents. Seven percent of the respondents, i.e. 22 people, did not disclose their nationality.

Table 7. Answers to four questions about demographics.

SECTION 7: Background information—demographics

1. Highest education	N	%
Highschool / upper secondary	22	7%
Bachelor	112	37%
Masters	155	52%
Higher degree than masters	10	3%

2. Nationality		
Finnish	251	84%
Other	26	9%
American	1	
Australian	1	
British	2	
Danish	3	
Dutch	2	
French	1	
German	1	
Indian	1	
Italian	4	
Russian	2	
Spanish	1	
Swedish	7	
Undisclosed	22	7%

3. Gender	N	%
Women	172	58%
Man	120	40%
I would rather not say	7	2%

4. Age		
25 or under	1	0%
26-30	44	15%
31-35	81	27%
36-40	74	25%
41-45	53	18%
46 or more	41	14%
I would rather not say	5	2%

More than half of the respondents, 58 percent to be exact, were women. Men represented 40 percent of the whole, and seven people did not want to specify their gender. Age-wise, the single largest group were the people between 31 and 35 years of age, with 81, i.e. 27 percent of all respondents. Second largest group were the 36 to 40-year-olds, with 74, i.e. 25 percent of all. Third largest group were the 41 to 45-year-olds, with 53, i.e. 18 percent of the whole. Close after, came the group of 26 to 30-year-olds, and 46 or more of age. Five people did not wish to specify.

4.2.3 Relationship between responses and backgrounds of respondents

For the purpose of comparing respondents to each other, they were divided into four groups according the overall score they received from answering how much they agree or do not agree with the statements of the questionnaire.

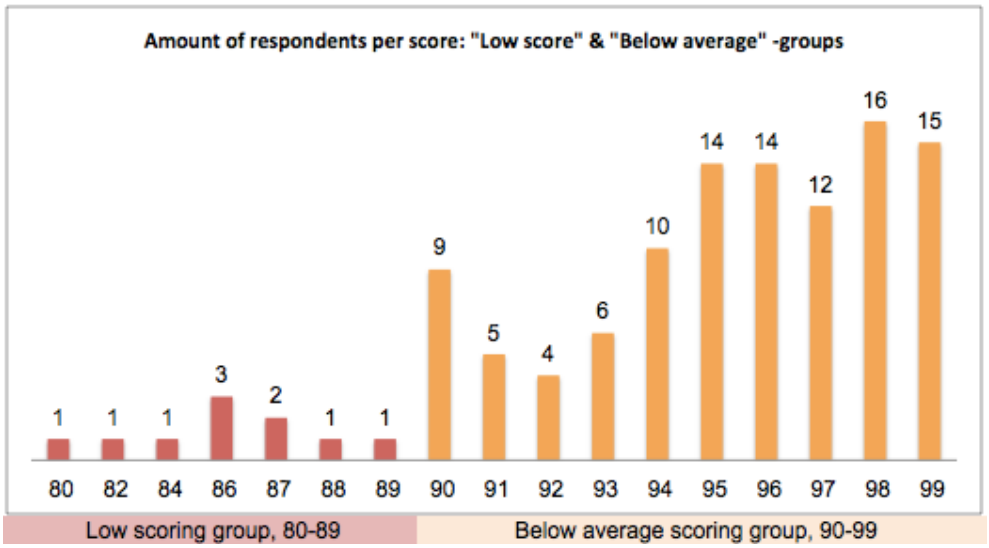

Figure 20. Amount of respondents per score: “Low score” & “Below average” -groups.

The four groups are the “low scoring group” for a score between 80 to 89 “points”; the “below average scoring group”, for 90-99 points (figure 20); the “average and above scoring group”, for 100-109 points; and the “high scoring group”, for 110 to 124 points (figure 21).

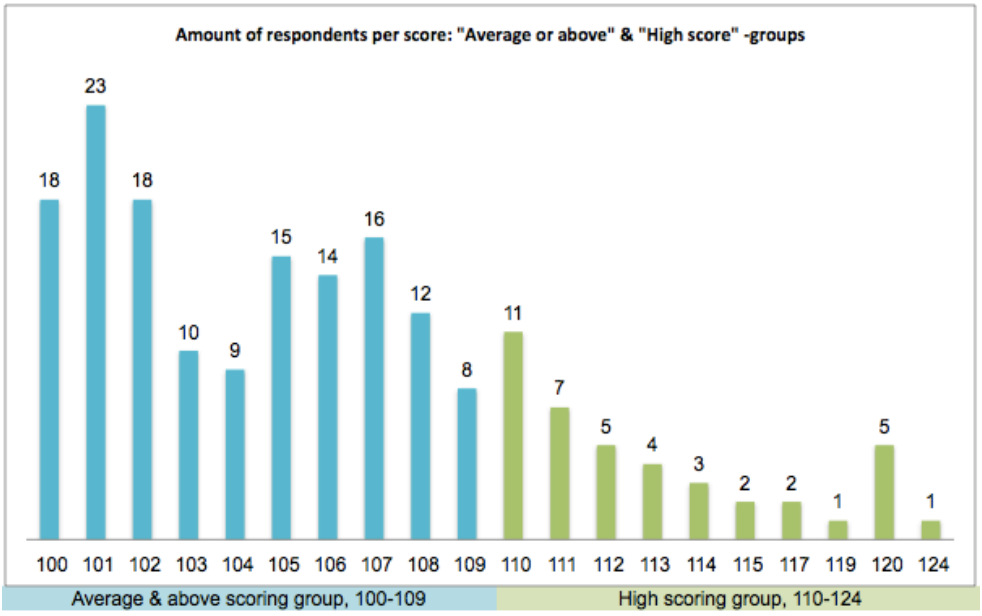

Figure 21. Amount of respondents per score: “Average or above” & “High score” -groups.

The low scoring group consists of 10 respondents, i.e. 3,34 percent of all; the below average group of 105, i.e. 35,12 percent; the average and above scoring group of 143, i.e. 47,83 percent; and the high scoring group of 41 people, i.e. 13,71 percent of all respondents (figure 22).

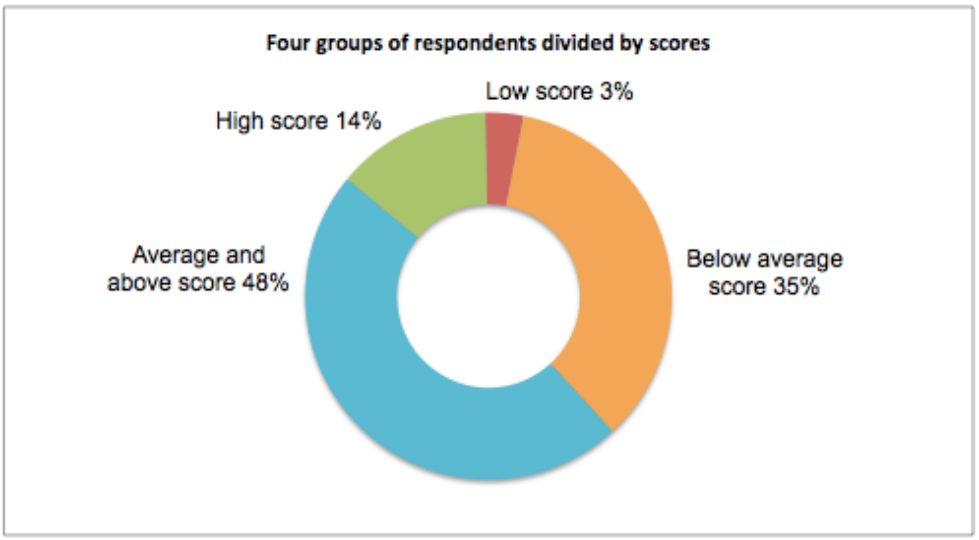

Figure 22. Four groups of respondents divided by scores.

Open answers were not quantified, but rather categorised in three groups of different sizes according to the themes of the answers. As stated earlier, 31,77 percent, i.e. 95 respondents gave an open answer.

The category "Ingredients of a good presentation…" includes 61 answers, out of which 59 percent from respondents, who got an average to high score (table 8). This group has the most variety in scores. As seen before, this is typical in the larger answer groups. The category "The presenter is equally, or more, important" includes 20 answers, out of which 70 percent from respondents, who got an average to high score. Proportionally, this group has the lowest number of high scores from the statements. Though, to balance that out, they have proportionally the most answers in the average or above scoring group. The category "'It's complicated' / Other" includes 14 answers, out of which 71,43 percent from respondents, who got an average to high score.

Table 8. Open answer categories with scores.

Category	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
"Ingredients of a good presentation…"	61	4 7%	21 34%	24 39%	12 20%	59,02%
"The presenter is equally, or more, important"	20	0 0%	6 30%	12 60%	2 10%	70%
"It's complicated" / Other	14	0 0%	4 29%	7 50%	3 21%	71,43%

All in all, a clear majority, exactly 63,15 percent, of those who took the time and gave the energy to write and tell more about their thoughts, were also the ones who knew relatively much about the topic. Regardless of differences in the answers, and what and how they highlighted various factors, it seemed, that if not all, then almost all, cared about the subject matter.

Next, a look into the scores, together with the background and demographic information, is taken. Firstly, it seems that there is no relationship between level of knowledge, which is proved by the score, and whether the respondent is usually the one who sells or gets sold to. In all respondent groups, the ratio of people who sell, and people who buy was 76 to 80 percent against 10 to 24 percent.

When examining what roles appeared under which scoring group (table 9), one sees that the high and low scoring groups have five to six roles in them, and a total of 51 people in them, both groups include people in sales, marketing, communications, and expert work with client or sales responsibility.

In addition, the low scoring group have one person from business development, and the high scoring group have nine people from general management and two from IT and product development. The below and above average scoring groups have almost all roles in them. These groups also had the most respondents in them, 248 to be exact, so diversity is likely.

It is very interesting to examine, how different roles are divided between differently scoring groups. A whopping majority of people in communications, 76,19 percent, reached a score ranging from average to high score, with 14,29 percent of them getting to the high scoring group. This means that three communications people got a high score, 13 got an average or above score, four got a below average, and 1 a low score. Most sales people, exactly 69,70 percent of them, got a at least an average score, but also 15,15 percent of them reached a high score. This means that 10 got a high score, 36 got an average or above, 18 a below average, and two got a low score.

Third successful role from this perspective was the people in general management, out of which 67,35 percent, scored an average to high score, with 18,37 percent reaching to high score. This means that nine got a high score, 24 got an average or above, 16 got below average, but none got low score. Corresponding figures for marketing people is 57,83 percent, and 8,43 percent. This means seven people got a high score, 41 got an average or above, 33 got below average, and two got a low score.

Additionally, sales, marketing, and communications people as well as experts, with client or sales responsibility people were found in all scoring groups. General management was in all scoring groups, except the lowest.

People in expert roles were the two other groups of roles that exceeded the 50 percent mark, when looking at scores going above average. Out of all experts, with client or sales responsibility, 51,02 percent, i.e. 25 people, had at least an average or above score, but 20,41 percent of experts, i.e. 10 people, also reached the high score. Other experts had 66,67 percent of them scoring average or above, but none reached the high score. Though, other experts only included three people in total.

All of the design people, a total of four, were in the average or above scoring group, which means none got a high score. Oppositely, account management, and data and analytics people were in the below average group, but this only included two people in total. All the rest of roles, had maximum 50 percent of them reaching the average or above score, and none but one role having any of its representatives in the high scoring group. IT and product development reached the high score, with two people, out of a total of eight.

Table 9. Relationship of roles and scores.

Role	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
General management	49	0%	32,65%	48,98%	18,37%	67,35%
Sales	66	3,03%	27,27%	54,55%	15,15%	69,70%
Marketing	83	2,41%	39,76%	49,40%	8,43%	57,83%
Communications	21	4,76%	19,05%	61,90%	14,29%	76,19%
Expert, with client or sales responsibility	49	8,16%	40,82%	30,61%	20,41%	51,02%
Expert (other)	3	0%	33,33%	66,67%	0%	66,67%
Account management	1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Admin & Finance	2	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%
Business development	6	16,67%	50%	33,33%	0%	33,33%
Data and analytics	1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Design	4	0%	0%	100%	0%	100%
Human resources	2	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%
Investor	2	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%
IT and product development	8	0%	50%	25%	25%	50%
Undisclosed	2	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%

As reported earlier, 41,8 percent of respondents have managerial responsibility over other people, and correspondingly 58 percent do not. Out of the people who do, 68 percent got an average or above to high score. This includes 85 respondents. Corresponding ratio for people with no managerial responsibility was 56,9 percent, around 10 percent less, including 99 respondents. The difference comes mainly from the high scoring group, where 18,4 percent of people who manage other people are, as opposed to 10,34 percent of all respondents who do not have a people managing responsibility. In numbers of respondents this means 23 out of 125, in contrast to 18 out of 174. Furthermore, the respondents with people managing responsibilities were less represented in their group in the lower scoring groups.

Next, it will be examined, how respondents working for different kind and different size companies did in the questionnaire. People who work for startups have the highest relative representation in the highest scoring group, with 22,22 percent of all startup people. The rest, 50 percent, are in average or above, and 27,78 percent are in the below average scoring group. None are in the low scoring group. This means 72,22 percent of all startup people got an average to a high score. Though, this also means 13 out of 18 people, i.e. not a very large respondent group.

Entrepreneurs and freelancers are within the same lines, as 15,38 percent of them scored high, 53,85 percent average or above, 30,77 percent below average, and none scored low points. This means 69,23 percent of all entrepreneurs and freelancers, i.e. nine out of 13 people. Since people working for startups often are or are expected to have an entrepreneurial attitude to working, it could be argued that these groups can be examined as one group, which would mean a group of 31 respondents. Furthermore, it would mean that 22 out of 31, i.e. 70,96 percent, scored an average to high score.

People working for small and medium sized companies as well as corporates, start to show more representation in the below average scoring group and in the low scoring group. Again, with a larger group this could be expected. Out of the 140 respondents working for a small or medium sized company, 87, i.e. 62,14 percent, scored and average to high score. Out of the 128 respondents working for a corporate, 75, i.e. 58,59 percent, scored an average to high score.

Next to be evaluated is, if operating domestically or internationally, and then, if the industry of the company, has any impact. There was only two people who worked for a domestically operating company outside of Finland. One of them got a high score, and the other an average or higher. Out of all respondents 112 work for a Finnish company operating only domestically, and 185 work for international companies. The two groups have almost the same amount of respondents with an average to high score; 62,50 percent of people working for domestic Finnish companies, and 60,54 percent of all that work for an international company. Not surprisingly, in the larger sample, the group of 185 respondents, there is a few more people who only scored low points.

In eight out of 11 industry groups, over half of the respondents got an average to a high score (table 10). Some of the industry groups have only a few respondents in them. Five largest industry groups, in order of size from largest to smallest, are technology and similar industries with 80 respondents, various creative and digital agencies with 66 respondents, B2B-services with 65 respondents, industrial and other more traditional industries

with 45 respondents, and finance with 16 respondents. People in “other” industries, that were not obviously similar to the adjusted industries, had the highest proportion of respondents scoring an average to high score, with 66,67 percent, though, none of them actually got a high score. Then again, this group only has six respondents. Next best proportion, and this time with the largest group of respondents, is the technology related industry group, with 66,25 percent of them scoring an average to high score. A close third is the B2B-services group, with 64,62 percent scoring an average to high score.

Various creative and digital agencies had proportionally the largest representation inside their industry group, in the high scoring group, with 22,73 percent. Industrial, manufacturing, and similar industries’ group is not far behind, with 17,78 percent of people working in more traditional field of business and scoring high. The B2B-services industry group is strong in the average and above scoring group, with 58,46 percent of them landing there. Technology related industry group is not far behind, with 53,75 percent of people working in tech or similar scoring an average or above score.

Other industry groups such as media, public office and non-governmental organisations, retail and “other” or “undisclosed” industry groups had no respondents in the low scoring group. As it has become obvious, in a larger group of respondents the group often includes people with all level of scores.

Table 10. Relationship of industry and scores.

Industry	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
Industrial, manufacturing, or similar	45	2,22%	40%	40%	17,78%	57,78%
Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar	80	3,75%	30%	53,75%	12,50%	66,25%
Ad / Marketing / Digital / Creative / Content agency or similar	66	1,52%	39,39%	36,36%	22,73%	59,09%
B2B-services	65	4,62%	30,77%	58,46%	6,15%	64,62%
B2C-services	2	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Finance	16	6,25%	37,50%	43,75%	12,50%	56,25%
Media	7	0%	71,43%	28,57%	0%	28,57%
Public office & NGO	5	0%	20%	60%	20%	80%
Retail	5	0%	20%	60%	20%	80%
Other	6	0%	33,33%	66,67%	0%	66,67%
Undisclosed	2	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%

Next, it will be examined, if there is a relationship between score and who does the presentations that the respondents use, they themselves, someone working under them, or if they come more or less as a given from the company (table 11). Also to be examined are is, whether the respondents in each three groups are usually the ones who sell or get sold to.

Two people, who responded that they do their own presentations, did not respond if they are usually the one selling or being sold to, were excluded from the analysis and table. So was one who answered that they usually do the selling, but not, who usually does their presentations. This respondent was in the below average scoring group, and from the other two, one was in low score group, and the other in average or above group. This left 296 respondents answers to be considered.

There is not a big difference between the three groups from the perspective of what proportion of each group reached an average to high score. Respondents who do their own presentations had 62,70 percent of them in the higher scoring groups; where as people who have other people doing the presentation had 60 percent of them, and those who get the presentation from the company, had 56,10 percent reach the average and higher scores.

From respondents that usually do the selling, the ones who do their own presentations, i.e. 194 people, have 63,92 percent of them reach an average to high score. In comparison, respondents who get their presentations from the company and who usually do the selling, have 53,13 percent reach the same level. They are nearly 10 percent behind, but it must be taken into consideration that the group is also only roughly 21 percent of that of the 194 respondents group. Then again, respondents who are usually sold to, and do their own presentations, a group of 56 people, has 58,93 percent reach an average or higher score. The group is not that much larger than the group of 41 respondents.

Table 11. Relationship of seller vs. buyer role and who creates the presentations they use.

Who does the presentations vs. respondent mostly sells or buys	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
I do my own presentations	250	2,78%	34,52%	47,22%	15,48%	62,70%
I usually do the selling	194	2,58%	33,51%	47,94%	15,98%	63,92%
I usually get sold to	56	1,79%	39,29%	44,64%	14,29%	58,93%
People working under me do my presentations for me	5	0%	40%	60%	0%	60%
I usually do the selling	5	0%	40%	60%	0%	60%
They come to me from the company more or less as a given	41	7,32%	36,59%	51,22%	4,88%	56,10%
I usually do the selling	32	9,38%	37,50%	46,88%	6,25%	53,13%
I usually get sold to	9	0%	33,33%	66,67%	0%	66,67%

Possible relationship between role or industry were also examined, but no clear trends emerged from the data. The “I do my own presentations” group included all roles; the “they come to me from the company more or less as a give” group included all the provided roles, i.e. general management, sales, marketing, communications, expert, with client or sales responsibility; the “people working under me do my presentations for me” group included all the provided role options, except communications, but included only five people, and thus, is not statistically very relevant.

The four final factors examined are the demographics of respondents, including highest education, nationality, gender and age. The vast majority, 267, i.e. 89,29 percent, of the respondents have either a bachelors or a masters degree. Perhaps it is not a surprise that these are the groups that have over 50 percent of the respondents with an average to high score (table 12). For masters the proportion is 67,10 percent, leaving the final third of the group scoring below average. For bachelors the proportion is 59,82 percent, leaving 40,18 percent scoring below average.

Those with lower or higher degrees were much smaller groups, but out of the two, the group with a higher than masters degree stayed clear of the low scoring bracket, and in fact, proportionally had the largest representation in the high scoring group, compared to representation in other scoring groups.

Table 12. Relationship of highest education and score.

Highest education	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
Highschool / upper secondary school	22	18,18%	45,45%	22,73%	13,64%	36,37%
Bachelors	112	0,89%	39,29%	48,21%	11,61%	59,82%
Masters	155	3,23%	29,68%	52,26%	14,84%	67,10%
Higher degree than masters	10	0%	50%	30%	20%	50%

There was not much possibility to evaluate the significance of nationality, as an overpowering majority of respondents were Finnish, 251 to be exact, i.e. 83,94 percent, and the rest, 48 respondents, included 12 different nationalities among 26 respondents, as well as 22 who would not disclose their origin. Nonetheless, whatever little data there was from other than Finnish respondents, would suggest that there is no relationship. Both groups had 58 to 63 percent of its respondents in the average to high scoring group, leaving 32 to 42 percent in the below average to low scoring group.

There is virtually no difference of how men and women were divided to scoring groups. Out of all women 61,63 percent scored an average to high score, and out of all men 61,67 percent reached the same scoring groups. Out of respondents who did not want to disclose their gender, which was only seven people, 57,14 percent reached the same groups. Compared to the 172 women and 120 men, the group of seven is hardly statistically relevant.

All age groups, except one, were nicely represented, ranging from 41 to 81 people in one group, largest group being the 31 to 35-year-olds and smallest the 46-year-olds and older. The respondents included one person who was 25 years or less, and they got a below

average score. The respondents also included five people who did not disclose their age, out of which one scored a high score, and the other four a below average score. These six respondents will not be take into account, when looking at possible relationship with age. The rest of the groups had at least a few dozen respondents in all of them, which bring them more onto the same line for analysis.

Table 13. Relationship of age and score.

Age	Number of people	Low score	Below average	Average or above	High score	Average to high
25 or less	1	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
26-30	44	6,82%	36,36%	56,82%	0%	56,82%
31-35	81	6,17%	25,93%	53,09%	14,81%	67,90%
36-40	74	0%	39,19%	45,95%	14,86%	60,81%
41-45	53	1,89%	33,96%	41,51%	22,64%	64,15%
46 or more	41	2,44%	39,02%	46,34%	12,20%	58,54%
I would rather not say	5	0%	80%	0%	20%	20%

All remaining age groups had between 56,82 and 67,90 percent of their respondents reach the average to high scoring group (table 13). More specifically, the 31 to 35-year-olds had 67,90 percent of them in this group, correspondingly 64,15 percent of the 41 to 45-year-olds were there, as well as 60,81 percent of the age group in between, the 36 to 40-year-olds.

The group of 41 to 45-year-olds had the largest proportion of them, 22,64 percent, in the high scoring group. The 36 to 40-year-olds and 31 to 35-year-olds were neck in neck in that respect, with 14,86 percent and 14,81 percent. The 26 to 30-year-olds had the largest portion of them, 56,82 percent, with an average or above score, but none reached the high scoring group.

4.3 Summary and answering research questions

The researcher set out to objectively learn about the level of knowledge about presentations and presentation design, as well as attitudes toward presentations, inside her professional network. In order to gather a large amount of data, some also outside of Finland, and not influence the responses by being present when a respondent answers questions, the data was gathered via an online questionnaire created with Google Forms.
The web questionnaire, which was sent directly to 603 people, and shared in a few social media posts, received an impressive 299 responses. The response rate was 49,50 percent, when calculated from the direct messages sent inside the researchers network.

With its 29 statements and one open questions, the research brought a hefty amount of data to analyse. The statements had been divided into four sections regarding presentations, persuasion, visual design and content design—all relevant for presentation design, but easily grouped like this. Respondents were asked to answer how much they agreed or disagreed with a statement, choosing from five Likert-scale answer options. For easier review, analysis and comparison of results, the answers were converted to numerical data. In addition, respondents were asked to give work environment and demographic information.

“What is the level of knowledge in general among the respondents?”

On the basis of the responses gathered to the statements—statements, which were derived as directly as possible from the theory—it could be said, that the level of knowledge is good. The highest score received from the questionnaire was 124, and the lowest 80, making the average score 102. All respondents were divided into four “score groups” on the basis of their score, as follows; low score 80-89, with 10 respondents, i.e. 3,34 percent; below average score 90-99, with 105 respondents, i.e. 35,12 percent; average and above average score 100-109, with 143 respondents, i.e. 47,83 percent; and high score 110-124, with 41 respondents, i.e. 13,71 percent.

If the questionnaire had been an exam, and one could grade it with the university grading scale from 1, lowest, to 5, highest, the scores start to look a little different. The absolute maximum score—which no one received—was 145. If, the case was also, that in order to pass the test one would need to get half, meaning at least 72,5 points. This would have meant that, everyone passed.

However, instead of the scoring categories above, they would be more as follows; pass 73-87, with 8 respondents, i.e. 2,67 percent; relatively good 88-102, with 166 respondents, i.e. 55,52 percent; good 103-117, with 118 respondents, i.e. 39,46 percent; very good 118-132, with 7 respondents, i.e. 2,34 percent; and, excellent 133-145, with no respondents. Over half would have gotten a relatively good score, 2, just one grade above passing, and nearly 40 percent would have gotten a good, 3.

“Is there a relationship between level of knowledge and an attitude towards presentations?”

The only way to get a glimpse of the attitude towards presentations was through the open answers. The question was not mandatory to answer; yet, a pleasantly large group of 95 respondents—a third of all questionnaire respondents—shared their thoughts on the matter. The responses were put in three categories according to the theme of the answer, e.g. listing things that make a good presentation, highlighting the importance of the presenter, and other, such as explaining how the subject matter at hand is more varied than how it was portrayed in the questionnaire.

One could have expected, that the two last categories of answers might have shown less knowledge on the questionnaire, but this was not the case, with the responses that were received. However, they were small groups of respondents. Almost two thirds of everyone who gave some comment knew relatively much about the topic. Answers were very versatile, some mentioning only one certain things that they feel presenters should focus on more, other listing many things. With the analysis done on the answers, there did not seem to be a strong relationship between types of answers, and a possible attitude that could be detected in the answer, and score.

“Are there notable differences in the level of knowledge between groups of professionals, divided by, for example, role, industry or size of the company respondents work for?”

In fact, there were 10 pieces of background information that could be compared among respondents to see if the data would suggest any relationship. There were four factors that did not appear to have any relationships between them and the level of knowledge. Two of them were demographic factors. Gender had no relationship whatsoever with the scores. The same may be true for nationality. Statistically it is relevant to say that, men and women were almost equally represented in the research, but nationalities were not. There was an overpowering amount of Finnish respondents, which is not a surprise considering the network that the research could be shared with.

In addition, it appears, that there is no relationship between level of knowledge and whether the respondent is usually the one who sells or gets sold to. It would also appear, that whether a company operates domestically or internationally, has no impact on the presentation related knowledge of the respondent.

Two factors were not this clear-cut and, thus, could not, with certainty, be ruled out as possibly having some relationship. In three out of five age groups that could actually be evaluated, respondents between ages 31 and 45, got an average to high score, with 60,81 to 67,90. The age group that broke the 20 percent barrier in the high scoring group was the 41 to 45-year-olds.

Whether the industry, which the respondent works in, has an impact, is up for debate. There were clearly some shining stars among tiny sample groups, like “public office and NGO”, “retail”, and “other”, but as those groups only had five to six respondents in them, one can hardly draw conclusions here. Around 58 to 66 percent of respondents in all the four largest industry groups reached an average to high score. “B2B-services” and “Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar” -groups were very heavy in the average or above scoring group, ensuring their presence in the group, but they were not impressively present in the high scoring group. Those who were, were the “Ad, marketing, digital, creative, content agency or similar” -group, which was the only group to break the 20 percent barrier, and have 22,73 percent of the score a high score. To even out the score, “Industrial, manufacturing, or similar” -group was not far behind.

Finally, there were five factors, which seemed to influence with level of knowledge about the topic. These were highest education, role, what size company respondent works for, whether they have managerial responsibility over other people, and if they create their own presentations.

Out of all respondents with a masters degree, 67,10 percent scored an average to high score. Correspondingly, out of all respondents with a bachelor's degree, 59,82 percent scored an average to high score. There was also slight indication, that higher than masters degree could also bode well for knowledge in this area.

Between the 14 actual role groups, 90 percent were in the provided roles, and 10 percent in other. The sizes of the groups should be kept in mind. However, it is interesting to see, what are the role groups, where at least over 60 percent of respondents got an average to high score, at the same time has over 10 percent of the respondents in that group in the high scoring section, and less than 5 percent of its respondents in the low scoring section. These roles are general management, sales and communications.

The research shows that respondents who are entrepreneurs, freelancers or work for a startup, scored higher than respondents working for small, medium or corporate sized companies. If entrepreneurs, freelancers and “start-uppers” are treated as one group, it

can be said that 70,96 percent of them scored an average to high score. Corresponding portion for respondents in small to medium sized companies was 62,14 percent, and 58,59 percent for respondents in corporations.

Respondents who have managerial responsibility got a higher score than people who do not have managerial responsibility over other people. Out of all managers, 68 percent, got an average to high score, and out of all non-managers 56,90 percent. Respondents who create their own presentations scored higher in the questionnaire, with 62,70 percent scoring an average to high score. Correspondingly, respondents who get the presentations they use, from the company, had 56,10 percent score an average to high score.

To sum up the research—and answer the main research question “Is there a relationship between level of knowledge, attitude and business role, when it comes to presentations?”—it can be argued that there is a relationship between various factors and the level of knowledge regarding presentations, persuasion as well as visual and content design. However, researching attitudes and finding relationships there, is a tougher task, and remains inconclusive within this research.

5 Developed product

The first product to be created on the basis of the theory and outcomes of the research is a training material. The goal of the training material is to bring knowledge and inspiration to business professionals who create presentations in their work for varying purposes.

The material focuses on the areas, which split opinions the most, or revealed confusion among respondents the most, i.e. the topics, which were more or less unfamiliar to the respondents. These are the areas where the respondents can benefit the most, when getting new information about them.

With this logic, instead of fine-tuning the respondents' knowledge about things they already knew fairly well, one gives them potentially completely new information, thus filling the largest gaps in their presentation design knowledge. The gaps can be filled with the studies and principles presented in the theory part of this research.

5.1 Presentation training content

The training (appendix 6) is structured into three parts and planned to be about one hour. First, the training starts with the question "Why?"; why should we focus more on creating good presentations? Three reasons are presented as an answer; saving time, making money, and increasing the chances of the audience taking action after the presentation.

With time, the researcher refers to what was discussed in chapter "Busyness kills potentially powerful presentations" and visualised with figure 1. With money, the researcher refers to what was discussed in chapter "Design-centric companies outperform others" and visualised with figure 2. The other subchapters which back these claims are "Vision is the strongest sense for humans", "A visualisation creates understanding", and "Mastering both visual and verbal language brings best results."

The second part of the training offers concrete tips on how to create better, more effective, presentations. First, it suggests to get to the point fast and being brief. It offers the Twitter pitch and the guideline of having no more than six keywords on a slide, as a means to push ones own creativity, and make sure that a slide does not have too much text. It also reminds, that in natural speech, the most important thing is always said first, i.e. one should not linger and take the long road to explaining their personal or company pitch.

Next, the training provides a new comparison to presentations, which is not documents, but cartoons and cinema; which are based on images, still or moving, and, at least sometimes, text. Then, the training gives two concrete tools to help anyone create a story, the Pixar pitch model, based on a classic fairytale story structure, and the What is-What could be –way of taking turns in describing the status quo of something, and how it could be improved, finally ending in a "new bliss", which should be the new norm.

Also, the use of story and multisensory tactics in telling it, is backed up by an explanation about how the audience's attention span works according to studies, and therefore, what is the best time to for example use video or a product demonstration in a presentation.

Finally, the training guides business professionals to make sure their text, e.g. slide headline, and the visuals, e.g. a chart, tell the same thing, and thus support each other. This brings the topic to highlighting important information, and toning down less important content and elements on a slide. Also, it is made clear, that call-to-actions are best said with words. This means if one wants an audience to take action after a presentation, it has to be said verbally, and or as text on a slide.

Most of the "How to" –contents are from the "Limits set creativity free" chapter, and especially from subchapters "Forcing brevity brings clarity", "Think cinema rather than document" and "Buy attention with a multisensory experience" within it, but also from "Design is a tool for persuasion." Some tips came also from subchapters "To highlight something, tone down everything else" and "Verbal system processes tables and visual system typography", under "Vision is the strongest sense for humans" chapter.

Before a summary, the training encourages the audience members to explore their own storytelling abilities, as we are all natural storytellers. We just may need some tools to help us get started and see how easily stories can be created. Information has been shared throughout human history as stories. Meaning, values, codes of conduct and what has happened or is expected to happen, are shared through stories. Storytelling is an everyday activity, and could—and should—be harnessed better in business, once professionals realise that they already have the natural instinct for it, and that there are frameworks to help one get going.

5.2 Testing the material prototype

The prototype of the training material was presented to a test audience on 27th of April 2019. The test audience included three people, an HR consultant, a digital marketing consultant and a digital producer in the field of design. All three had also answered the re-

search questionnaire. After the training, the audience was asked to write down individually what they remembered after the training, what came as new information to them, and what they already knew from before.

The audience members remembered well the main points of the training as well as individual best practices. For the second questions, everyone answered that the stubborn timing pattern, that our brains follow, was new information. The topic is covered in subchapter “Buy attention with a multisensory experience.”

The rest of what was new to the test audience was different for all. For example, for one the new points included the recommendation of having a call-to-action in the presentation, and how much time one should use to create a good presentation. For another person, they were the need to work on graphs to make them clear, the different ways of adding stories to one’s presentation, and that a presentation is not a document, but closer to a cartoon or cinema, as a communication method. For the third audience member, in addition to the timing pattern of our brains, the story telling model What is-What could be was new.

What, then, was the information, which the audience was already familiar with? For one audience member, using stories and keywords, as well as having a very concise and visual presentation, were familiar guidelines. For another, it was for example “highlighting visuality”, having less text, going straight to the point and telling stories. However, the audience member admitted, that these tend to be forgotten in everyday work.

For the third, familiar points had to do with going straight to the point, simplifying and visualising the contents of slides, not to use bullet points, directing the audience’s eye with strategic use of colour, and remembering that a person cannot listen to the presenter, and read their slides at the same time. This answer included some things that were not apart of the training, e.g. bullet points were not mentioned. Hence, it is possible, that the question “What information you already knew?” can easily sidetrack a respondent to include things, which they knew in general and have top-of-mind regarding presentations.

In conclusion, out of the “Why” section, the first argument was new information to the test audience, and thus, is good contents for the training. The money and action arguments were not specifically mentioned in the written answers, but they did raise conversation during the prototype training, and hence should be kept in the training.

In the “How” section, the Twitter pitch and the keyword guideline, were not mentioned as new information, but again, raised some questions and discussion during the training. The researcher believes that they were partly new information, or at the very least, can be helpful concrete guidelines to some, if not all. The remaining points that the presentation training goes through were new and interesting information at least to some of the test audience.

The researcher believes, that the content of the training is on point. Audiences will always have different level of knowledge to start with, and different areas of focus within that knowledge. The researcher believes, that the current content of the presentation training will satisfy most audience members’ desire to get new information, while also feeling smart. At this point, the researcher does not see a need to change the content of the presentation training. However, that is a possibility in the future, after the training has been given to more people, and more feedback has been received. Future audiences will most likely be varied, including different field professionals, in different kind of business roles.

The presentation training will be given for the first time officially on 4th of June 2019 to a professional network for women, called “Mothers in Business.” The researcher was approached by the network, after having written about the topic of presentation design several times to social media. The researcher will ask for feedback from the audience.

5.3 Other products to come

The study itself is an immediately useful and usable product, a library of valuable information, including feedback from the network, for the researchers profession and day-to-day work in the field of presentation design. In addition, the researcher will write a blog post about the research to the company X blog.

A fast and relatively easy way to utilise the theory and empirical part, is to publish it, as is, in a personal blog, the purpose of which is to build the professional brand of the researcher as an expert in the area. In this case, it would be made clear, that the posts are directly from the thesis. The plan is to publish one post per theory chapter, once a week for 32 weeks, starting week 32 in August 2019. Posts would last until beginning of April 2020, with a Christmas break in between. This would mean 19 posts for the autumn and 13 for spring. Naturally, anyone who is interested in reading the thesis in one go would be provided a link to it. For others, a blog can be a good way to take in the information in parts, as each chapter includes a lot of information. The blog would allow subscribing the next post directly to their email. The blog will be created by August 2019.

Furthermore, all the theory and data can be restructured into new post entities, building new combinations of the information, and possibly adding examples to it. This can be a continuance to the initial 32 posts, or be done simultaneously, allowing the other types of posts lean on the theory of the thesis, and focus more on free pondering of the phenomenon or craft.

Another way to use the work is creating a downloadable guide or multiple guides on the basis of it. The researcher will comprise a comprehensive list of advice on presentations, or separate them into multiple shorter guides according to theme, for example: typography, charts, structure of a pitch, or story, and so on. The guides are for anyone who creates presentations. One downloadable would be a summary of the thesis and research results. It may be lighter on the academic explanation side, and put more emphasis on the results and guiding readers toward the guides on different topics within presentation design. The downloadable materials will be available on the personal blog site.

6 Discussion

This chapter presents the consideration of the results that uncovered areas in which the respondents' opinions varied significantly, and match those to knowledge presented in the theory. It also presents the business value of the research. In addition, the trustworthiness of the research is evaluated, and the ethical viewpoints examined. Furthermore, the researcher presents their conclusions and evaluates the thesis process and learning along the way.

6.1 Consideration of results

A third of the statements, more precisely 10, clearly divided opinions or caused confusion among the respondents. It is not necessarily surprising, that some of them may have felt too black and white, to some respondents. They were partly intended to be bold, to find topics that could be discussed later on in the products of the thesis. Next, each of the ten is presented and the reasoning of the statement with references to the theory is shortly explained.

Over half of the respondents disagreed to some level with the statement "Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation." As it is discussed in chapter "Buy attention with a multisensory experience", whether we know it or not, our brains crave multisensory experiences. In fact, they are key in keeping us engaged throughout, for example, a 40-minute presentation, where we otherwise have a stubborn innate clock starting to turn off our attention after ten minutes.

The statement "A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document", had the largest portion of "Neither agree or disagree" answers in the section with presentation related statements. Just over half agreed to some level with the statement. As it is discussed in chapter "Think cinema rather than document", presentations will have increasingly more in common with cartoons or cinema, through telling stories, using sound and evocative images. Presenting is, or should be, a visually oriented way of telling a story. The importance of having a story came up many times also in the open answers of the research.

A crushing majority agreed with the statement "Empathy is key in persuasion", which was posed as a false statement in the research. As it is discussed in chapter "Perspective tops empathy in persuasion", moving others, means understanding their perspective, which in turn requires thinking, and not necessarily feeling.

Empathy has, in the recent years, been highly discussed in the business world, so it's possible that its role was over exaggerated in the responses. It is trendy to answer that empathy is key. In the end, feeling or knowing how one's client feels, may not help in crafting a message that directly addresses their perspective.

The statement "Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process"—considered false by the researcher—got a lot of "Neither agree or disagree" answers, but most agreed with it on some level. As it is discussed in chapter "Persuasion starts before conscious processing", we constantly scan our surroundings, and when something happens to catch our attention, something else loses our attention. We tend to believe, that whatever has our attention and focus, is what is most important at that moment, and that other things are not as important. Things we give our attention to, get a sense of heightened importance. In this way, by directing attention we are already persuading.

The statement that got many confused, "Potential is more intriguing than experience", got a "Neither agreed or disagreed" answer from almost half of the respondents. As it is discussed in chapter "Tell authentic stories and sell potential", potential is more fascinating than previous accomplishments, as its more uncertain. Additionally, the best stories promise to make a wish true, or they play with fear and paint a picture of losing something dear to us. Also, as discussed in chapter "Buy attention with a multisensory experience", a persuasive speech moves between "what is" and "what could be", ending in a "new bliss", which is, of course, some potential outcome, not something that was achieved before.

No other statement gathered such an evenly distributed set of answers, as "Charts always make a main point clearer" did. Almost a third agreed, almost a third didn't', and almost a third did neither. As it is discussed in chapter "Making charts is too easy", charts are too often cluttered with unnecessary things, whether its unnecessary data or visual effects, many times they do not highlight what is most important. Sometimes they give no scale, no comparison, no perspective, which could help the audience understand the discussed scope of things better. Charts are a great way to make new information easier to take in, remember, and act on, but too often that is not the case.

A somewhat related point is the next statement of "Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough." Also here the responses were quite evenly distributed between the three main answer options. This statement, together with the one above, had the largest amount of unsure answers in the entire questionnaire.

As it is discussed in chapter “To highlight something, tone down everything else”, since we are such vigorous seekers of contrast—not only in colour, but in shape, words, happenings around us, to name a few—for good, clear, communication, supportive, i.e. secondary, elements need to be toned down in a design, so that what is primary pops up.

Over half of the respondents agreed or were unsure about the statement “Typography is not as important as the message itself.” Correspondingly, almost half agreed, and that is the half the researcher agrees with. As it is discussed in chapter “Typography is as important as the message itself”, typography always communicates something about the content itself, and makes all the difference in the world on how the message is received.

Another false statement, “Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system” received answers contrary to the researchers. As it is discussed in chapter “Verbal system processes tables and visual system typography”, tables are read, and therefore a table with a lot of contents can be dangerously intriguing to audiences, as they automatically start to read them, and study them, and lose focus on the presenter, unless the presenter goes through the table with the audience, and therefore guides their attention. But as everyone reads with different speed, it is likely the audience anyway skips ahead, if they are shown the whole table at once.

Yet another false statement, “Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories”, received a lot of unsure answers, although almost half shared the view of the researcher. As it is discussed in chapter “Conversations and stories draw us in”, narratives get our attention naturally, and engage us automatically, and are remembered more easily.

6.2 Business value

The research brings business value, to company X by suggesting that the level of knowledge about presentation design is similar in Finland and Sweden. Therefore, the need for presentation design services may exist also in Sweden, which is a market company X seeks to expand its business at some point.

Additionally, company X’s business benefits from the extensive learning that the researcher did during the process. The researcher developed their competence in the field, and can use the gained knowledge and insights in customer cases as needed, as well as share them with other employees of the company. Therefore, the increased competence brings value to the company’s customers through quality work.

Outside of the scope of the case company, the research brings business value to all professionals—and thus their employers—who will take part in the upcoming training, as well as to all other trainings that may be arranged to other groups of professionals in the future. As discussed in the beginning of the thesis, design-centric companies outperform other companies financially. Design thinking affects companies wholly and can clearly have a major role in the successes of companies.

The research, and presentation training that stems from it, are an effort in line with that trend. The training directly contributes to an increase in an individuals or team's knowledge about designing presentations. Better and more effective presentations reduce internal costs, by decreasing ineffective meetings and sub-optimal communication. In addition, more impactful presentations grow revenues, by increasing the chance of converting leads into customers; they can also help companies align their personnel around the same goals through better storytelling and raised employee engagement.

On the flip side, what is the impact on business, when all other business roles, except general managers, sales and communications people, are only on an average level of performance with presentations? This is a question outside of the researches scope, but an interesting one, nonetheless. Might there be a downside to the company, if employees in, for example, administration, finance, human resources, analytics, IT, account management, or business development, present inefficiently important findings in their area of responsibility, which would demand action from, let's say, a board of directors.

This is not to say, that a presentation could not be good and effective without a presentation material, such as the ones discussed in the research. However, most business meetings do include presentation material and presenting. It is highly unlikely they are effective presentations, if the professionals do not know presentation design principles; principles, which are based on studies in the field of biology and psychology, and on questions like how humans process, learn and recollect information.

In addition, the research outcomes suggest that people with managerial responsibility over other people know presentation design principles better than people with no managerial responsibility. One may wonder; did the first group get to where they are due to their presentation knowledge and capabilities, or overall superior skills in communications? The researcher believes that excellent communication skills, including knowledge of good presentation design, helps professionals get further in their career. Mastering presentation design has value for both an individual professional, as well as a company.

The research got to the bottom of the topics that the reserachers network of business professionals did not master. The training's first direct and short-term objective is to increase the individual's knowledge especially in those areas, to close the larger gaps. This is already a considerable business value for companies. Furthermore, the long-term objective is to ignite a new presentation philosofy, which will lead businesses to superior financial performance, one effective presentation at a time—internal or external.

6.3 Trustworthiness of the research and ethical viewpoints

The researcher finds, that there were no data quality issues that should raise concerns on the reliability of the research. The chosen data collection method has been explained with arguments in chapter 4.1.3. In the same chapters, the questionnaire design, as well as data collection and analysis processes have been documented in detail.

In the appendices the reader can find more about designing of the web questionnaire (appendix 1), the contents of the web questionnaire (appendix 2), answers to all statements in numbers (appendix 3), responses regarding working role (appendix 4), and responses regarding company's industry (appendix 5), and adjusted categories for both. The researcher is very transparent on the taken steps throughout the research.

All data is stored in the original data sheet, which was exported from Google Form, and copied as a whole to one Excel file, where data was carefully processed and manually coded numerically, in some parts, as explained in the referred to chapters. Only the researcher has access to the raw data. However, all the data is available to all readers in the main chapter four as well as in the appendices.

Upon request the raw data could be made available to other researchers for replicating the research, for example in the name of further investigation of the data and discovery of relationships. If that were to happen, the respondents contact details would be removed to ensure their privacy, as they were promised confidentiality. The researcher believes that redoing the questionnaire in a similar context, for example in Finland among a similar network of professionals, would yield similar results.

Each phase of data collection and processing was handled carefully to minimise errors. The researcher believes that no errors, that would have made it to the final thesis, or had an effect on results, occurred in the process. All steps could be backtracked, as they are recorded in the thesis and visible in the one file where data was handled.

The researcher believes that quality findings were made, and, that the research is valid. Findings are consistent with the theory, proved by all the statements that respondents mainly answered as theory explains to be so. The statements where respondents disagreed with theory do not hurt the internal validity, but shows the areas in which respondents could benefit from better knowledge of the theory. Also, the answers to the open questions show what different attributions of a good presentation are more known to the respondents—many of them discussed in the theory.

As mentioned above, it is also the belief of the researcher, that under similar conditions, the findings could be repeated and generalised, as the context was western culture business professional, and presentations, which are widely used everywhere with the same tools. The same research could be done in the other Nordic countries perhaps, as well as elsewhere in Europe and the English speaking countries. Thus, results could be compared, and made further conclusions on.

The amount of answers this research gathered, enforces the trust on the results being generalisable, at the very least, in a similar context. If then, the context was different, perhaps among business professionals of a very different culture, it should not be a surprise if answers are different, as for example colours have different meanings in different cultures, which certainly would affect the use of them in a presentation, if presentations even in that case are so widely used as they are in western culture.

As far as the researcher is concerned, the design of the research was logical, comprehensive and detailed, and that, there are no contradictions between ontology, epistemology, or the research approach or data collection and processing methods. As far as the researcher is concerned, the internal and external validity of the thesis is intact.

Respondents were able to answer the questionnaire on their own, without any supervision or influence by the researcher. Thus, there should not be any bias that would have impacted the answers and results. Statements were both true and false, which means they needed to be properly read and thought about before answering. In addition, they were directly from the theory, which means that they were not the opinions of the researcher. It is possible that not all statements were clear to all respondents, or that some of them felt leading in the eyes of some respondents. However, as mentioned before, the large amount of responses helps to iron out possible miscommunication, and indicate where the majorities' beliefs lie. It is the belief of the researcher that for the majority, it was clear what was stated and, if the statement felt true or not, i.e. if they had previous knowledge of the matter, which would enable them to give an opinion.

The fact that many, especially communications specialists and creative professionals, got quite high scores in the research as well, supports the point, that when one has knowledge in a subject matter, one is able to show it. Furthermore, the researcher stayed true to the data, and reported it transparently, to prove that there is no bias in the reporting or analysing of results.

The researcher sees that good scientific practices were upheld throughout the research. The research is trustworthy and transparent, and has its reliability and validity intact, and that no bias influenced the research.

6.4 Conclusions and suggestions for further research

The researcher concludes, that the general level of knowledge is not great when it comes to presentations, and that there indeed are relationships between different factors of a professional, such as their role in an organisation, and the level of knowledge they have regarding presentations. The results are reported extensively in chapter 4.2 and summarised in 4.3. The ten statements, which divided answers the most, and differed of that of the researchers and what the thesis theory suggests, are presented in the consideration of results.

If the questionnaire had been a school exam with five available grades, everyone would have passed; over half would have received a relatively good score; 40 percent would have received a good score; and just over two percent, i.e. seven people out of 299 respondents, would have gotten a very good score—none received an excellent score.

Presentation design means having knowledge and skill in both content creation, such as writing understandably and persuasively, as well as, in impactful visual communication and clear design. The fact that certain business roles, such as general management, sales and communications, fared better than other in the questionnaire, supported the thesis.

Also, respondents with a masters or a higher degree scored better in the questionnaire, and so did respondents who have managerial responsibility over other people, and those who do their own presentations. It would also appear, that “start-uppers”, entrepreneurs and freelancers may also be better off in this area. The research does not and cannot evaluate, which came first, the knowledge or the factor that is found having a relationship with, for example, a person’s role or status in a company, or the skill. It raises questions like; are general managers, such as CEO’s in the role partly because they know how to communicate well, for example, in presentation situations.

Many business professionals fly blind, when it comes to this topic. If the name of the game is selling an idea or a service, it is concerning if the material, that is supposed to help the presenter to do so, is sub-par. It is like trying to run a marathon with one broken leg.

It would be the recommendation of the researcher, for businesses to put more effort in building this skill within their personnel. As stated in the theory, it is increasingly everyone's job to be able to persuade, and in one sense of the word or another, sell. As one respondent mentioned in their open answer, it should be mandatory for schools to teach public speaking. It is the belief of the researcher that it should also be mandatory to study visual communication. Not everyone has to be a designer, but the very basics would benefit everyone greatly, especially those who end up in business jobs.

Further research in the topic could include how professionals use materials, for example, how often or how many present the whole material they have, or improvise according to a discussion with a client or internally in the organisation, when they do influencing work— and are the presentations build to support the presenter. In addition, one could research what are the things that professionals feel are missing from their presentations. For example, how many are missing a proper description of their services; is the service even productised, which connects all presentations to the company’s business development and the quality of their offering.

6.5 Evaluation of the thesis process and one’s own learning

A significant driver for the thesis was the researchers genuine interest in the topic and desire to learn as much as possible about it, and then put that knowledge into use in various ways. The aim was to get a broad view and deep knowledge of the topic, in order to better perform in presentation design projects, write about the topic and be able to train others on the topic.

The thesis process progressed steadily during approximately one year and two months. It took longer than originally planned, mostly due to the acquiring of information being a very thorough process, which took more time than expected. The researcher studied most presentation books found in university and city libraries during February and November 2018.

In addition, there were books by respected experts and authors about information design, sales, marketing and persuasion. Some information was acquired also from online articles. Familiarity of the topic came also from the researchers job.

After researching the topic for about 10 months, and gathering 109 pages worth of fascinating notes about presentations and related themes, it was time to construct the theory chapters. A vast majority of this work was done during December 2018 and January 2019. The research questionnaire was planned in the end of January, and designed and published in the beginning of February. Answers were gathered during that same month.

In March the results were analysed and reported, as well as the discussion chapter written. In April the contents of the thesis was further worked on. Furthermore, the product was designed, described and tested on a small audience, and improved on the basis of received feedback. Hence, writing of the finished thesis took five months.

The thesis work progressed in a timely manner, considering the level of devotion towards detail, versatility and quality, both in the exploration of theories, as well as on the planning and implementation of the research, which the researcher wanted to put in the process and final product.

A lot of work went into all aspects of the thesis, from thorough theory investigation, to gathering a large set of data from a versatile group of professionals, and analysis of the results against the research questions and sub-questions. The researcher learned a lot from research methods, quantitative data analysis, and handling data in Excel. Most importantly, the process brought a great deal of new knowledge on the topic, which supports the researchers work, and can, and will, be refined to multiple concrete products. The study will be utilised to the fullest and bear fruit for a long time to come.

Furthermore, the researcher received a lot of positive feedback regarding the topic, from professionals who answered the study. Many told that they find the topic interesting and important, and requested to hear results after they have been published.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Designing of the web questionnaire

Sub-chapter	Chapter *	Statements in the order in which they are presented in the Black font = True statement -- Red font, (F) = False statement	Section of web questionnaire
2.1	2.1.1	- Audiences have learned to find what is relevant even in bad presentations. (F)	1. Presentation knowledge
2.1	*2.1.1 (2)*	- Including a lot of information and data into your presentation shows that you know the topic. (F)	
2.1	*2.1.1 (3)*	- The audience can easily switch between listening to the presenter and reading a slide, and get the most important point. (F)	
2.1	*2.1.1 (4)*	- Presenting slides before discussing something data-heavy with a small group of people is a good practise. (F)	
2.1	2.1.2	- The purpose of a presentation is to arouse curiosity and emotion.	
2.2	2.2.3	- The best recollection comes from a combination of words and images.	
2.3	2.3.1	- A good presentation is a comprehensive portrayal of the topic at hand. (F)	
2.3	*2.3.2 (2)*	- Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation.	
2.3	2.3.3	- A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document.	
2.1	*2.1.2 (1)*	- I can have an impact on others without arousing emotion. (F)	2. Persuasion knowledge
2.1	*2.1.2 (2)*	- Design, including presentation design, should be at the core of a company.	
2.2	*2.2.1 (2)*	- We remember emotional moments better than others.	
2.2	*2.2.2 (2)*	- We naturally assign meaning to everything we see or hear.	
2.3	2.3.2.	- Empathy is key in persuasion. (F)	
2.3	*2.3.2 (1)*	- Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process. (F)	
2.3	*2.3.2 (3)*	- Potential is more intriguing than experience.	
2.3	*2.3.3(1)*	- Design is a persuasion tool.	
2.1	*2.1.1 (1)*	- Charts always make a main point clearer. (F)	3. Visual design knowledge
2.2	2.2.1	- Visuals help learning and increase recollection.	
2.2	*2.2.1 (1)*	- The subconscious mind gets information from some visual elements.	
2.2	2.2.2	- A visualisations purpose is to create understanding.	
2.2	*2.2.2 (1)*	- Every choice matters in the design of visual communication because everything tells something.	
2.2	*2.2.2 (3)*	- Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough. (F)	
2.3	*2.3.3 (2)*	- Typography is not as important as the message itself. (F)	
2.2	*2.2.3 (1)*	- Rhetorical devices, e.g. anecdotes, metaphors, etc., help us understand the message better.	4. Content design knowledge
2.2	*2.2.3 (2)*	- Nouns should be concrete, verbs should be active, words and sentences should be short.	
2.2	*2.2.3 (3)*	- Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system. (F)	
2.3	*2.3.1 (1)*	- Having to create a short sales pitch helps find clarity in the pitch.	
2.3	*2.3.1 (2)*	- Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories. (F)	

* Numbered chapter (vertical numbers), *or an unnumbered, fourth-level chapter, subheadline in italics, and ordinal number (in italics)*

Appendix 2. Web questionnaire form

SECTION 1: Statements about presentations

1. Audiences have learned to find what is relevant even in bad presentations.
2. Including a lot of information and data into your presentation shows that you know the topic.
3. The audience can easily switch between listening to the presenter and reading a slide, and get the most important point.
4. Presenting slides before discussing something data-heavy with a small group of people is a good practise.
5. The purpose of a presentation is to arouse curiosity and emotion.
6. The best recollection comes from a combination of words and images.
7. A good presentation is a comprehensive portrayal of the topic at hand.
8. Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation.
9. A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document.

Answer options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

SECTION 2: Statements about persuasion

1. I can have an impact on others without arousing emotion.
2. Design, including presentation design, should be at the core of a company.
3. We remember emotional moments better than others.
4. We naturally assign meaning to everything we see or hear.
5. Empathy is key in persuasion.
6. Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process.
7. Potential is more intriguing than experience.
8. Design is a persuasion tool.

Answer options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

SECTION 3: Statements about visual design

1. Charts always make a main point clearer.
2. Visuals help learning and increase recollection.
3. The subconscious mind gets information from some visual elements.
4. A visualisations purpose is to create understanding.
5. Every choice matters in the design of visual communication because everything tells something.
6. Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough.
7. Typography is not as important as the message itself.

Answer options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

SECTION 4: Statements about content design

1. Rhetorical devices, e.g. anecdotes, metaphors, etc., help us understand the message better.
2. Nouns should be concrete, verbs should be active, words and sentences should be short.
3. Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system.
4. Having to create a short sales pitch helps find clarity in the pitch.
5. Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories.

Answer options:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

SECTION 5: Love it or hate it, but please do say it!

1. Any thoughts you want to share regarding presentations or presenting?

Answer: free text field

SECTION 6: Background information—working environment

1. If you had to choose, would you say you are mostly the one who gets sold an idea or service etc. to, or are you usually doing the selling of ideas or services? Consider both internal and external sales.

Answer options:

- I usually get sold to
- I usually do the selling

2. What is your (main) role in your organisation?

Answer options:

- General management
- Sales
- Marketing
- Communications
- Expert, with client or sales responsibility
- Other… (free text field)

3. What is your title?

Answer: free text field

4. Do you have managerial responsibility over other people?

Answer options:

- Yes
- No

5. What size organisation do you work for?

Answer options:

- Corporate
- Small or medium sized company
- Startup
- I am an entrepreneur or freelancer

6. Is the company domestic or international?

Answer options:

- Domestic, in Finland
- Domestic, outside Finland
- International

7. What industry is the company in?

Answer options:

- Industrial, manufacturing, or similar
- Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar
- Ad / Marketing / Digital / Creative / Content agency or similar
- B2B-services
- Other… (free text field)

8. Who does the presentations you use?

Answer options:

- They come to me from the company more or less as a given
- People working under me do my presentations for me
- I do my own presentations

SECTION 7: Background information—demographics

1. Highest education

Answer options:

- Highschool / upper secondary school
- Bachelor
- Masters
- Higher degree than masters

2. Nationality

Answer: free text field

3. Gender

Answer options:

- Woman
- Man
- I'd rather not say

4. Age

Answer options:

- 25 or under
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46 or more

Appendix 3. Responses to statements by section.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 1: Statements about presentations						
1. Audiences have learned to find what is relevant even in bad presentations.	32	**183**	39	42	2	298
2. Including a lot of information and data into your presentation shows that you know the topic.	71	**166**	33	27	2	299
3. The audience can easily switch between listening to the presenter and reading a slide, and get the most important point.	54	**148**	42	48	7	299
4. Presenting slides before discussing something data-heavy with a small group of people is a good practise.	3	19	56	**183**	38	299
5. The purpose of a presentation is to arouse curiosity and emotion.	2	9	57	**163**	68	299
6. The best recollection comes from a combination of words and images.	1	5	21	**154**	118	299
7. A good presentation is a comprehensive portrayal of the topic at hand.	5	47	52	**150**	43	297
8. Everyone wants a presentation to include for example video, a demonstration or audience participation.	30	**127**	63	66	13	299
9. A presentation has more in common with cinema than with a document.	7	62	73	**134**	23	299

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 2: Statements about persuasion						
1. I can have an impact on others without arousing emotion.	37	**158**	44	55	5	299
2. Design, including presentation design, should be at the core of a company.	5	23	50	**171**	50	299
3. We remember emotional moments better than others.	0	0	9	107	**182**	298
4. We naturally assign meaning to everything we see or hear.	3	32	40	**187**	37	299
5. Empathy is key in persuasion.	1	18	51	**167**	62	299
6. Persuasion starts once the audience gets the main points to process.	4	48	72	**156**	19	299
7. Potential is more intriguing than experience.	2	60	**140**	84	13	299
8. Design is a persuasion tool.	1	8	31	**192**	67	299

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 3: Statements about visual design						
1. Charts always make a main point clearer.						
	15	83	88	**93**	20	299
2. Visuals help learning and increase recollection.						
	0	0	5	**166**	128	299
3. The subconscious mind gets information from some visual elements.						
	0	1	24	**192**	82	299
4. A visualisations purpose is to create understanding.						
	0	4	24	**158**	113	299
5. Every choice matters in the design of visual communication because everything tells something.						
	0	17	42	**180**	58	297
6. Highlighting the most important thing on a slide without dimming other elements is enough.						
	7	94	**116**	78	4	299
7.Typography is not as important as the message itself.						
	18	**127**	65	75	14	299

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of answers
SECTION 4: Statements about content design						
1. Rhetorical devices, e.g. anecdotes, metaphors, etc., help us understand the message better.						
	1	12	53	**166**	67	299
2. Nouns should be concrete, verbs should be active, words and sentences should be short.						
	1	3	36	**172**	86	298
3. Tables with numbers or text are processed by the visual system.						
	3	37	107	**139**	12	298
4. Having to create a short sales pitch helps find clarity in the pitch.						
	0	5	26	**170**	97	298
5. Short bullet points are easier to remember than stories.						
	26	**112**	81	49	30	298

Appendix 4. Responses regarding working role and adjusted role categories.

	Provided categories of roles	
1	General management	
2	Sales	
3	Marketing	
4	Communications	
5	Expert, with client or sales responsibility	
	Roles in "Other..." -field by respondents	**Adjusted categories**
6	Chairman of the board, boardmember and owner	General management
7	Entrepeneur. So all of the above	General management
8	Expert + General Management	General management
9	Owner	General management
10	Channel Management	Sales
11	Growth	Sales
12	Sales Support	Sales
13	Vendor management	Sales
14	Marketing & digitalization	Marketing
15	App content creation	Communications
16	Expert	Expert (other)
17	Specialist	Expert (other)
18	Teacher	Expert (other)
19	Customer service	Account Management
20	Administrative Executive	Admin & Finance
21	Finance	Admin & Finance
22	Business development	Business Development
23	Continuous improvement	Business Development
24	Everything	Business Development
25	process management	Business Development
26	Project Manager and doing sales also	Business Development
27	Currently it is business development and project management - I need to sell internally and bring in partners externally. Still selling to a degree but its slightly different to selling a service or contract	Business Development
28	Data & analytics	Data & analytics
29	Design & communications	Design
30	Design and research	Design
31	Design management and expert	Design
32	(Kind of an expert with client or sales responsibility but also) Designer with some client responsibilities	Design
33	HR	Human resources
34	Human Resources	Human resources
35	Investor	Investor
36	VC investor	Investor
37	(until recently) Buyer of ICT Services	IT & Product Development
38	Developing	IT & Product Development
39	Development	IT & Product Development
40	ICT development	IT & Product Development
41	IT, Performing arts, leadership	IT & Product Development
42	Product management	IT & Product Development
43	Research and development	IT & Product Development
44	Tech	IT & Product Development
45	(blank)	Undisclosed

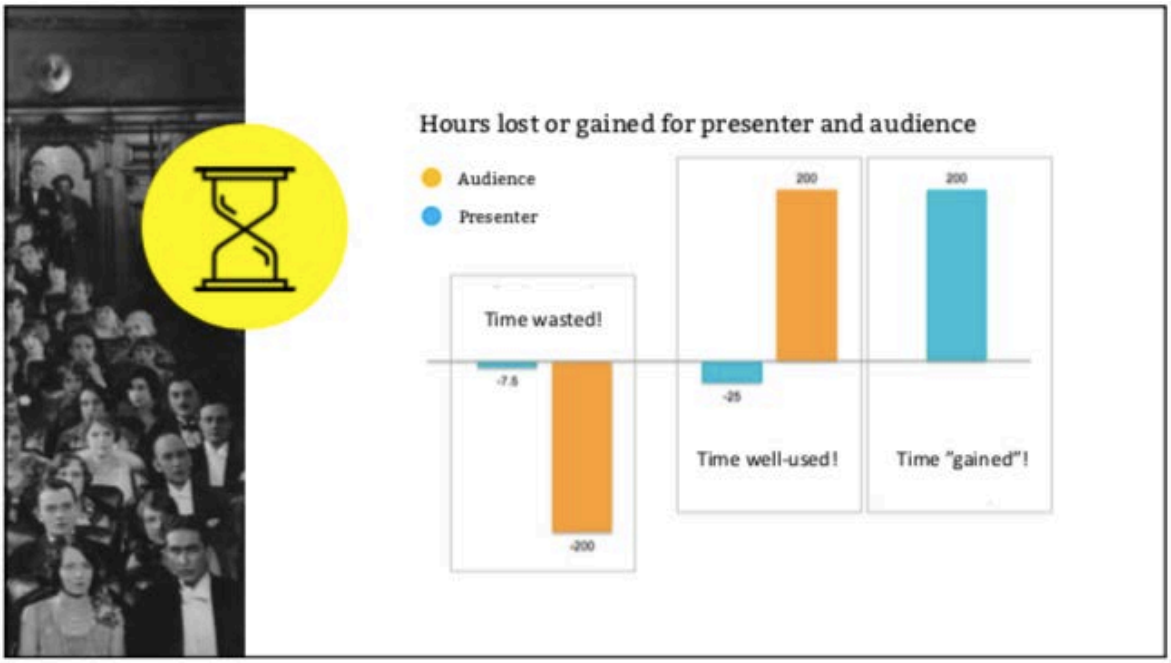
Appendix 5. Responses regarding company's industry and adjusted categories.

	Provided categories of company industry
1	Industrial, manufacturing, or similar
2	Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or similar
3	Ad/Marketing/Digital/Creative/Content agency or similar
4	B2B-services

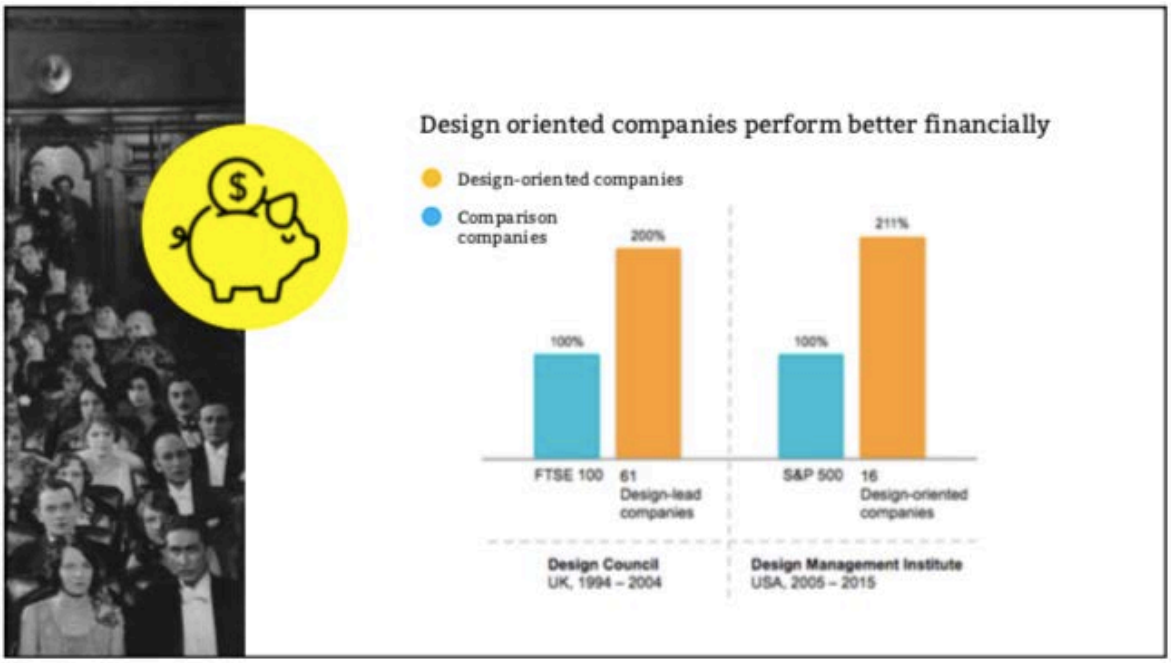
	Industries in "Other..." -field by respondents	Adjusted categories
5	Logistics	Industrial, manufacturing, or similar
6	Pharmaceutical	Industrial, manufacturing, or similar
7	SaaS and B2B	Technology, Software-as-a-Service, or ...
8	MLM	Ad/Marketing/Digital/Creative/Content ...
9	B2B & B2C	B2B-services
10	Consulting firm	B2B-services
11	Facility services	B2B-services
12	HR services industry	B2B-services
13	importer and reseller of medical equipment	B2B-services
14	Recruitment	B2B-services
15	recruitment agency	B2B-services
16	B2C services	B2C-services
17	BtoC- services	B2C-services
18	Banking	Finance
19	finance	Finance
20	Financial	Finance
21	Financial services	Finance
22	Financial services	Finance
23	Financing/Retail Banking	Finance
24	Insurance	Finance
25	Investing	Finance
26	Venture Capital	Finance
27	Entertainment	Media
28	Entertainment	Media
29	Media	Media
30	Media house	Media
31	Government	Public office & NGO
32	NGO	Public office & NGO
33	Non govermental organization	Public office & NGO
34	Non-governmental organisation	Public office & NGO
35	public policy	Public office & NGO
36	Retail	Retail
37	Retail shop-fitting industry	Retail
38	Education	Other
39	Health and welfare	Other
40	Service	Other
41	Tech/StartUp Community	Other
42	Travel	Other
43	Travelling	Other
44	(blank)	Undisclosed

Appendix 6. Presentation training PowerPoint-material.

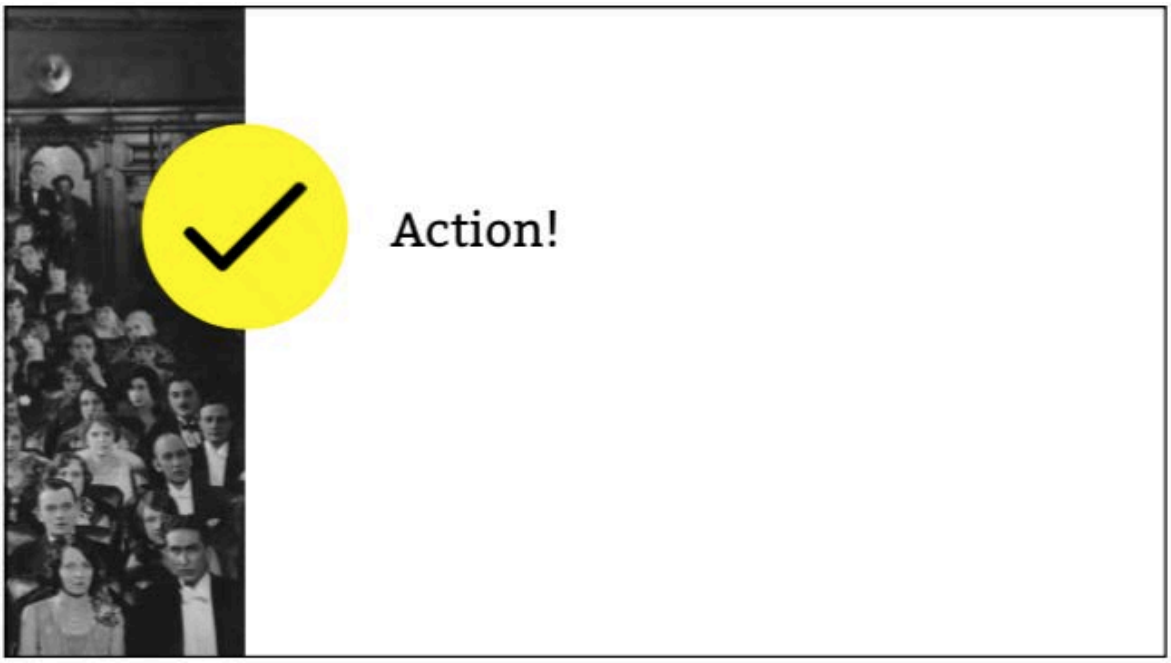
To save time



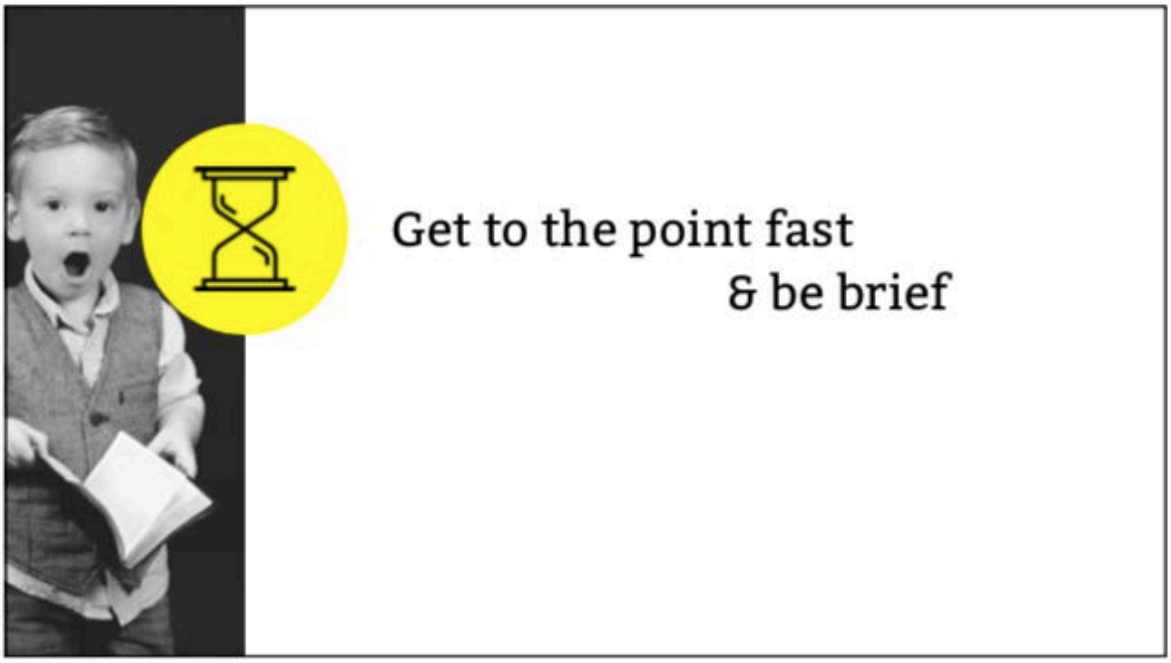
To make money

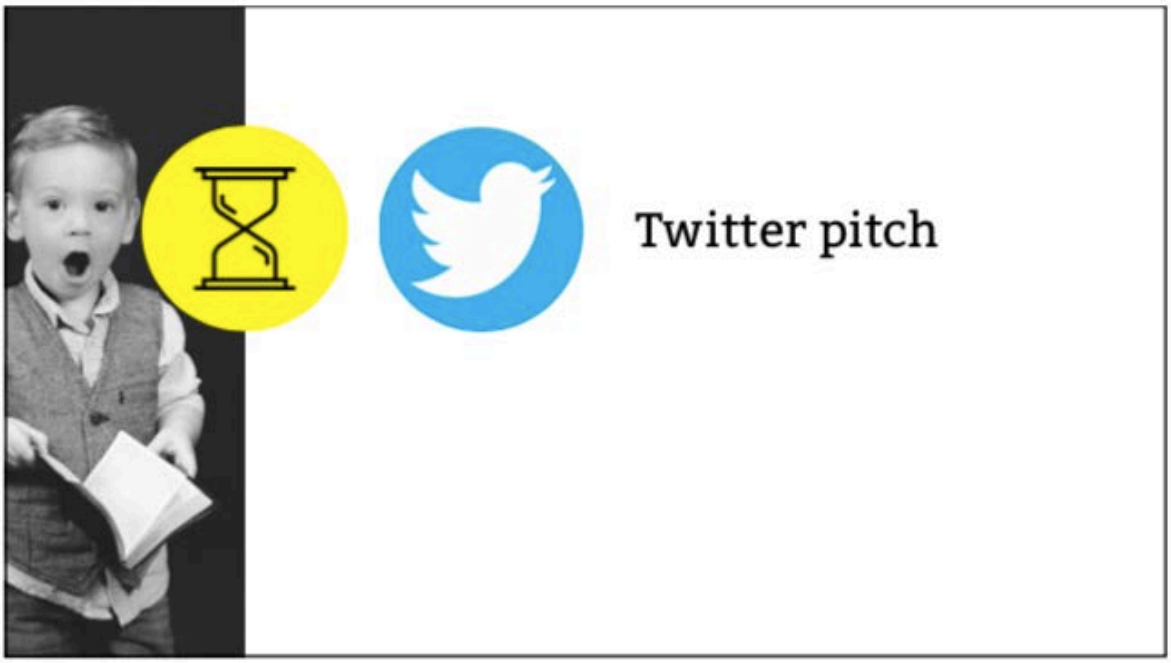

Design oriented companies perform better financially
Design-oriented companies
Comparison companies
100%
200%
100%
211%
FTSE 100
61 Design-lead companies
S&P 500
16 Design-oriented companies
Design Council
UK, 1994 – 2004
Design Management Institute
USA, 2005 – 2015

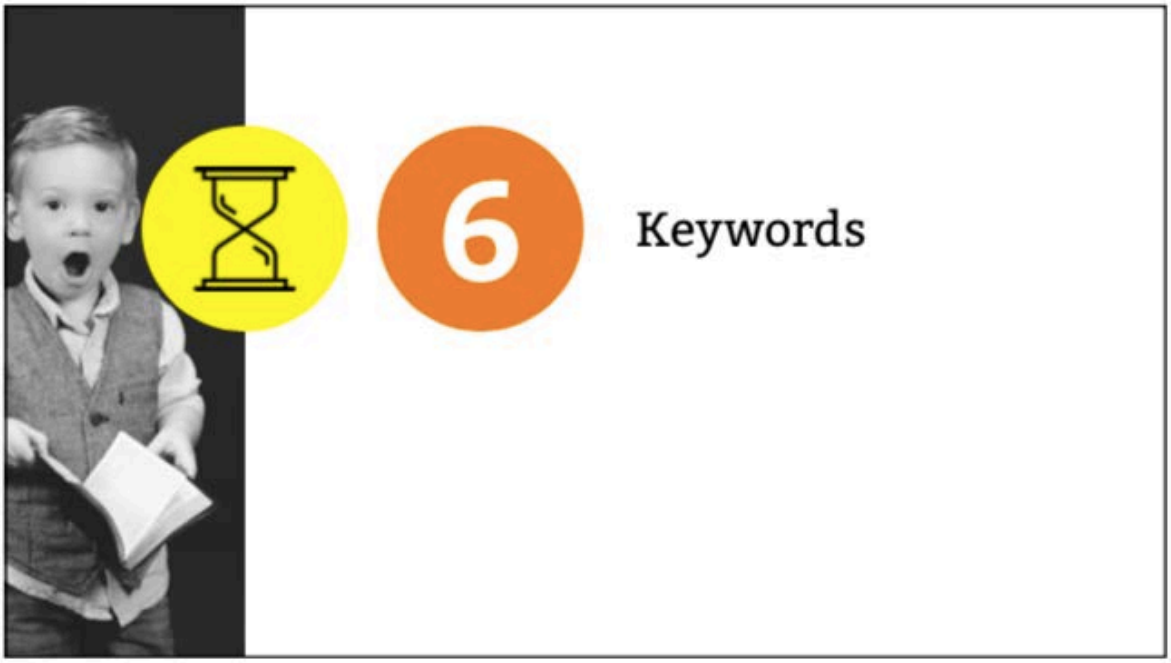
Action...?


Action!

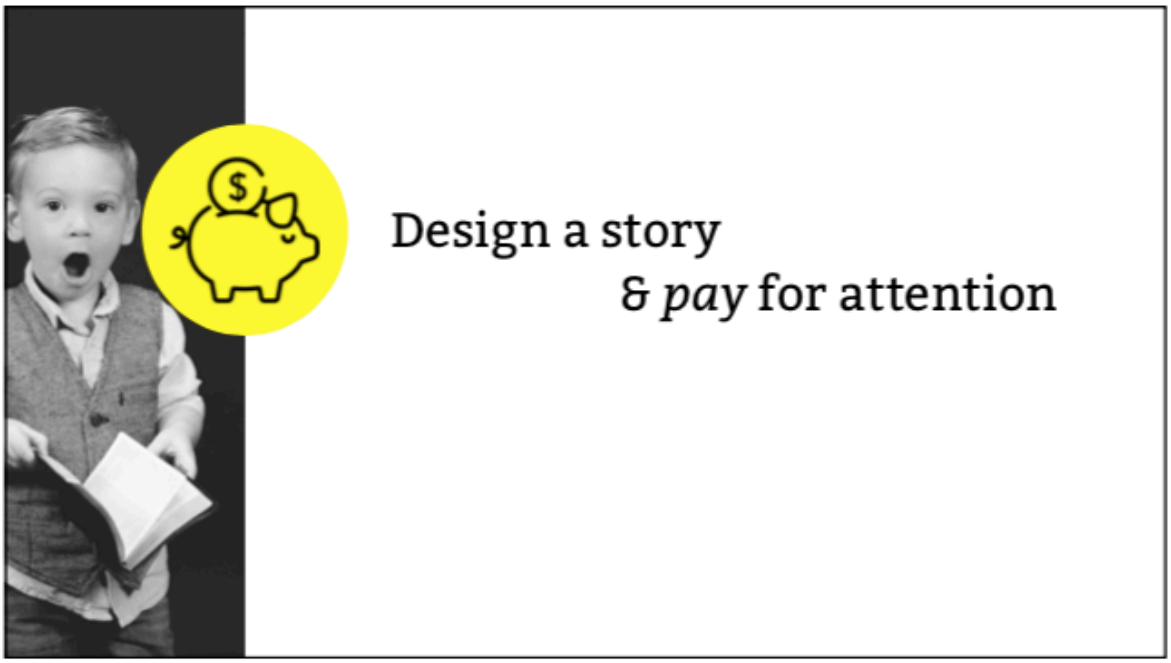

HOW?


Get to the point fast
& be brief


Twitter pitch


6
Keywords


6
Get to the point fast
& be brief

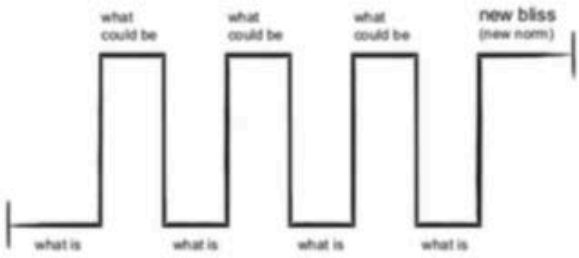

Design a story
& *pay* for attention

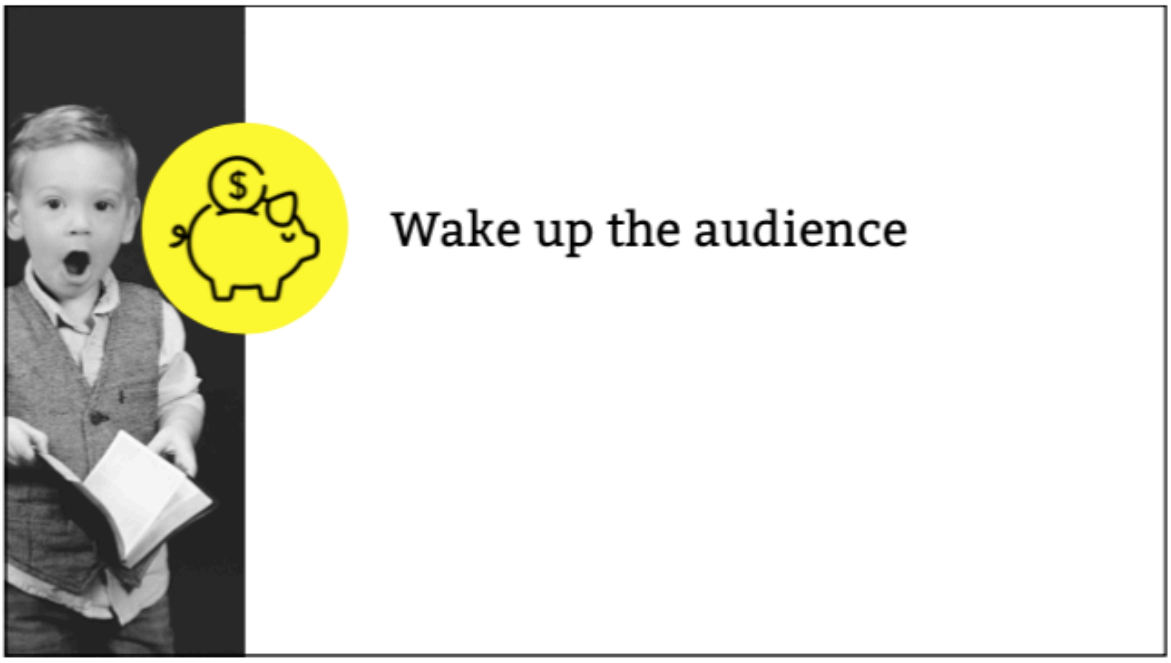

It's not a document

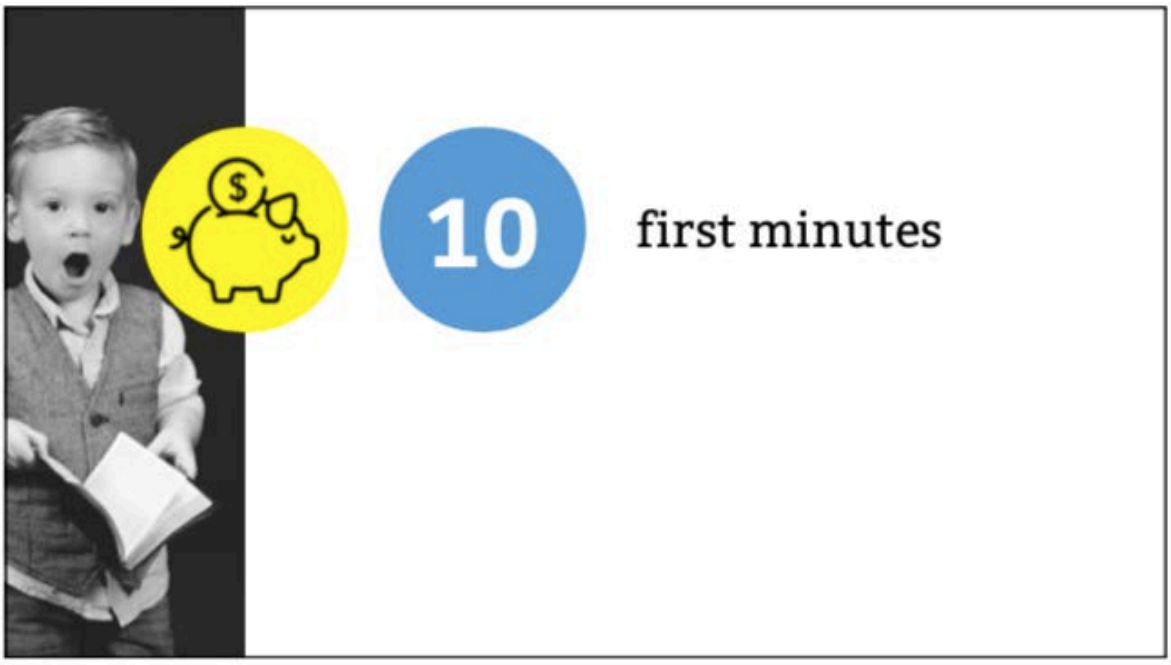

"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never
'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself'."

"Once upon a time_____.
Every day,_____.
One day_____.
Because of that,_____.
Because of that,_____.
Until finally_____."

Create and solve conflict

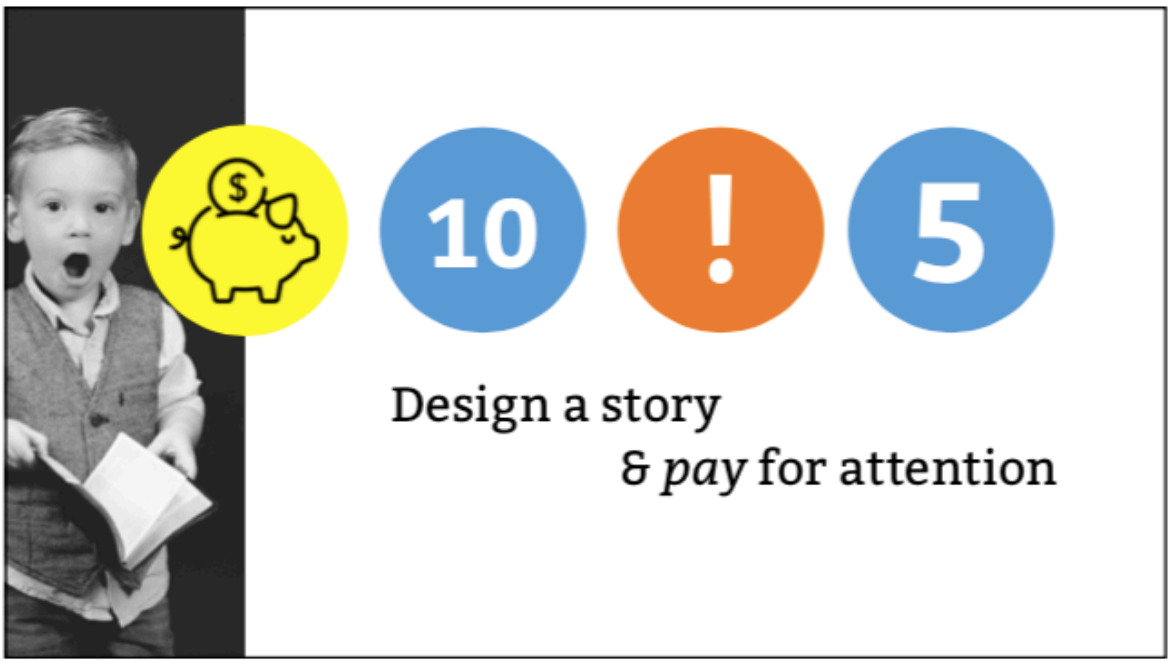


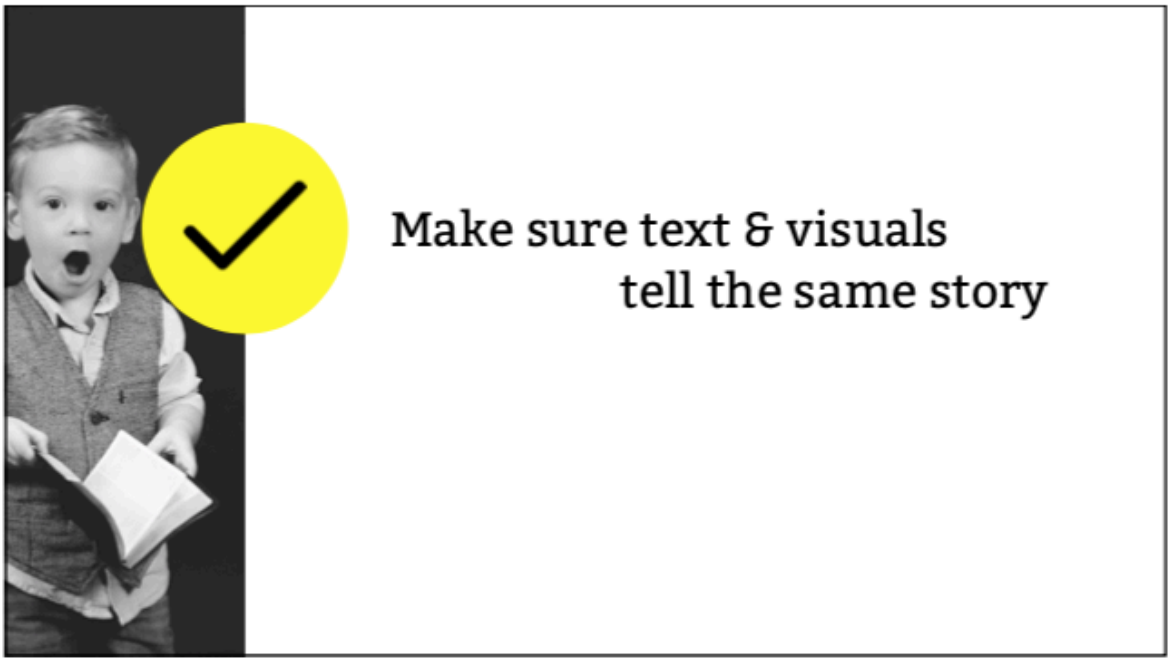

Wake up the audience


10
first minutes

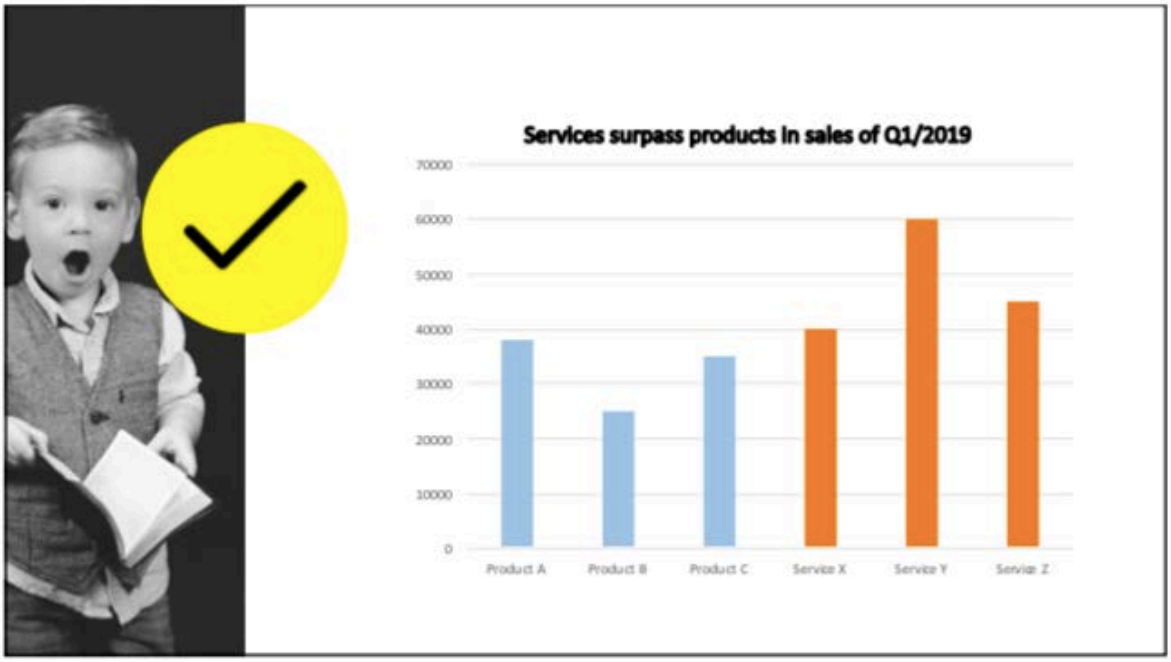

!
then, steep drop

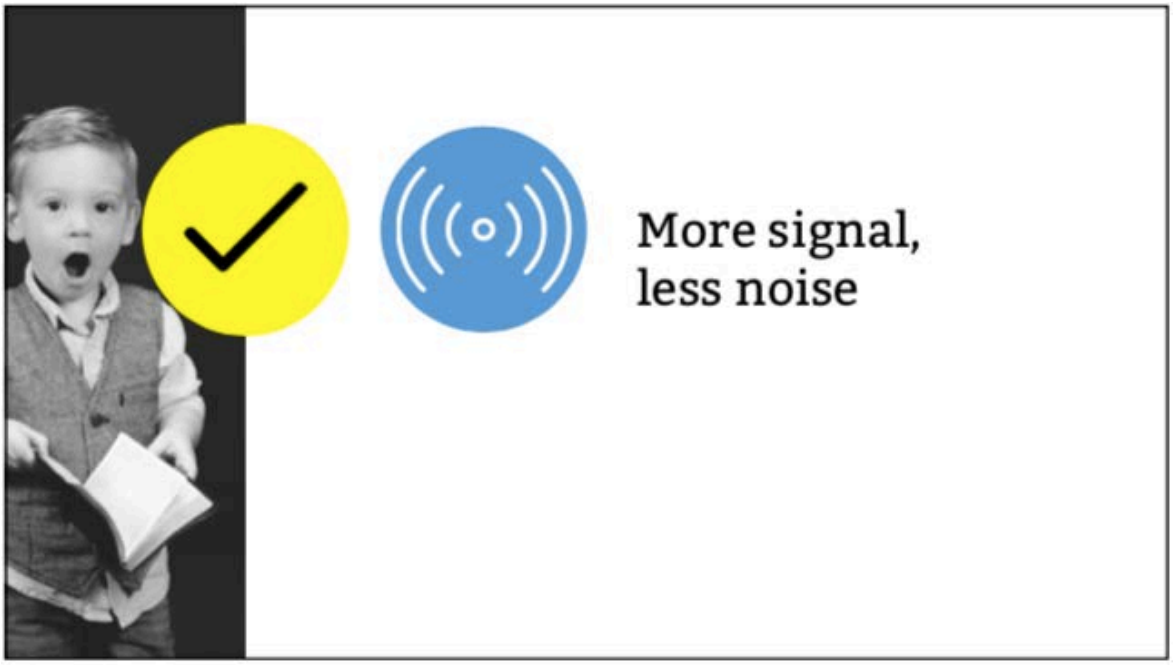

5
last minutes


10
!
5
Design a story
& *pay* for attention

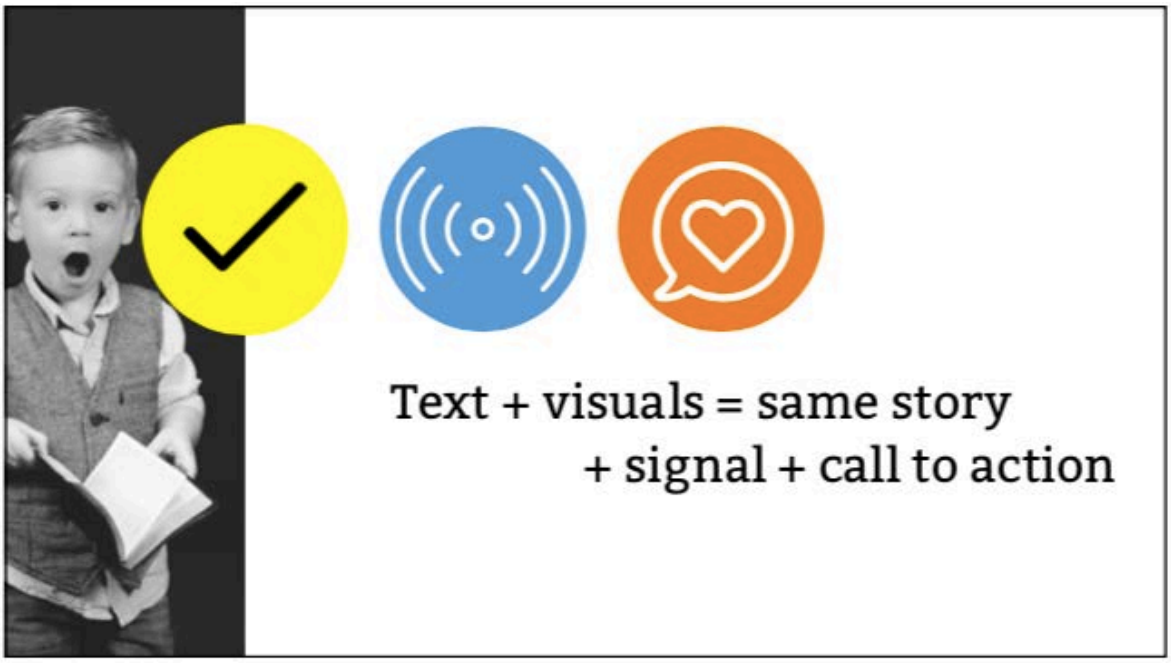

Make sure text & visuals
tell the same story


Sales Q1/2019
70000
60000
50000
40000
30000
20000
10000
0
Product A
Product B
Product C
Service X
Service Y
Service Z


Services surpass products in sales of Q1/2019
70000
60000
50000
40000
30000
20000
10000
0
Product A
Product B
Product C
Service X
Service Y
Service Z


More signal,
less noise

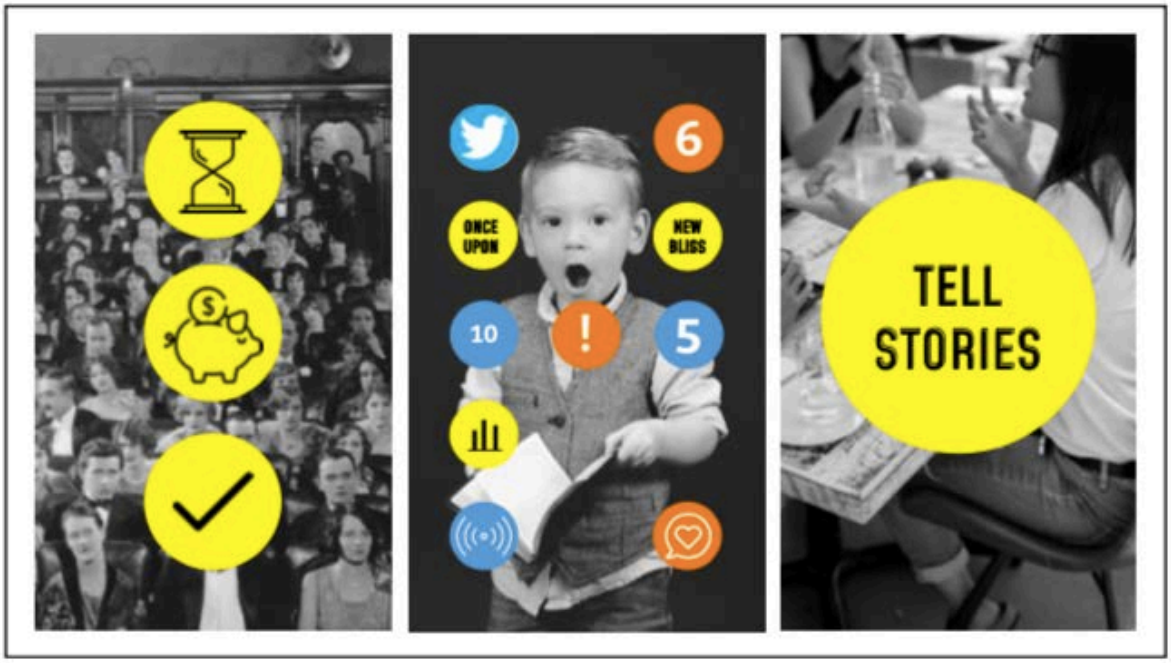

Call to action


Text + visuals = same story
+ signal + call to action


ARE YOU?


YOU ARE!


YOU ARE
a natural storyteller


ONCE UPON
6
NEW BLISS
10
!
5
TELL STORIES