

Beyond Bullet Points: Using Microsoft® Office PowerPoint® 2007 to Create Presentations That Inform, Motivate, and Inspire

Cliff Atkinson

To learn more about this book, visit Microsoft Learning at
<http://www.microsoft.com/MSPress/books/10715.aspx>

9780735623873

Microsoft
Press

© 2007 Cliff Atkinson. All rights reserved.

Contents

	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xiii</i>
	<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xv</i>
Chapter 1	Making Headlines Beyond Bullet Points	1
	■ Can I Really Change the World with a PowerPoint Presentation?	1
	■ The Perfect PowerPoint Storm	2
	■ Stepping onto the Media Stage	5
	■ A Singular Story	8
	■ The Heart of the Problem	12
	■ Distilling the Essence	15
	■ Mixing Mediums	18
	■ Fade to Gray	20
	■ Stark Choices	21
	■ Winds of Change	22
	■ The Power of BBP in Your Hands	23
Chapter 2	Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks	25
	■ Three Bedrock Tools of PowerPoint	25
	■ Trick 1: Use Slide Sorter View to Manage the Volume	27
	In Search of “Research Reality”	28
	Research Reality 1: You Have to Respect the	
	Limits of Working Memory	30
	BBP Respects the Limits of Working Memory	35
	The Old Way Ignores the Limits of Working Memory	38

 **What do you think of this book? We want to hear from you!**

Microsoft is interested in hearing your feedback so we can continually improve our books and learning resources for you. To participate in a brief online survey, please visit:

www.microsoft.com/learning/booksurvey/

■ Trick 2: Use Notes Page View to Sync Pictures and Narration	40
Research Reality 2: You Have to Address the Two Channels	40
BBP Addresses the Two Channels	41
The Old Way Addresses Only One Channel	43
■ Trick 3: Use Normal View to Guide the Eye and Ear	48
Research Reality 3: You Have to Guide Attention	48
BBP Guides Attention	49
The Old Way Does Not Guide Attention	52
■ A Well-Trained Tool	54
Chapter 3 Getting Started with BBP	55
■ What Does the Road Ahead Look Like?	56
■ Sewing Up Understanding with BBP	58
The Heart and Brain of BBP: The Story Template	58
The Built-In Story Structure	59
Theory Becomes Practical	62
■ Step 1: Choose a Story Thread and a Pattern to Follow	64
■ Step 2: Pull Through What's Most Important First	65
■ Step 3: Guide the Visual and Verbal Strands with Your Storyboard	68
Sketching the First Five Slides	70
Sketching the Rest of the Slides	71
Applying Custom Layouts	72
Adding Graphics to the First Five Slides	74
Adding Graphics to the Rest of the Slides	74
Stepping into the Screen	75
Presenting in Multiple Views	77
Presenting with a Tablet PC	78
Presenting Online	78
Documenting the Experience	79
■ Getting Started with the BBP Story Template	81
■ Writing Headlines Using Three Ground Rules	82
Rule 1: Write Concise, Complete Sentences with a Subject and a Verb in Active Voice	82
Rule 2: Be Clear, Direct, Specific, and Conversational	83
Rule 3: Link Your Ideas Across Cells	84

Chapter 4	Planning Your First Five Slides	85
	■ What Will You Show, Say, and Do in the First Five Slides?	86
	■ Starting with the Title and Byline	87
	■ Choosing a Story Thread	88
	Orienting the Audience with the Setting Headline	89
	Interesting the Audience with the Role Headline	90
	Engaging the Audience with the Point A Headline	92
	Motivating the Audience with the Point B Headline	95
	Creating Dramatic Tension Between the Point A and Point B Headlines	97
	Focusing the Audience with the Call to Action Headline	99
	■ Choosing a Pattern to Follow	101
	■ Closing the Curtain on Act I	105
	Reviewing the Five Headlines	106
	Appealing to Your Audience's Emotions	106
	Focusing Your Ideas	107
	■ 10 Tips for Enhancing Act I	108
Chapter 5	Planning the Rest of Your Slides	117
	■ The Problems of Sequence and Priority	117
	■ Three Columns of Clarity	120
	Threading the Eye of the Needle Using a Hierarchy	123
	■ Prioritizing Your Slides	125
	Justifying the Call to Action Headline with the Key Point Headlines	127
	Clarifying Each Key Point Headline with Its Explanation Headlines	132
	Backing Up Each Explanation Headline with Its Detail Headlines	136
	Fleshing Out the Rest of Act II	140
	■ Pulling Through What's Most Important First	143
	■ Lowering the Curtain on Your Story Template	146
	■ 10 Tips for Enhancing Your Story Template	148

Chapter 6	Setting Up Your Storyboard and Narration	155
	■ What Will You Show, Say, and Do During Every Slide?	156
	■ Preparing the Storyboard	157
	Reformatting Your Story Template Manually	158
	Using the BBP Storyboard Formatter	159
	Practicing Scaling to Time	165
	Editing Your Headlines If Needed	166
	Reviewing the Storyboard	166
	■ Planning for the Verbal Channel by Writing Down What You'll Say	166
	■ Planning for the Visual Channel by Sketching Your Storyboard	170
	■ Storyboarding Using Three Ground Rules	173
	Rule 1: Be Visually Concise, Clear, Direct, and Specific	173
	Rule 2: In Act II, Sketch Consistency Within Columns and Variety Across Columns	173
	Rule 3: Sketch Outside the Screen Too	176
	■ 10 Tips for Enhancing Your Storyboard	178
Chapter 7	Sketching Your Storyboard	187
	■ What Do I Sketch on Each Slide?	187
	■ Sketching the Act I Slides	189
	Sketching the Title Slide	190
	Sketching an Optional Introductory Slide	190
	Sketching the Setting Slide	192
	Sketching the Role Slide	194
	Sketching the Point A and Point B Slides	196
	■ Sketching the Call to Action and Key Point Slides	203
	Tripling Your Impact with Three Panels	205
	Propping It Up	206
	Adding It Up with Icons	206
	Using Video, Sound, or Motion Graphics (Carefully)	207
	Blacking Out the Screen	207
	Raising Interest with Your Layouts	208
	Keeping the Motif Flowing	209
	Integrating the Interaction	210

More than One Speaker	210
Going Back to A and B	210
■ Sketching an Optional Navigation Bar	211
■ Sketching the Explanation Slides	213
Explaining Ideas by Building a Diagram	214
Building a Chart Across a Series of Slides	216
Sketching a Visual Organizer	217
Completing the Explanation Slides	218
Using a Screen Capture	218
■ Sketching the Detail Slides	220
Switching to Other Media	222
Adapting Your Sketches to Your Profession	224
■ Sketching Your Story Template	225
■ Ready, Set, Sketch!	226
Chapter 8 Adding Graphics to Your Storyboard	227
■ Which Graphics Do I Add to Each Slide?	227
■ Defining Your Design Constraints	228
■ Adding Graphics Using Three Ground Rules	230
Rule 1: See It in Seconds	230
Rule 2: Align the Aesthetics with the Audience	233
Rule 3: Defend Your Foundation!	237
■ Starting the Production Flow	240
Assigning What You Can	240
Getting the Graphics You Already Have	241
Getting the Graphics You Can Easily Find	241
Creating the Graphics You Can	242
■ Applying Custom Layouts to Your Storyboard	243
Creating Layouts Manually	245
Applying, Reviewing, and Refining the Layouts	256
■ Adding Graphics to the Call to Action and Key Point Slides	257
■ Duplicating and Positioning Key Point Slides 1 and 2	259
■ Creating the Act III Slides	260
■ Preparing Slides That Don't Require Graphics	261
■ Adding Graphics to the Act I Slides	262

■ Adding Graphics to the Explanation Slides	264
■ Fine-Tuning and Finishing Up	268
Adding Graphics to the Title and Closing Credits Slides	268
Reviewing and Adding Graphics to the Notes Pages	269
■ Reviewing and Finalizing the Storyboard	270
■ 10 Tips for Enhancing Your Storyboard	272
Chapter 9	
Reviewing a Range of BBP Examples	279
■ What Other Examples Can I See?	280
■ Introducing a Case with The Trial	280
Act I: The Classical Storytelling Foundation	281
A Photographic Setting Slide	282
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Trial	282
Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Trial	284
■ Keeping on Track with The Plan	286
Writing Act I of the Story Template	286
Researching and Adding Available Graphics for The Plan	287
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Plan	288
Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Plan	289
Delivering The Plan Remotely	294
■ Presenting Results with The Analysis	295
Researching and Adding Available Graphics for The Analysis	298
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Analysis	299
Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Analysis	301
■ Making Information Meaningful with The Report	303
Researching and Adding Available Graphics for The Report	305
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Report	306

Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Report	306
■ Engaging Students with The Class	308
Researching and Adding Available Graphics for The Class	309
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Class	310
Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Class	311
■ Putting Your Clients at the Center in The Pitch	313
Researching and Adding Available Graphics for The Pitch	315
Reviewing the Act I Slides for The Pitch	315
Reviewing the Call to Action and Key Point Slides for The Pitch	316
■ Handling Objections to BBP	318
Chapter 10 Delivering Your BBP Presentation	321
■ Delivering Your Presentation Using Three Ground Rules	322
Rule 1: Step into the Screen	322
Rule 2: Remove the Distractions	323
Rule 3: Manage the Flow	323
■ Removing Distractions	324
Preparing the Environment	324
Checking the Technology	325
Planning for Problems	326
Rehearsing Away Distractions	326
Using Notes	327
■ Developing a Dialog	329
Being Authentic	329
Working Confidently with Your Slides	330
Handling Q & A	331
■ Improvising Within Constraints	332
Keeping Control of Your Story	332
Preparing for Different Contexts	332
Handing Out Handouts	333

■ Presenting Without Being Present	333
Sending Your Notes Pages (Not Your Slides)	333
Producing an Online Presentation	334
■ And Now, Presenting . . .	335
■ 10 Tips for Enhancing Your Delivery	335
Index	339

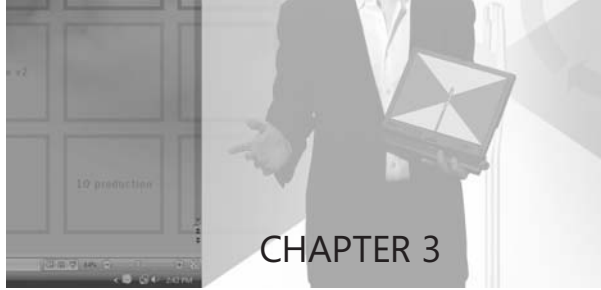
On the CD

Chapter 11	Preparing Others for BBP with a 5-Minute Exercise	C-1
■	A Cross-Country Conversation	C-2
■	The People Issues	C-8
■	The Information Issues	C-9
■	Visual Improvisation	C-11
	Step 1: Create the Presentation	C-12
	Step 2: Instruct the Group	C-13
	Step 3: Administer the Exercise	C-14
	Step 4: Reflect and Summarize	C-18
■	Sophisticated Simplicity	C-21
■	Twenty-First-Century Media	C-23
Appendix A	BBP Ground Rules and Checklists	C-25
■	The BBP Ground Rules	C-25
■	The BBP Checklists	C-27
Appendix B	Presenting BBP with Two Views	C-29
■	Using Slide Show View and Tools	C-29
■	Using Presenter View and Tools	C-30
Appendix C	Starting Your Point A and B Headlines	C-35
Appendix D	Starting Your Call to Action Headlines	C-39

 **What do you think of this book? We want to hear from you!**

Microsoft is interested in hearing your feedback so we can continually improve our books and learning resources for you. To participate in a brief online survey, please visit:

www.microsoft.com/learning/booksurvey/



CHAPTER 3

Getting Started with BBP

IN THIS CHAPTER, YOU WILL:

- Learn how Beyond Bullet Points (BBP) addresses the limited capacity of your audience's working memory to process new information.
- See how you will use the BBP Story Template to create the foundation for your presentation that you will build upon with your narration and graphics.
- Prepare the BBP Story Template and review three ground rules for writing headlines.

MAKING A LIVE presentation with Microsoft® Office PowerPoint® 2007 is complex and difficult from a couple of perspectives. From a presenter's point of view, you have many things you want to say and show during a presentation, including your purpose, your key points, and the many thoughts, ideas, anecdotes, arguments, data, and evidence that back up your key points. You would like your audience to integrate the new information into clear understanding in long-term memory, as shown in Figure 3-1.

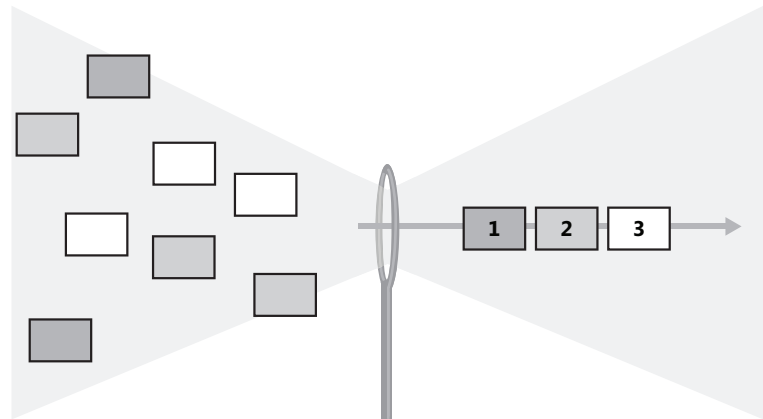


FIGURE 3-1 The formidable challenge every presenter faces—the limited capacity of working memory.

But as you saw in Chapter 2, you also know what is happening from the audience's point of view in terms of memory. *Sensory memory* can see and hear a potentially unlimited amount of verbal and visual information, but only for a fleeting second. *Long-term memory* can hold a potentially unlimited amount of information from 30 seconds to up to a lifetime. Yet the capacity of *working memory* to handle new information, the eye of the needle, is relatively limited for the few seconds it pays attention to what you are showing and saying.

That means that effectively communicating a message is not as easy as creating a PowerPoint presentation and assuming that you can deliver it through an unobstructed pipeline to the passive minds of your audience. Instead, you have to set PowerPoint myths aside and engage the three research realities you learned about in Chapter 2—finding the right amount of new information to engage the limited capacity of working memory without overloading it, engaging both the visual and the verbal channels, and guiding the working memory of your audience to help them integrate new information into their long-term memory. Some of the Beyond Bullet Points (BBP) techniques you will use to accomplish this are new, some you already know, and some are old techniques used in new ways. If you're new to PowerPoint, you won't have to unlearn old habits; instead, you'll find here a better way to use PowerPoint from the start.

■ What Does the Road Ahead Look Like?

This book guides you step by step as you see how BBP is applied in depth to one specific example presentation, using tools and techniques that you can apply to any presentation. People give such a wide range of types of presentations that it's difficult to choose a single type to demonstrate how to apply the approach. The example presentation used in Chapters 4 through 8 features a topic most people can relate to—finance—and shows how BBP handles a challenging topic that would normally use only bullet points along with charts and graphs. The example in this book is intended to be delivered as a 45-minute presentation, so you can get a sense of what it takes to produce a presentation that long. This example topic is very different from the jury presentation in Chapter 1 yet still produces clear communication using the same underlying approach. You can adapt the same BBP process to a wide range of presentation topics, contexts, and purposes—Chapter 9 gives you a tour of more examples that you can review for inspiration.

WHAT TOOLS DO I NEED FOR BBP?

This book and the companion CD include what you need to get started with BBP. Of course, you'll also need a computer with Microsoft Office Word 2007 and PowerPoint 2007 installed. As you begin or continue to work with BBP, the companion Web site to this book at www.beyondbulletpoints.com offers additional resources and a community to help you create BBP presentations smarter, faster, and easier from start to finish. If you have the capability, using a Tablet PC to create and give your BBP presentations will accelerate the process of working with your storyboard and will improve your live presentations by giving you the ability to interact with the audience in ways that are not possible otherwise. Many computer manufacturers offer Tablet PCs—to see what's available, do a Web search for "Tablet PC reviews."

You'll find that BBP is both simple and hard. It's simple because at many levels, it's doing the obvious—like telling a story, getting to the point, or being more visual. And the basic work you do is to fill in the blanks of a Word document, create a PowerPoint file from the document, and then add graphics to the slides. But at many levels, BBP is hard too. BBP is not a quick fix or a patch that you can put over your current approach to PowerPoint. Learning BBP will take you through a sometimes challenging process of letting go of long-standing assumptions, habits, and practices. Especially if you have been using PowerPoint for years, BBP represents a fundamental shift in thinking and action. You won't learn BBP in five minutes or an hour, but you will learn it over the course of a day, two days, a week, or a month as you read this book at your own pace and apply the process to your own presentations. Although there is a steep learning curve at the beginning, be assured that the process will get faster. Over time, with knowledge and practice of the techniques and tools in this book, you'll be producing BBP presentations quickly and building an ever-growing library of resources that you can reuse later.

If you work for yourself or by yourself, you have no choice but to apply BBP on your own, and you'll do just fine. But you'll get the most out of BBP if you unlock the benefits it produces for teams. BBP offers organizations a process where they might not have had one before and often aligns PowerPoint with the group's communications strategy for the first time. If possible, the most-senior people should be involved in the BBP process along with others such as marketers, graphic designers, and even some of your customers who would be willing to join you. When BBP brings together these separate groups,

the efficient process of producing presentations increases the speed of decision making, reduces revisions, and improves the quality and impact of PowerPoint communications for both presenters and audiences. BBP will also reveal that people on your team have unexpected talents that will surprise you—perhaps computer engineers will turn out to be good at graphic design, graphic designers will be good at wordsmithing a logical argument, and statisticians will be good at facilitating the social process of BBP.

■ Sewing Up Understanding with BBP

When you face the limited capacity of the working memory of your audience to process new information, a core challenge is not creating the visuals and narration, but rather determining the underlying structure that will shape those elements in the first place. A structure focuses your ideas and helps you figure out what you want to say and how you want to say it. That's where an incredibly powerful structural tool you will use comes into play—the BBP Story Template.

The Heart and Brain of BBP: The Story Template

With the lessons of the dual-channels theory from Chapter 2 in mind, filmmaking is an appropriate model for designing multimedia presentations because it plans and manages both visual and verbal information simultaneously. Filmmakers know that the best way to start planning a film is with the written word, in the form of a script. A script is much shorter and less detailed than a novel because it assumes that the visuals and dialog will play a major role in telling the story. The best scripts distill stories to their bare essence and strip away anything that does not contribute to a story's singular focus.

When a writer completes a script, the document then becomes a powerful organizing tool that literally puts everyone on the same page. The script is the starting point for planning and producing visuals and dialog, and it serves as a way for everyone involved in the project to be clear on what everyone else is saying and doing. If you were a filmmaker and you started filming before you had a script—similar to working on a PowerPoint presentation without a written structure—you would probably waste time and resources while you changed your focus and figured out the story along the way.

Although putting your thoughts in writing adds a new step to your usual PowerPoint process, doing so will save you time and effort later. When you begin writing your PowerPoint script next in Chapter 4, you won't have to start with an empty page, because you'll use the story template shown in Figure 3-2 to guide you every step of the way.

Title and byline		
Act I: Set up the story from the audience's viewpoint ("A to B, what's in it for me?")		
Setting (Where am I?)		
Role (Who am I here?)		
Point A (What challenge do I face?)	Call to Action (How do I get from A→B?)	Point B (Where do I want to be?)
Act II: Develop the action ("1-2-3, show me only what I need to see")		
Key Point (5 minutes):	Explanation (15 minutes):	Detail (45 minutes):
1		
2		
3		
Act III: Set up the resolution (To be completed in the storyboard phase)		

FIGURE 3-2 The BBP Story Template, which you will complete in Word.

The story template serves as a central organizing tool for the entire presentation. It is a visual interface for the structure of your presentation, helping you see the big picture on a single page or two before you commit to adding a visual and verbal track to individual slides. The story template has roots in many sources, including classical philosophy, contemporary media techniques, and the research described in Chapter 2. It draws from these inspirations and more and interprets them all through the lens of a process you can use to produce your next presentation.

The Built-In Story Structure

The Greek philosopher Aristotle recorded the classical elements of storytelling 2,400 years ago, including the concept that a story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. When you adapt this timeless idea to your PowerPoint presentations, you will ground your communications in a powerful technique that works.

The story template includes three sections, or *acts*, that form a classical story structure and correspond to the beginning, middle, and end of your presentation. Each act in the template is delineated by a horizontal black bar extending across the page, as shown in Figure 3-3. Act I begins your story by setting up all of the key story elements, including the setting, the main character, a conflict, and the desired outcome. Act II drives the story forward by picking up on the conflict in Act I and developing it through the actions and reactions of the main character in response to changing conditions. Act III ends the story by framing a climax and a decision that the main character must face to resolve the situation, revealing something about his or her character. This time-tested structure keeps your audience interested in your presentation and eager to find out what happens next.

Title and byline		
Act I: Set up the story from the audience's viewpoint ("A to B, what's in it for me?")		
Setting (Where am I?)		
Role (Who am I here?)		
Point A (What challenge do I face?)	Call to Action (How do I get from A to B?)	Point B (Where do I want to be?)
Act II: Develop the action ("1-2-3, show me only what I need to see")		
Key Point (5 minutes):	Explanation (15 minutes):	Detail (45 minutes):
1		
2		
3		
Act III: Set up the resolution (To be completed in the storyboard phase)		

FIGURE 3-3 The BBP story template incorporates a classical story structure.

This three-part story structure follows natural patterns that underlie the way we think and understand. No one needs special training or technology to understand a classical story structure because it's the way humans have been communicating with one another throughout history. Stories frame the context for communication and focus attention by making information specific and relevant to an audience. A story structure literally ties together scattered pieces of information. A story also can help you to focus your ideas, clarify your words and images, and produce an engaging experience for both you and your audiences. By reaching into the past and incorporating these fundamental ideas in your current PowerPoint story, you'll be building on a solid foundation that ensures that your presentation is focused, clear, and engaging.

There is also a research basis for using a story structure. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the long-term memory of your audience already contains existing structures that can help working memory organize and integrate new information. One of the most basic structures is the three-act structure that forms the foundation for countless stories, novels, theatrical productions, films, and television shows. When you tap into this powerful three-part organizing structure that already exists in your audience's long-term memory and apply it to the structure of the new information you present, as shown in Figure 3-4, you are well on your way to creating a clear pathway through the limited capacity of working memory.

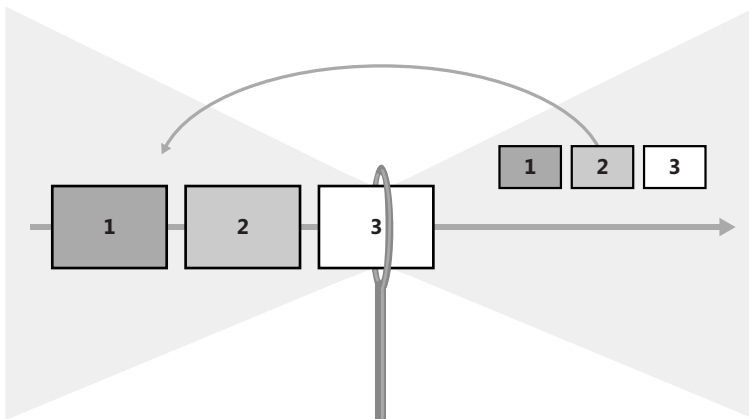


FIGURE 3-4 Introducing the familiar three-act structure to new information as you present it to working memory.

The research principles described in Chapter 2 have been around as long as 50 years, and the idea of a story structure has been around even longer—for thousands of years. These are proven ideas and techniques that work—the real challenge is how to make the concepts practical as you work on your next PowerPoint presentation. To help get your job done quickly and efficiently, the fundamentals of classical story structure and the screenwriting process have already been adapted to your PowerPoint needs and incorporated into the story template.

In addition to a classical story structure, your story template also incorporates persuasive techniques that are useful for many types of presentations in different contexts. These techniques include using Aristotle's classical concept that to persuade, you must appeal to emotion, reason, and personal credibility. Even if your intent is to simply *inform* an audience about something, you still have to *persuade* them to pay attention. Why should they listen? What's in it for them? Act I of your story template will make sure that you persuade your audience to focus on your message, and Act II will make sure that you provide the logical reasoning they need to make a decision. You will infuse the entire presentation with personal credibility in terms of verbal clarity and conciseness and add visual credibility by matching your graphics and aesthetics with your audience.

Theory Becomes Practical

The innovation of the story template is that it brings together theory and a process into a practical tool you open up and use to structure and start every presentation. Everything you do here in the story template shapes the visuals and narration to come and sets up your ideas in a way that preconfigures and aligns information to best prepare it for its passage through the working memory of your audience. The story template ensures that every presentation accomplishes what you intend—understanding your audience members, tailoring your material to them, getting to the point, and establishing a priority and sequence for your ideas.

You don't have to be an expert storyteller or an expert in cognitive theory; the template makes structuring your story as easy as filling in the blanks. In the cells of the story template, you'll write out a complete sentence that describes what is happening at each point in your story, similar to writing a newspaper headline. As you fill in the blanks, you will be writing the actual story that you will present. When you've finished, you'll have a completed one-page or two-page script. This process ensures that you stay focused on your ideas and include all the elements that make up a good story.

When you write your PowerPoint script using the story template, you focus on your ideas first rather than your graphics. After you complete the template in Word 2007, you'll

import the headlines into PowerPoint 2007, where each complete sentence you wrote will become the headline of a slide, as shown in Figure 3-5. This ensures that before you start working in PowerPoint 2007, you already know the key point you intend to make on each slide. Next you'll take care of narration and sketch a graphic that you'll soon replace with a finalized graphic.

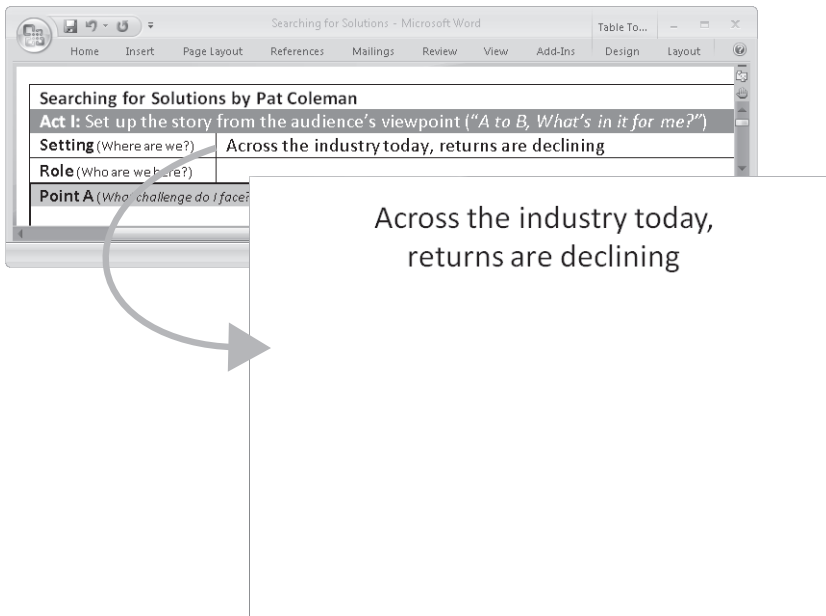


FIGURE 3-5 Each headline you write in the story template becomes a headline on a slide.

This pivotal technique of turning your story template into a set of PowerPoint slides will help you to transform your written words into the foundation of a visual story. This will make your job of finding visuals easier by establishing exactly what you need to illustrate on every slide, and it will help your audience to understand your new information much faster by indicating clearly in the title area the meaning of every slide.

You'll begin applying BBP step by step in Chapter 4; the following is a visual tour of how the three steps of BBP will unfold as you apply BBP to the specific presentation example in this book. Here you can see how each slide finds its context in the bigger presentation picture by following the three steps of BBP that help you, and your audience, sew up understanding.

■ Step 1: Choose a Story Thread and a Pattern to Follow

You need to quickly make an emotional connection with an audience in order to motivate them, and you can see the specific words that do that in Act I, where you write out the classical elements of a strong story beginning. The first five headlines you write in Act I of the story template will connect emotionally with an audience, define a problem they face, and explain how they can solve it. This forms the story thread that will carry attention through the entire presentation. You will reinforce the strength of the thread to carry new information through the working memory of your audience by applying a familiar pattern in the form of a verbal and visual *motif*, or recurring theme. After you complete Act I and the rest of the story template, you will import these five headlines into your PowerPoint presentation, where each statement becomes the headline of a PowerPoint slide, as shown in Figure 3-6.

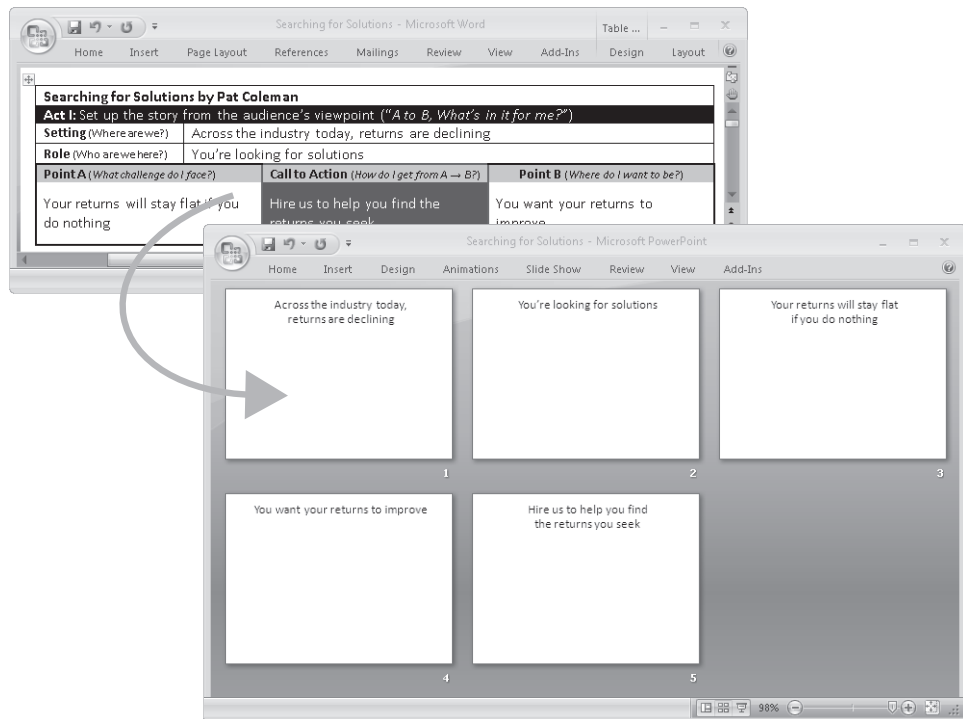


FIGURE 3-6 The five sentences you write in the story template become the headlines of your first five slides.

When you view the first five slides in Slide Sorter view, you can see by reading the headlines of the slides the story thread that will carry your specific sequence of ideas through the eye of the needle of working memory of your audience, as shown in Figure 3-7; this sequence will also provide the framework for your visuals and narration.

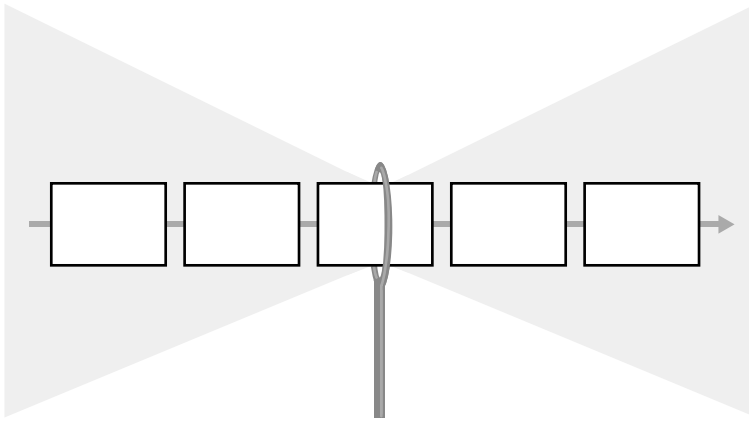


FIGURE 3-7 Act I defines what you will show to working memory in the first five slides.

■ Step 2: Pull Through What's Most Important First

You set in motion a number of powerful processes in Act I of the story template that continue to play out as you create the rest of the slides in your presentation. Just as in Act I, you will break up your ideas in Act II into digestible pieces by writing out complete sentence headlines in the story template. Later each sentence will become the headline of a slide, as shown in Figure 3-8.

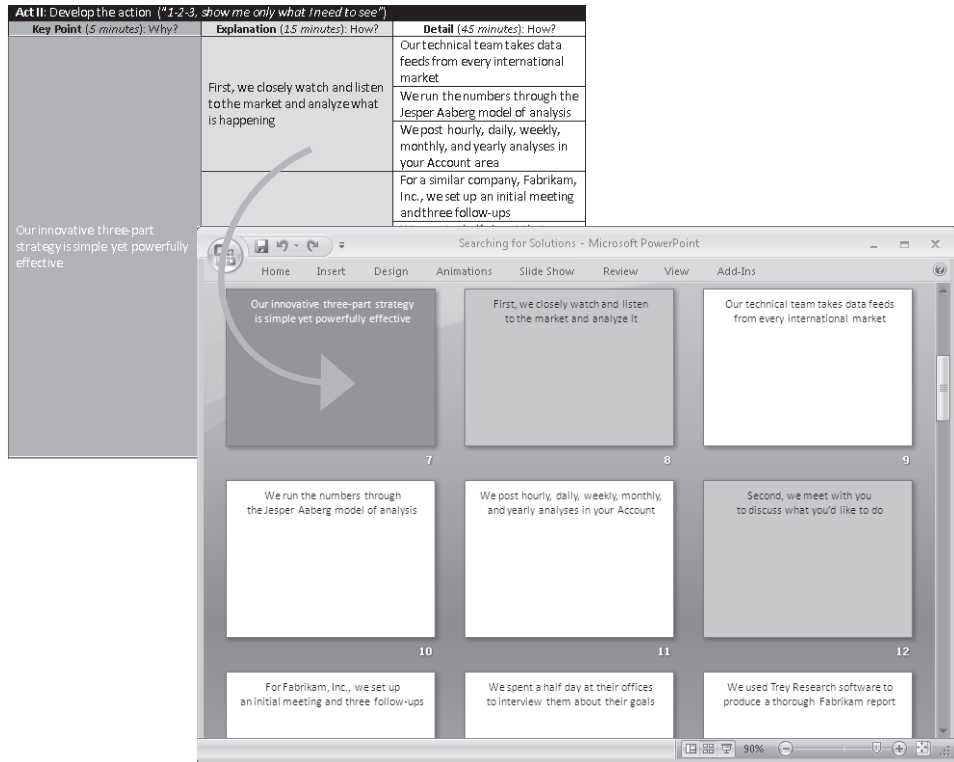


FIGURE 3-8 The headlines you write in Act II of the story template become the headlines of the rest of your Act II slides.

The challenge of any presentation is not to show *all* the information you have but instead to select the *appropriate* information to present. The story template guides you through the important process of selecting only the ideas your audience needs to know and breaking them into digestible chunks that are easier for your audience to understand. A logic-tree structure is built into Act II of the story template, as shown in Figure 3-9; this structure helps you put the most important information at the top level of attention, to increase memorability and application. A presentation should have a few key points, and you literally can see them in Act II, where you clarify and identify these top-level points, create a logical and clear structure, and perhaps most important, leave out nonessential information.

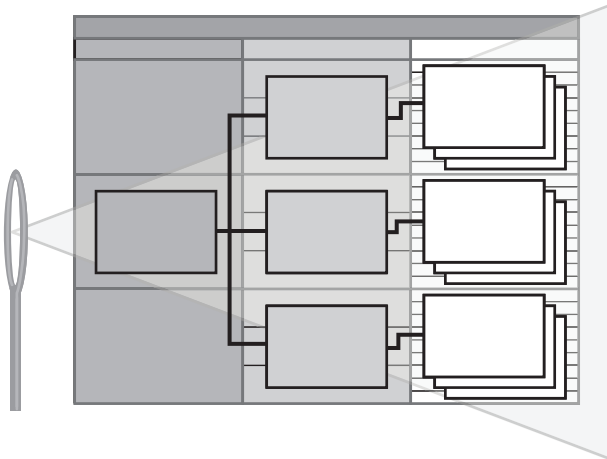


FIGURE 3-9 A built-in logic-tree structure prioritizes your ideas from most important to least.

Completing Act II of the story template can be the hardest thing you do in BBP if you're new to this way of thinking. But the investment in learning will sharpen your critical thinking skills and ensure that the new information in your presentation appears in the order and sequence needed to prevent overloading the working memory of your audience, as shown in Figure 3-10.

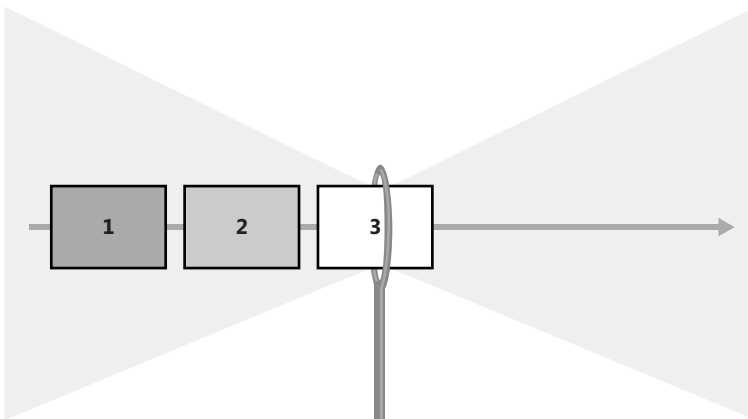


FIGURE 3-10 Act II makes sure that you present the correct priority and sequence of slides to working memory.

■ Step 3: Guide the Visual and Verbal Strands with Your Storyboard

With a completed script in hand, a filmmaker usually turns to a storyboard artist to sketch selected scenes from the story to show how things will look on screen. Storyboards help teams collaborate effectively—the sketches help everyone see how the story will look so that they can plan various aspects of production.

Your BBP storyboard will solve many of the problems found in the conventional PowerPoint approach because you start designing visuals and narration with a strong and coherent foundation in the form of a story structure that shapes the entire presentation. This story thread ties everything in the storyboard together and keeps one idea flowing to the next. No idea—or slide—is without specific meaning, context, and sequence.

Even before graphics and narration have been added to this presentation, you have already accomplished a significant task while completing the story template. You've broken up complicated ideas into digestible chunks to aid their passage through working memory. You will be able to work with your story in Slide Sorter view from now on to review your story structure and sequence, check your pacing and flow, and use visuals to tie together the various parts of your story. This planning ensures that you continually build on and improve your strong story foundation with a single unified set of visuals and words.

Next you will quickly apply layouts with slide backgrounds that indicate the three hierarchical levels of Act II slides, as shown in Figure 3-11, to set up preliminary visual cues that designate which slides are more important than others and how those slides fit into a sequence. After you do this, you will be able to easily see the three most important slides in your presentation—the dark gray ones. You'll also be able to see your second-most important slides—the light gray ones—and your third-most important slides—the white ones—so that you can easily locate and hide them if you need to quickly scale down the presentation to a shorter amount of time. These slides are the foundation for

the fully designed layouts and backgrounds you use to cue working memory when you add graphics in Chapter 8.

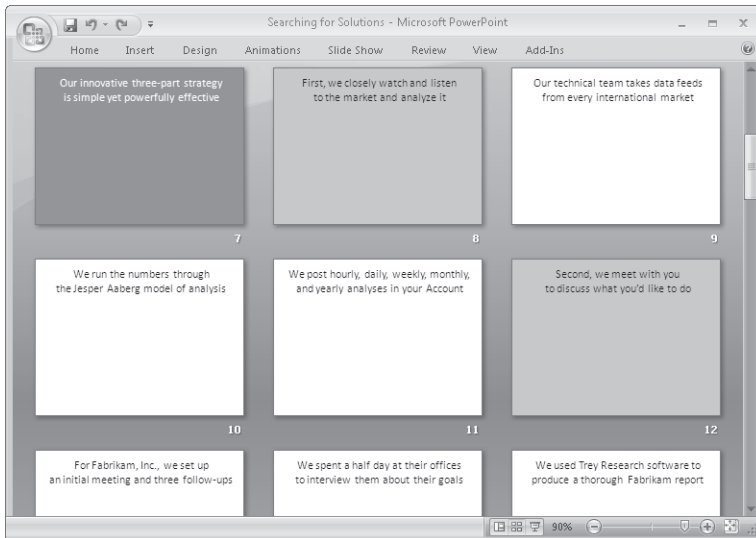


FIGURE 3-11 Next you'll cue working memory by applying layouts with preliminary slide backgrounds to the three hierarchical levels of Act II slides.

Next you will plan the narrated soundtrack of the presentation by writing out the verbal explanation for each headline in the off-screen text box in Notes Page view, as shown in Figure 3-12. In line with the dual-channels theory described in Chapter 2, this helps you seamlessly integrate each visual with its verbal explanation. By capturing in the notes area a record of the rich verbal explanation that will accompany the slide, you then will choose the simplest possible visual to illustrate the headline of each slide.

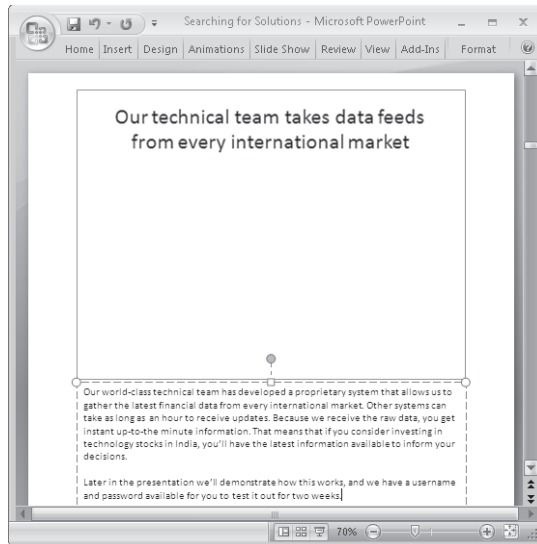


FIGURE 3-12 First you write out what you will say for each headline in the off-screen notes area (bottom). After you have recorded the information that you will convey with your voice, you will next add a simple graphic to the on-screen slide area (top).

Sketching the First Five Slides

With your clear and concise story line in place in your slide headlines and with your narration written out in the off-screen notes area, your next step will be to tap into your team's visual thinking skills by brainstorming an illustration for each headline of each of the Act I slides of your storyboard. You'll do that by sketching a visual idea on each of the five slides, which you'll learn about in Chapter 7, either using a Tablet PC, as shown on the slides in Figure 3-13, or using printouts of the slides.

When you do this, your focus is on making full use of the powerful visual channel of your audience members by sketching out a crisp and compelling visual story that complements your clear and concise headlines. Just as your headlines tell a story with only words, your sketches now should complement, enhance, and intensify that story on

individual slides, as well as across slides. Here you'll also plan for both on-screen and off-screen media such as physical props, demonstrations, video, dialog, or other types of media or interactive techniques.

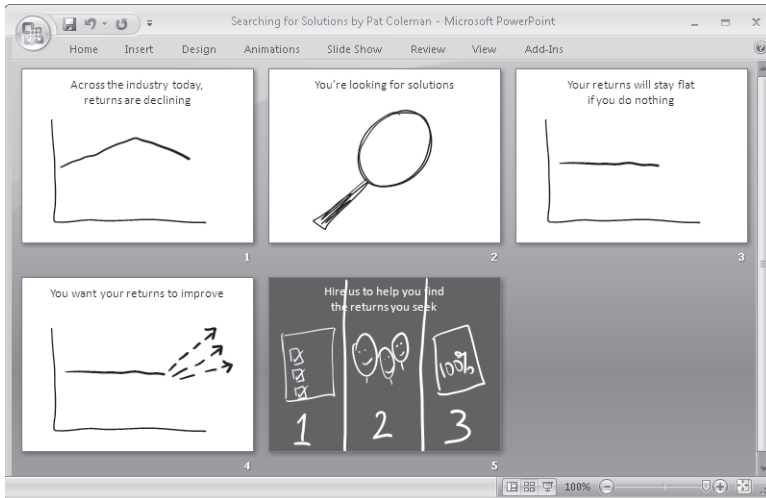


FIGURE 3-13 Once you have a storyboard, you'll sketch a graphic on each of the five slides.

Sketching the Rest of the Slides

As with Act I, completing the story template for Act II creates a solid foundation that will help you choose exactly what you will show and say as you present the working memory of your audience with new information. With this infrastructure in place, you'll have endless creative options to make the crisp and clear underlying story even more powerful. Here on the Act II slides, as shown in Figure 3-14, you will visually carry through the motif you establish in Act I to help working memory better select and organize the large amount of new information.

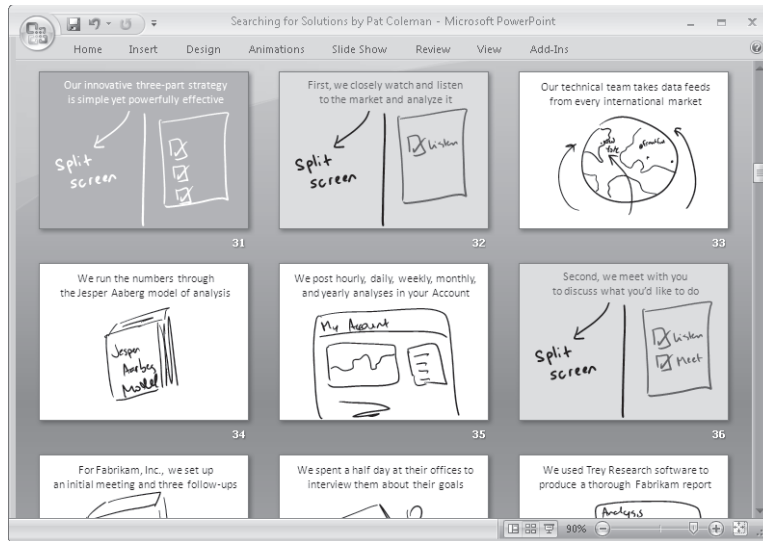


FIGURE 3-14 You'll continue sketching graphics on each of the rest of the slides.

Applying Custom Layouts

After your team has agreed and signed off on the sketches, the last step is to find and add a specific photograph, chart, or other graphic to each of the slides. But before you do that, you will apply custom layouts to each of the different sections of your storyboard, according to the way you sketched the layout of each slide. As shown in Figure 3-15, this creates a visual foundation for the slides based on the hierarchy from the story template.

By applying layouts and backgrounds, you use graphical indicators that cue working memory to the relative importance of each slide, as shown in Figure 3-16. In this example, the striking black-and-white, split-screen layout indicates the most important slides. The dark gray slides are the second-most important, and the white slides are the third-most important.

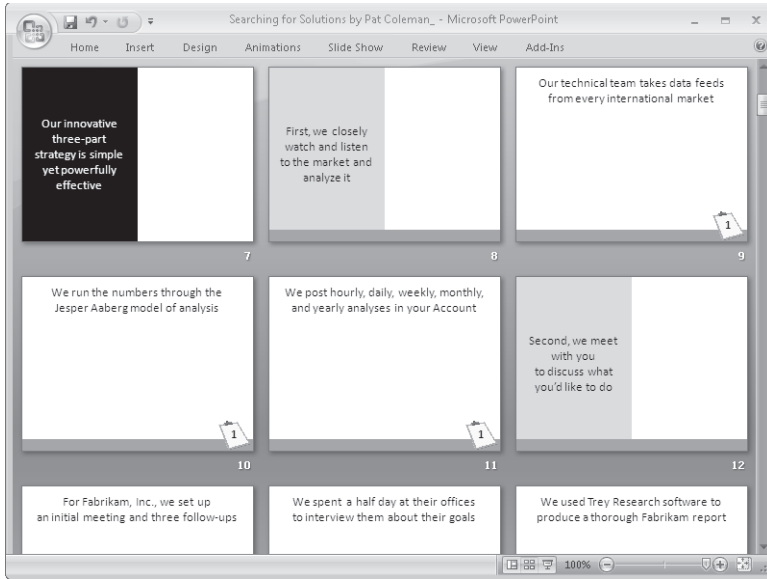


FIGURE 3-15 Storyboard with custom layouts applied.

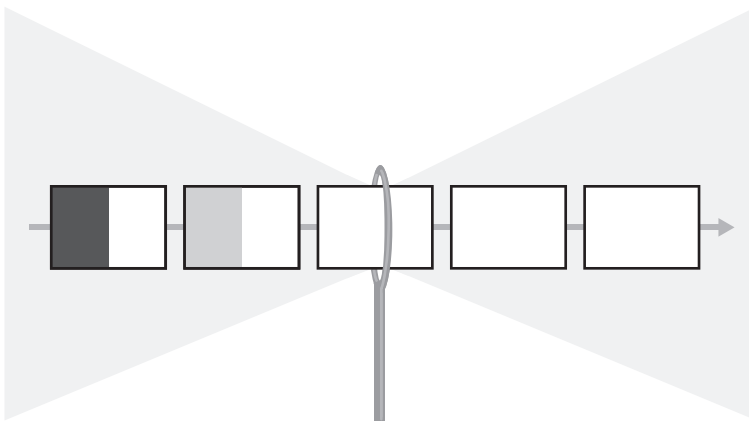


FIGURE 3-16 The slide layouts and backgrounds cue working memory to each slide's relative importance within the big picture.

Adding Graphics to the First Five Slides

The last step is to find and add graphics to each of the slides using your sketches as a guide. Here is where you savor the fruits of the labor of writing Act I in the story template, because you know you've got the specific PowerPoint slides that will ensure that you start strong in your presentation, as shown in Figure 3-17. The visual and verbal clarity you achieve is possible through using the story template, which has established the foundation for everything you have done.

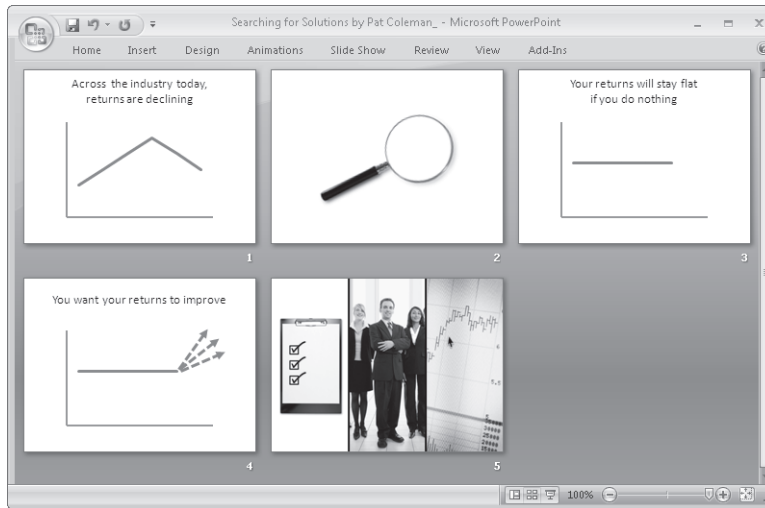


FIGURE 3-17 Adding graphics to the first five slides of Act I.

Adding Graphics to the Rest of the Slides

After you add graphics to the Act I slides, you continue by adding graphics to the rest of your slides, as shown in Figure 3-18. Here you might use photographs, screen captures, logos, charts, and other illustrations.

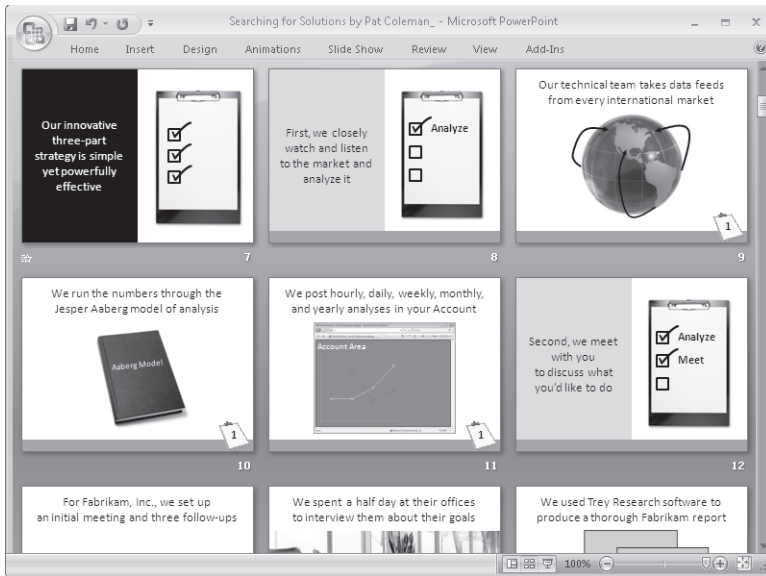


FIGURE 3-18 Adding graphics to the rest of the slides.

Stepping into the Screen

Using the approach described in this book, you'll be well-equipped to produce a media experience that will get you the results you want anytime you give a presentation. Focusing and distilling your ideas using a story template and clarifying them using a storyboard blends your message with your media and significantly expands your ability to enhance your presentation with sophisticated media tools and techniques. The large screen directly behind you, as shown in Figure 3-19, completely integrates your voice and body into a media experience greater than the sum of its parts. This approach brings together a range of media techniques—including those from stage, screen, theater, and television—and blends them together with your body and your clear message into a seamless presentation experience.



FIGURE 3-19 BBP immerses the audience in the experience and ensures that the attention of the audience is not split between screen and speaker.

When you project your slides on a large screen, they work as visual triggers that increase your confidence as a speaker. You're no longer tied to the uncomfortable task of reading text off the screen and unintentionally ignoring your audience. Instead the clear headline and graphic quickly prompt you to use your natural voice and authority as you explain them. While the slide is displayed, you are free to look at your audience instead of at the slide. And even if you had a fear of public speaking in the past, you'll breathe much easier with your new PowerPoint approach. These powerful tools increase your confidence and improve the quality of everything you communicate with your spoken words and projected images. Because you're more relaxed as a speaker, you'll become more confident in improvising during your live presentation.

Presenting in Multiple Views

Making use of Notes Page view to write out your narration in advance increases your ability to present confidently during a live PowerPoint presentation. While your audience sees the simple slide on the screen shown on the upper left in Figure 3-20, your Presenter view in PowerPoint on your own computer displays a speaker notes pane on the right that shows what you wrote in the off-screen text box in Notes Page view. You can easily zoom in on the notes to enlarge the size of the font so that the text is easy to see.

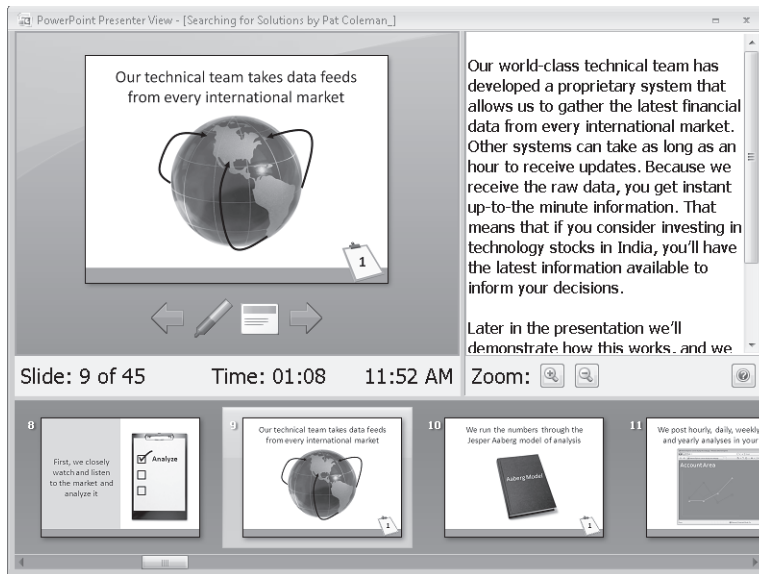


FIGURE 3-20 Presenter view allows you to see the clear and focused on-screen slide that the audience sees, alongside the text you wrote in the off-screen notes area in Notes Page view.

BBP transforms the social space and opens a wide range of new possibilities for treating your PowerPoint screen as a canvas to promote dialog and collaboration. The clear story structure and innovative techniques engage your audience, but there are many more things you can do to help them feel more involved, such as using other media and physical props. When you sketch your storyboard in Chapter 7, you choose the specific tools and techniques you will use during each slide to highlight and reinforce your most important ideas.

Presenting with a Tablet PC

With BBP, you can make maximum use of a Tablet PC by writing directly on the screen to increase engagement and dialog, as shown in Figure 3-21. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 will show you a range of ways to sketch and use graphics to prompt interaction using a Tablet PC.

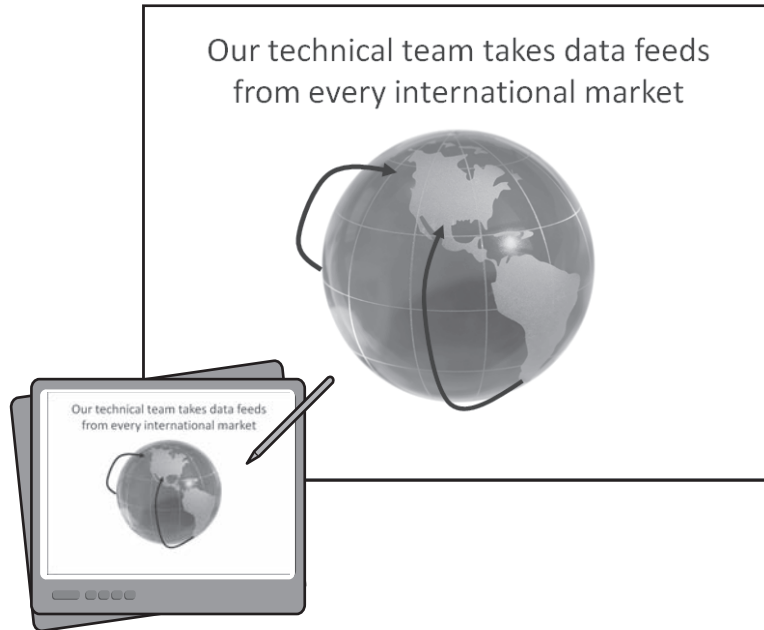


FIGURE 3-21 Presenting a BBP slide using a Tablet PC.

Presenting Online

Your visually engaging BBP slides are a great fit with online meeting tools such as Microsoft Office Live Meeting, as shown in Figure 3-22. Because the slides are designed to be visually simple, they increase the need for people to pay attention to your voice on the other end of the telephone or computer speakers.

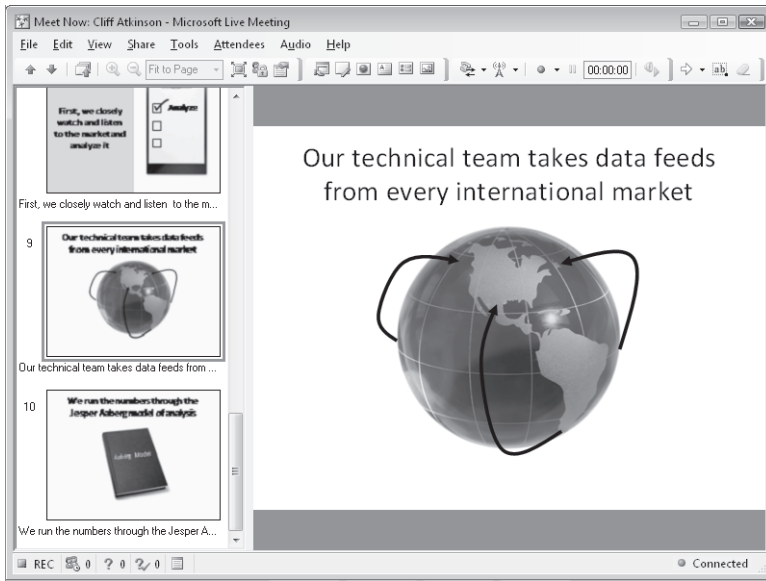


FIGURE 3-22 Presenting online using Microsoft Office Live Meeting.

Documenting the Experience

BBP helps you use PowerPoint in a way that gives you more than just an effective in-person presentation. As described in Chapter 2, using the conventional approach can torpedo interpersonal dynamics and produce PowerPoint files that neither work well for in-person presentations nor work well as stand-alone documents. Instead, aligning with the dual-channels theory allows you to use PowerPoint in a way that produces both an effective presentation and an effective printed handout, as shown in Figure 3-23. Looking at Notes Page view on the left, the on-screen slide area contains a headline and a simple graphic, while the off-screen notes area captures what is spoken aloud by the presenter. Keeping the narration off the screen creates effective slides (upper right), along with effective handouts (lower right).

When you distribute the PowerPoint file to people who were not present for the live presentation of visuals and narration, you send the notes pages, not the slides. You can print out the notes pages to create a physical copy or create a PDF version that you can distribute electronically.

Using Notes Page view taps into the unique value PowerPoint offers you as a communications tool, because no other tool can produce a single file that works effectively like this on a screen, on a piece of paper, and even online.

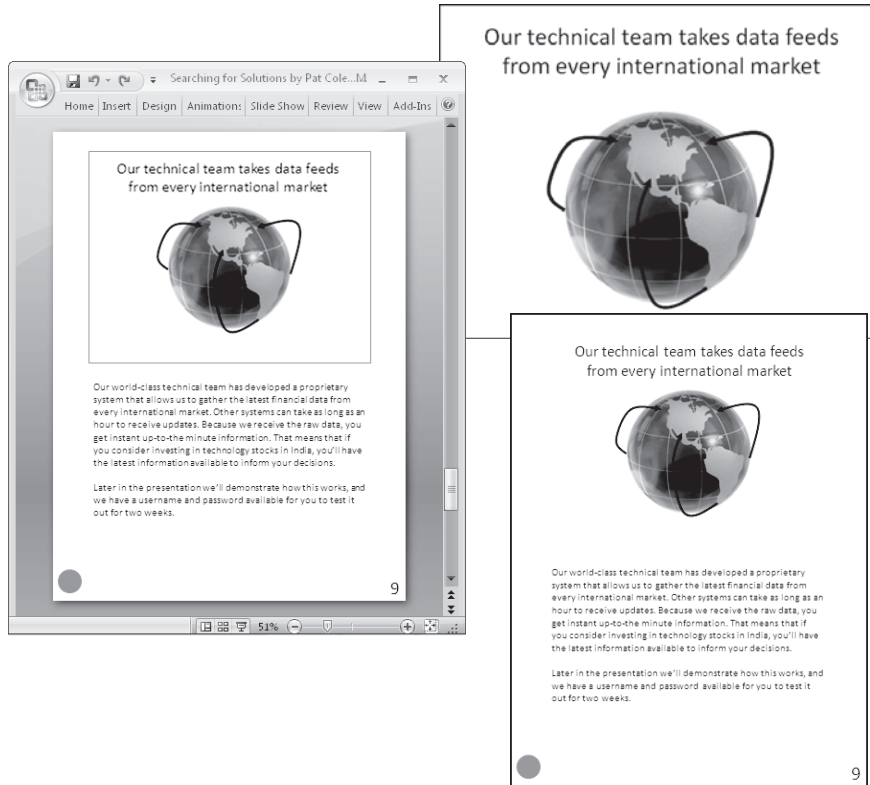


FIGURE 3-23 Notes Page view, showing a well-designed slide and a well-designed handout with the complete verbal explanation of the slide.

■ The Relative Importance of the Three Steps

You'll cover the three steps of BBP through the chapters of the book as follows:

- **Step 1: Choose a story thread and a pattern to follow.** Chapter 4 walks you through planning the first five slides of the presentation by completing Act I of the story template.
- **Step 2: Pull through what's most important first.** Chapter 5 walks you through planning the priority and sequence of the rest of the slides in the presentation.

- **Step 3: Guide the visual and verbal strands with your storyboard.** Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 10 walk you through setting up your storyboard and narration, sketching your storyboard, adding graphics to the storyboard, and then delivering the presentation.

Although step 3 takes more time and more chapters than steps 1 and 2, the three steps are relatively equal in importance because of the role each one plays in guiding the working memory of your audience. Step 1 is critical because here you make the fundamental decisions about how to focus the presentation based on how well you know the audience and what they will hear and see. If you don't get these first five slides of your presentation right, the rest of the presentation will be off base. Step 2 is important because it takes time to prioritize your ideas. If you don't distill your ideas to their essence and identify your key points, there's no way to highlight the most important information to your audience. Step 3 consists of the visual and verbal expressions of your idea built on the previous two steps. If you don't match your visuals to the audience, set the verbal context for the visuals, and tie the experience together with your physical presence, the two preceding steps could fall short.

Together these three steps create a powerful synergy that works together to ensure that you create a powerful and meaningful experience for your audience.

■ Getting Started with the BBP Story Template

To use the story template, copy BBP Story Template 2007.dotx from the companion CD, and save it on your local computer. Locate the BBP Story Template on your local computer, and double-click it. Because the file is a Word 2007 template, indicated by the .dotx file extension, double-clicking the file will open a new presentation based on the template's formatting. Save the new presentation, and then review the story template.

THE BBP GROUND RULES AND CHECKLISTS

As you follow the steps in upcoming chapters, you'll find sets of BBP Ground Rules for writing your story template, sketching your storyboard, adding graphics, and producing the presentation experience. You'll also find at the end of key chapters a checklist of items to make sure that you've covered them. Refer to Appendix A on the companion CD for a complete list of the ground rules and checklists that you can print and keep handy as you work with BBP.

■ Writing Headlines Using Three Ground Rules

Because the text in your story template will fill the title area in your PowerPoint slides, your sentences will require a certain format. You achieve this format by following three important ground rules that apply to every statement in your story template.

Rule 1: Write Concise, Complete Sentences with a Subject and a Verb in Active Voice

Everything you do in your presentation from this point forward will build on the headlines you write in your story template. To effectively communicate your message consistently and clearly through your entire story, your headlines must be complete sentences with a subject and a verb. The verbs should be in active voice to keep your language dynamic and direct; the same principles, techniques, and rules that define good writing also define good headlines in your template.

See Also For an excellent reference guide to writing the headlines of your story template clearly and concisely, see William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White's, *The Elements of Style* (Longman, 2000).

Writing headlines in the form of complete sentences imposes a discipline on your ideas by forcing you to turn them into coherent thoughts and remove any ambiguity. Later, when you import your headlines into the title area of your PowerPoint slides, your audience will have no doubt about what you want to communicate because they can read it for themselves at the top of each slide. Write your headlines using sentence case, with the initial word capitalized and the rest in lowercase.

When you write your headlines for Act I, constrain them to only one line that fills the width of the cell without extending to a second line. The columns in your template for Act II are narrower, so you can extend those headlines to a maximum of about two and a half lines. Constraining your headlines to these limits keeps you from being wordy and ensures that your headlines will fill a maximum of two lines when you send them to the title area of your PowerPoint slides.

TIP



If you're looking for practical examples of how to write concisely, look no further than the headlines of a newspaper. When writing a headline, an editor has limited space to communicate an idea clearly, so the language has to be clear, direct, and engaging.

It might be a challenge to keep your headlines brief, but that's part of the process of boiling down your complicated ideas to their essence. This distillation will help you to get right to the point in your presentations.

Rule 2: Be Clear, Direct, Specific, and Conversational

Each statement in your story template will speak directly to your audience when it fills the title area of a slide, so use a conversational tone that is simple, clear, and direct. Say what you mean in plain language. When you make your point, include the details that give it specificity, color, and impact. You should tailor your words to the level of understanding of everyone in the audience and place nothing in the headline that is not in the audience's vocabulary. The point of the headline is to help your audience understand your point as efficiently as possible—if you use words unfamiliar to them, you create obstacles to understanding, and they will wonder what the individual words mean instead of attending to the overall message. The exception to using simple words is if everyone in the audience has prior understanding of the technical language you are using.

When you write your headlines, imagine that you are addressing a few members of your audience sitting in chairs next to your desk. Because you're simply having a conversation, your voice should be relaxed and casual—not tense and formal. This conversational tone will help you keep your headlines from getting wordy. Later, when your audience reads your headlines in the title area of your slides, the conversational tone will help them to feel more relaxed and open to your ideas. Although presenters might assume formal language gives them more authority, research shows people learn better when information is presented in a conversational style rather than a formal style.

THREE GROUND RULES FOR WRITING HEADLINES

Your story template depends on a special writing style that boils down your story to its essence. Follow these three ground rules to keep your writing concise:

Rule 1: Write concise, complete sentences with a subject and a verb in active voice.

Rule 2: Be clear, direct, specific, and conversational.

Rule 3: Link your ideas across cells.

Rule 3: Link Your Ideas Across Cells

As you'll see in Chapters 4 and 5, you'll be breaking up your ideas into smaller pieces as you write your thoughts in the cells of the story template. As you do that, you want to make sure that you link your ideas so that they flow to one another as you read them across the cells. You can make sure you do this by choosing a consistent tense across all headlines—you'll generally create a more dynamic story if you use the present tense. You should also link your ideas by using a parallel sentence structure across cells, which keeps everything sounding clear and coherent. Linking your cells verbally in the story template becomes important when you sketch and add graphics to your storyboard visually, as you'll see in Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9.

THE WRITING ON THE WALL

Although writing is usually considered a solitary experience, don't write your PowerPoint script alone. Invite the members of your team to join you in a conference room. To get started, attach a projector to your laptop computer and display your story template as a Word document on the screen. When the story template is projected onto a wall, it becomes a tool for a group of people to see, create, discuss, debate, and agree on the structure of any presentation. Organizations have found the story template tool to be a breakthrough innovation because it guides a collaborative process, gives people ownership, taps into collective brainpower, and literally gets everyone on the same sheet of paper.

Now that you've prepared your story template and reviewed the ground rules, it's time to get specific and start with the beginning—the first five slides of your PowerPoint presentation.