

Meyer's Management Models

49. New Pyramid Principle

How can I give an impactful presentation?

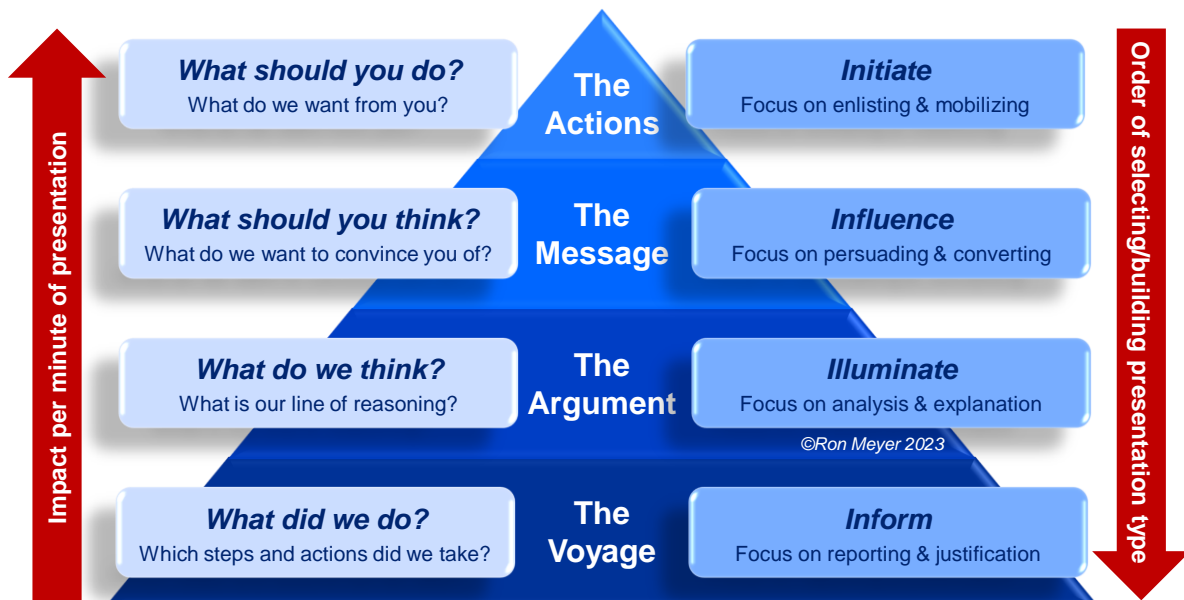
Key Definitions

Managers give *presentations* all the time – verbal monologues, often supported by visual projections. They can be short, taking only a few minutes, but can also be extensive, spanning many hours. The audience can be small, limited to only one or a few people, but can also be large, especially when broadcast via digital media.

Whatever the setting, the presenter will want to be *impactful* – realize a certain effect with the audience within a limited amount of time. A presentation is a means to an end, so presenters will want to tailor their monologue to achieve the intended result as effectively as possible.

Conceptual Model

The *New Pyramid Principle* describes four different kinds of presentations, with the width of the pyramid symbolizing the relative length of time that each sort of presentation would typically require. The framework suggests that staying higher up on the pyramid not only results in a shorter presentation, but also in a more impactful one. The name of the framework refers to the original pyramid principle, that stated that effective presentations start by offering a clear big picture overview and then move down into more detail where necessary. The New Pyramid Principle isn't about moving from overview to details but similarly recommends selecting the top presentation type and only moving down if the situation requires you to do so.



Key Elements

The four types of presentations are the following:

1. **Presenting the Actions: With the intention to initiate.** Most people give a presentation because they want to trigger some follow-up activities, although they often fail to specify what they want the audience to do. Therefore, the most impactful type of presentation is where it is made clear what is asked of the audience, while engaging them to act

accordingly. The focus is on getting people to embrace the stated actions and to motivate them to start implementing. The more SMART (specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound) the actions, the higher the chance of getting people moving.

2. **Presenting the Message: With the intention to influence.** The second type of presentation is generally a bit longer and focused on influencing people to change their minds and embrace a new point of view. The more clearly, succinctly, and persuasively this message is formulated, the higher the chance will be that the audience will accept it and be converted to this new way of seeing things. Effective presenters will often combine the top two types of presentations, underpinning their compelling call to action with a convincingly formulated message explaining why the stated actions need to be realized.
3. **Presenting the Argument: With the intention to illuminate.** The third type of presentation is even longer, putting forward a line of reasoning in order to explain certain conclusions. It structures a logical argument, based on analyses and insights, building towards a particular result. This argument can often be used to justify the above message and actions. However, the opposite often happens, as the audience gets overwhelmed with facts and insights that the sender is too eager to convey, while the message and actions for the receiver are drowned out or even forgotten.
4. **Presenting the Voyage: With the intention to inform.** The fourth type of presentation is the longest of all, retelling the intellectual voyage that was undertaken to arrive at the reported facts and insights. This journey description typically clarifies how the data was collected and the analysis performed. However, this is the formula for death by PowerPoint, and fits more with a written report than in a verbal presentation. Moreover, taking people along on this voyage in a presentation is more about your need to share your work (sender-centric), than thinking about what the audience needs to hear (receiver-centric).

Key Insights

- **Presentations are not verbal reports.** Too many presentations sound like someone is reading a written report aloud (and the fact that many reports are written in PowerPoint makes it all the more tempting). Yet readers can *flip through* a report as they see fit but have to *sit through* a presentation with no control of the process. This places a huge responsibility on the presenter to think from the perspective of the receiver.
- **Presentations can have 4 types of impact.** The most powerful impact is when a presentation gets people *to do* things (*focus on initiation*), while the second most impactful gets people *to think* things (*focus on influence*). One step short of this type of convincing is to get people *to understand* things (*focus on illumination*), while the least ambitious is to get people *to know* things (*focus on informing*).
- **Presentations can have 4 types of format.** An *actions presentation* is a tangible call to action, a *message presentation* has a clear point to make, an *argument presentation* explains a line of reasoning and a *voyage presentation* reports on all of the steps taken.
- **Presentation inputs are created bottom-up.** Presenters typically create their material bottom-up, starting with an analytical voyage, resulting in some type of argument. Sometimes they even make the effort to distill their key message for the audience and even formulate some follow-up actions they believe the audience should take.
- **Presentation content should be selected top-down.** Effective presentations are constructed the other way around, starting with the desired actions and then the underpinning message, while only including supporting arguments and a description of the analytical voyage where necessary. This keeps the presentation short and focused.

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Insightful Tools to Kickstart Your Thinking

Publication Schedule

<i>July 2019</i>	<i>Mind the Gap Model</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2019</i>	<i>Digital Platform Map</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>September 2019</i>	<i>Interaction Pressure Gauge</i>	<i>Interpersonal Interaction</i>
<i>October 2019</i>	<i>Revenue Model Framework</i>	<i>Revenue Model Typology</i>
<i>November 2019</i>	<i>House of Engagement</i>	<i>Organizational Engagement</i>
<i>December 2019</i>	<i>Confidence Quotient</i>	<i>Trust Building</i>
<i>January 2020</i>	<i>Competition Tornado</i>	<i>Competitive Strategy</i>
<i>February 2020</i>	<i>11C Synergy Model</i>	<i>Corporate Synergy Management</i>
<i>March 2020</i>	<i>Leadership Fairness Model</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>April 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Agility Model</i>	<i>Strategy Process Approach</i>
<i>May 2020</i>	<i>Control Panel</i>	<i>Corporate Control Dimensions</i>
<i>June 2020</i>	<i>Rising Star Framework</i>	<i>Talent Management</i>
<i>July 2020</i>	<i>Strategy Development Cycle</i>	<i>Strategy Process Steps</i>
<i>August 2020</i>	<i>7I Corporate Center Model</i>	<i>Corporate Organization</i>
<i>September 2020</i>	<i>Storytelling Scripts</i>	<i>Leadership Communication</i>
<i>October 2020</i>	<i>Strategic Bets Framework</i>	<i>Strategic Decision-Making</i>
<i>November 2020</i>	<i>Rebound Model of Resilience</i>	<i>Organizational Resilience</i>
<i>December 2020</i>	<i>4C Leadership Capabilities</i>	<i>Leadership Competences</i>
<i>January 2021</i>	<i>Digital Product Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>February 2021</i>	<i>Digital Distribution Model Dial</i>	<i>Digital Strategy</i>
<i>March 2021</i>	<i>Empowerment Cycle</i>	<i>Employee Empowerment</i>
<i>April 2021</i>	<i>Innovation Box</i>	<i>Innovation Approaches</i>
<i>May 2021</i>	<i>Knowledge Sharing Bridges</i>	<i>Best Practice Sharing</i>
<i>June 2021</i>	<i>Followership Cycle</i>	<i>Leader-Follower Interaction</i>
<i>July 2021</i>	<i>Everest Model of Change</i>	<i>Change Management</i>
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>Fruits & Nuts Matrix</i>	<i>Priority-Setting</i>
<i>September 2021</i>	<i>Powerhouse Framework</i>	<i>People & Organization Strategy</i>
<i>October 2021</i>	<i>Strategy Hourglass</i>	<i>Strategy-Making Steps</i>
<i>November 2021</i>	<i>Disciplined Dialogue Model</i>	<i>Interpersonal Communication</i>
<i>December 2021</i>	<i>Team Building Cycle</i>	<i>Team Building Process</i>
<i>January 2022</i>	<i>Market System Map</i>	<i>External Analysis Framework</i>
<i>February 2022</i>	<i>Strategic Alignment Model</i>	<i>Business Level Strategy</i>
<i>March 2022</i>	<i>Creativity X-Factor</i>	<i>Creativity Enhancement</i>
<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Organizational System Map</i>	<i>Organizational Analysis</i>
<i>May 2022</i>	<i>Corporate Value Creation Model</i>	<i>Corporate Level Strategy</i>

June 2022	Change Manager's Toolbox	Change Methodologies
July 2022	Sustainable You Model	Personal Sustainability
August 2022	Value Proposition Dial	Business Level Strategy
September 2022	The Tree of Power	Organizational Power
October 2022	Psychological Safety Compass	Team Dynamics
November 2022	Strategic Action Modes	Strategy Process
December 2022	Corporate Management Styles	HQ Management
January 2023	Thinking Directions Framework	Reasoning Skills
February 2023	5I Innovation Pipeline	Innovation Process
March 2023	Resistance to Change Typology	Change Management
April 2023	Ambition Radar Screen	Motivation Analysis
May 2023	Corporate Strategy Framework	Corporate Strategy
June 2023	Cultural Fabric Model	Organizational Culture
July 2023	New Pyramid Principle	Presentation Approaches
August 2023	Activity System Dial	Value Creation Analysis
September 2023	Customer-Centricity Circle	Organizational Design
October 2023	Status Snakes & Ladders	Leadership Branding
November 2023	Dynamic Business Paradigm	Competitive Advantage
December 2023	Dynamic Organization Paradigm	Human-centered Organization
January 2024	Duty of Care Feedback Criteria	Feedback Method
February 2024	Stakeholder Heat Map	Stakeholder Management
March 2024	Best Practice Sharing Framework	Sharing Methods
April 2024	New Learning Curve	Personal Learning
May 2024	Partnership Distance Model	Interorganizational Relations
June 2024	Embedded Identity Model	Personal Awareness
July 2024	Interpersonal Interaction Levels	Communication Approaches