

A satellite image of the Earth, showing the Western Hemisphere. North America is prominently visible in the center-right, with green landmasses and blue oceans. The image is taken from space, showing the curvature of the planet and swirling cloud patterns over the oceans.

# POWERPITCH

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Handbook to create  
PowerPoint presentations  
that pay off



# THE ISSUE

## Public presentation is one of the biggest fear of our time.

According to the last Fear Index, by Chapman University\*, speaking in front of an audience scares us more than spiders, losing our job, even more than floods and earthquakes!

In addition, we are also rightly scared to undergo this practice. How many times we had to endure bad presentations? How harmful are those endless lists of bullet points, excel sheets without structure, filled with heavy (but meaningless) data? So we asked ourselves: "Why PowerPoint, a tool designed to improve our business lives, it's still, in 2017, used so badly (and in a deadly way)? Why all this suffering??"

There are various reasons, we think that 3 are key to understand the phenomenon.

### 1. Nobody taught us how to present.

Seems prosaic but since we are 8 years old they taught us how to write and do sums, and we keep doing that during all our educational years, then, abruptly, we land in the business world and they ask us to do something new, unusual: to present in public.

We look around, we try to grasp the "home-style" from previous presentations, to copy others, but the further we dug the less thinking we found, and the sad reality is that everyone is improvising.

\* <https://blogs.chapman.edu/wilkinson/2016/10/11/americas-top-fears-2016/>

2. It is very helpful to write down everything in our slides, so **we didn't have to study our presentation!** (Just open the pc and read).

If you stop and think about that for a minute: it is completely non-sense! Why do we have to take our colleagues' time, reserve a meeting room, bring them physically there if they will just listen to us while we are reading from a screen?

They know how to read themselves! We can send everything via e-mail and it will be a big spare of time for us, for them and for our company.

3. If we have all the materials organized in slides, we can print a very useful summary and we can leave something physical at the end of our presentation.

**This document is - usually - called Hand-out and it is a very powerful tool, a good thing to have.**

But, a PowerPoint made to support us in a live-presentation it doesn't work if it is read autonomously by our audience. Different code, different format, different settings, they don't work the same way, we have to do a step forward.

Learn how to present in public is not an innate talent and it is not only public speaking, it's an easy to learn process that follows a few simple steps: this handbook will help you exactly on that.



# UPS..we didn't introduce ourselves!



We are **Augusto Pirovano** and **Matteo Uguzzoni aka Livello7**, a Milan based creative studio focused on non-conventional workshops.

We've created many project (or startup if you prefer), and pitched our ideas in dozens of contest and competitions, often being chosen as winner\*.

**Since 2011 we "toured" Italy and Europe with our workshop , the PowerPitch**, training hundreds of professionals and start-uppers on the topic of effective presentations.

We successfully applied our process to other endemic big companies problems, with the workshops:

- Short and effective meeting
- Super Good Work - online course for work better and live the good life
- Virtual Meeting on Skype

You can find us on  
[www.livello7.it](http://www.livello7.it)

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best Italian startup - TechGarage 2009

best Startup - Premio Wired 2009

best development project- KublaiCamp 2009

best 100 young entrepreneurs - European Community







# THE AUDIENCE

## ie you are presenting for them

Before starting our design process we have to ask ourselves few key questions

- **Who is my audience?**
- **How many people there will be in the conference room?**
- **Are they alike or there will be different cluster?**
- **How many clusters can we recognize?**

For every cluster/audience we have to clarify (aka write down):

- **Why is here** or why would he read the handout? What is that is pushing him?
- **What are his problems?** Both connected to the presentation theme and more broadly connected to his personal or professional life
- **What are his passions?** What interest him?
- There is something that **he cannot stand?**
- What are **his expectations?**
- **Does he have some bias** that I have to face immediately?
- **What do I want him to do** at the end of my presentation?

Answer those questions before even start every work on the presentation, **write down everything and create your own "Audience Map"**.

Every time you have some doubt over a choice about your presentation (it is ok to insert this content or not? Which style I have to use?) **you can find your answers here.**

If you had identified multiple audience clusters then fill a different map for each one of them.

Be sure that your presentation touches at least one relevant topic for all your audiences, or choose if you want to focus strategically on the most important cluster (for you and your project).

**Be aware and choose knowingly.**

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Create your audience map is a little investment - in a half-hour session it is possible to describe almost every kind of public - but if you don't have time, then we suggest you to focus on those two questions:

- **What is his problem?**
- **What do I want him to do at the end of my presentation?**

For each one of this questions you will find a detailed chapter in the following pages.



# THE GOAL

## why are you here?

Before even starting working on a presentation it's important to stop and ask ourselves: why i'm building this document?

### What's the goal that I want to reach?

**In this sense there are two kind of different presentation.**

On one side you have the so-called **“informative presentations”**, presentations that had only to transfer messages, but other then that it is ok also if nothing happens after the communication.

On the other side you have **“Persuasive presentations”**, that, on top of the information transfer, are designed to move the audience in action.

### Which kind of action? What goal?

It may be to ask for backing your project, word-of-mouth sharing, social-media advocacy.

For instance we can ask to going further in the discussion or ask our audience to change an attitude toward a specific topic.

This question is part of the Audience Map work that we already saw together in the previous sections: **What do I want my audience to do at the end of my presentation?**

Sometimes we automatically think that our presentation is only an informative one. Maybe it's filled with data and in basically about a regulation update...the further from *inspirational* ever!

Even in this cases, if we stop and think, we will discover that just informing it is not enough, we have to make something happen.

For us, **the so-called informative presentation doesn't exist**, if we think deeply every presentation that we do has to be designed to move your audience to an action.

You always want something from your audience, always, it's just a matter of time and thinking.

Those actions, those things we want from our audience, **has to become our final Call to Action, the GOAL that we want to reach.**

And remember, in order to work, a good call to action must to be explicitly communicated, it can't remain implied.







# THE OPPORTUNITY

## otherwise which are the “circumstances” of your presentation?

Another very important questions that you have to ask yourself is: when and where will be the document i’m designing used?

**It will be read autonomously or will be used to a live-presentation in front of an audience?**

Those are very different background situations, with very distinct communication output.

If we want upgrade for real our communication we have to create **several documents for different circumstances.**

**In a live-presentation the document must to remain a background help**, it can’t grab the spotlight or, worse, draw the attention away for **the real center of the presentation: you!**

**A document that has to be read autonomously has to be self-explanatory:** all the information must reach the audience without any trouble.

This kind of document could be designed using PowerPoint, Word or any other software, we can call it “presentation” but we risk to loose what is that we are talking about: other then the project presentation itself, it’s more the project “handbook”.

Two useful question:

**How many people will be in the room?**

Few > be more factual

Many > you can be more inspirational

**I will present live or with a document?**

Live > Basic slides, not many text on it

Document > More text



# THE FOCUS

## is the subject of your presentation

It is essential to clarify what is **the central subject of our presentation**, the core, both if you are presenting a project or bootstrapping a new product.

**How it will look like the project/product definition if we have to fix it in a sentence of 140 characters?** The simpler and the all-purpose possible.

*This is not the project title.*

*This is not the presentation title.*

*This is not the payoff or an engaging motto.*

**It's a plain short description, candid and straightforward that is useful for you** to clarify what is the core element of your project/product that you will sell/describe.

Try to pick a noun to describe your project, when you are satisfied with that noun, then start describing the value and all the features of the project/product.

Few examples:

- “A training **program** to improve communication skills”
- “A **channel** to collect feedback from the network”
- “A new methodological **framework** for the learning area”
- “An outsourced e-learning **report tool**”
- “**A tool** to discover your company Talents”
- “A **landing page** to explore our offer”
- “An **online coaching tool** for top manager”
- “**A communication strategy** for the launch of our new HR projects”
- “A **change-management event** to spread out digital culture”

When you had found the definition then do the ultimate test::

Imagine that someone comes randomly to your presentation, without any clue about the topic, then he walks out and meet a colleague.

He will be able to answer the direct question: “What was that presentation about?” in a short, plain and straightforward sentence?

If yes, you nailed it!

Mission accomplished!





# THE PROBLEM

## make room for the most important chapter

Sometimes presentation are mainly focused on describing our project or product and **recount one after the other all the features of it.**

Why it is so annoying to see a presentation like that?

**Because the creator didn't care about us and who we are.**

A strong statement we must remember is: **our audience don't give a s\*\*t about us.**

If they don't care about us and our project, what do they care, then?

**People are interested in themselves, they are interested in solving their problems.**

Look at your audience Map, it's full of questions, one of the most important is connected with the problem, the pain of your listener.

**Identify the right pain that we want to solve** - and be sure that is not a global problem, or worse our problem, but our audience problem - is the perfect way to grasp their attention and to make them positive and curious about the solution that we uncovered: the product/project that we want to present.

Once the problem(s) are identified it's time to make them explicit and describe them in the presentation.

Sometimes our listeners had problems that are not so clear and plain for them too. **If we are able to do that work for them (highlight the pain) that will be the peak moment of our presentation.** From that moment on it will be downhill.

After the pain it's time to present our project/product as an answer, a specific solution for that problem.

Mostly all the boring and ineffective presentation didn't take off from a problem but they care exclusively to describe the solution.

**Identifying our audience problem is an evidence that we are giving them the right consideration.**

Before selling every solution possible, project or product doesn't matter, we must make feel our audience **understood and included.**

**Only then they will listen to us and they will listen to our solution with the right consideration.**



# THE STRUCTURE

## or rather: use stories

A good presentation is like a book or a fairy tale: it must follow an **effective structure in order to involve the public and lead in through a line of reasoning.**

There are many structures ready to use, one of the most easy and traditional goes like this:

Use this structure to design your live presentation and the persuasive handout too (if there will be no meeting).

1. **Opening:** we grasp our audience attention
2. Exposition of a **pain**
3. Presenting a **solution**
4. List of **advantages**
5. Wrap up + **Call to Action**

### Exercise!

Identify the 5 chapter of the traditional structure in each one of the following stories:

- Star Wars - the Force awakens
- The wizard of Oz
- The Lord of the Rings







# THE HANDOUT

## how to design it without working twice

Start from **writing the text of the presentation** and, only after that, start designing the slides storyboard is a good way to work saving time and without being distracted from useless tech specs.

If it's a Live presentation that we are creating it means to **open Word** (or other writing software), write down the 5 chapter of the traditional structure and try to fill them with the entire speech that we want to say live. Not a bullet point list but **word by word**.

If we present live, we are the presentation, the slides are only an assistance, a background support.

For this it's key to grasp fully the primary goal of **saying the right things in a line of thinking persuasive and clear** (we are used to do that also).

Then from the written speech we can ask ourselves which moments deserve a visual support and we will define how many slide we have to design.

If we are creating a persuasive handout, let's start even so writing down the speech presentation as if we were to do it live. This will help us on building the argument blocks that we will unfold in the slides.

**A good handout is made so that our audience feel like we are taking them hand by hand and leading gently through the our thinking process.**

If we write the speech, we are creating the voiceover for them.

A rational objection against writing the entire speech is: what's wrong on delivering a good "handbook"?

Presenting something in an effective way is like to lay out a wire between two points and connecting them with a rational argument. The first point is the problem (or the need of our audience) the second is the conclusion, our goal, the call to action. We can choose: **we can unfold this wire and give to our audience just the initial end of it.**

Or we can give them the entire hank and ask them to unravel the knot and reach autonomously the goal of our communication. This is what happens when we send out tech documents to someone that it wasn't involved on the project.

**If we can make is simple for them, they will be grateful**, nobody loves to embark himself in such a complex tasks, the only sure result it will be that our message wouldn't arrive, wouldn't stand out or be remembered.

### Great persuasive handout:

- [How to get unstuck](#)
- [How Google works](#)
- [The Brand gap](#)
- [Kill procrastination](#)



# DESIGNING SLIDES

## that works for live presentations



We already stated that in a live presentation, you are the presentation, not the slides.

### Slides are a support, a help.

So the question is, how do we create slides that are an useful background and not a distraction?

### A good slide is a simple one.

When you are talking all the eyes of the audience are on you and everyone is focused on what you are saying.

When you change slide everyone's eyes move, something changed in the screen and they go there.

The simpler the slide the faster your audience will decode the content and come back to you.

**A complex, rich and messy slide sort of hypnotize the listeners that start wander around in that complexity** and in few seconds they don't listen to you anymore and you've lost their attention.

### How to design a simple slide?

**First rule is: one slide / one concept.** And work to help that single message to stand out

For instance: the goal of this slide is to explain that 50% of the South Italian export is by oil products.



However to express this simple message it uses dozens of data and complex graphs. The key data is a tiny fraction of the slide.

Same slide, simpler and the concept is way more clear.

In order to do that you can choose: make comprehensive a graph or just use an image with the raw data.



### Some mistakes to avoid:

#### Don't use animations and useless transition between two slides.

We don't have to impress with eye candy effects, but help them focus on content and to our strong argumentative structure. Exception: if you can't avoid a complex slide make the single element to appear one by one, in line with the speech that is delivered at that moment.

#### Don't use bullet points.

A list with all the things flattened is not helping your audience to remember them. Every time you have the desire to add a bullet point ask yourself: are all the element equally and really important? Delete the redundant and put each of the ones that "survive" in one slide: give them the correct relevance.

#### Don't create a presentation made only with images.

Images are powerful tools but it's hard to design a coherent, refined and effective document made only with images. Use caution and choose carefully.

# DESIGNING SLIDES

## that works for live presentations



### Evita di scrivere tanto testo nella slide.

Soprattutto se si tratta di una presentazione LIVE avere troppo testo nella slide produce due effetti devastanti:

1. il pubblico appena la slide compare inizierà con gli occhi a leggere il testo, non ascoltandoti più. Lo stesso messaggio arriverà qualche secondo dopo dalla tua voce creando una sorta di “effetto eco” che dopo pochi minuti sarà in grado di stendere anche l’interlocutore più motivato.
2. avere tutto quello che devi dire a schermo aumenta a dismisura la tentazione smettere di guardare il pubblico e rivolgere lo sguardo a schermo per leggere. Senza il contatto visivo si riduce di molto il tempo massimo di attenzione delle persone presenti.

### Evita di usare le clipart, immagini scadenti e quelle viste e riviste (cliché).

Alcuni (orribili) esempi e le idee a loro associate:



Le immagini sono funzionali alla nostra comunicazione nella misura in cui ci consentono di **legare un concetto ad un elemento visivo memorabile.**

Immagini viste e riviste non sono memorabili anzi, contribuiscono a rendere le nostre slide uguali a quelle di altre mille presentazioni viste in passato.

*E' come se il nostro pubblico fosse immune a questi riferimenti, avesse già sviluppato negli anni gli anticorpi.*

**Noi vogliamo essere ricordati e quindi dobbiamo utilizzare elementi visivi nuovi, interessanti e curiosi.**

Allo stesso tempo dobbiamo essere attenti ad essere anche eleganti e coerenti con l'immagine aziendale.

Non si tratta di una cosa facile, per questo nel dubbio, meglio usare meno immagini ma più curate.



# DESIGNING SLIDES that works for live presentations

**Do not use an executive summary if you are designing a LIVE presentation.**

The executive summary is an index, and index are for books.

An index is used to give the reader the possibility to jump directly to the section of the text that he prefer.

When we are presenting we don't want the audience to jump to the conclusion without passing through our reasoning.

**Therefore let's leave the executive summary to the technical handbook that we will give away after the speech.**

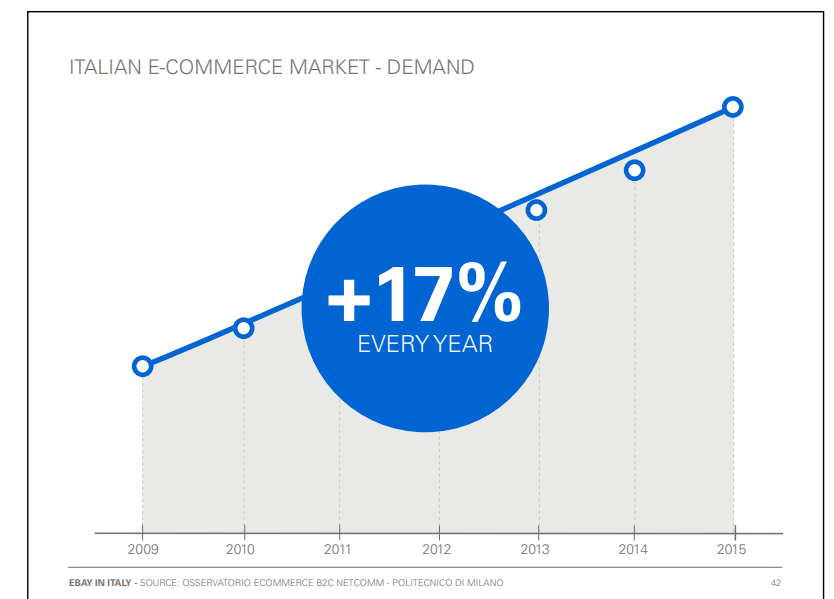
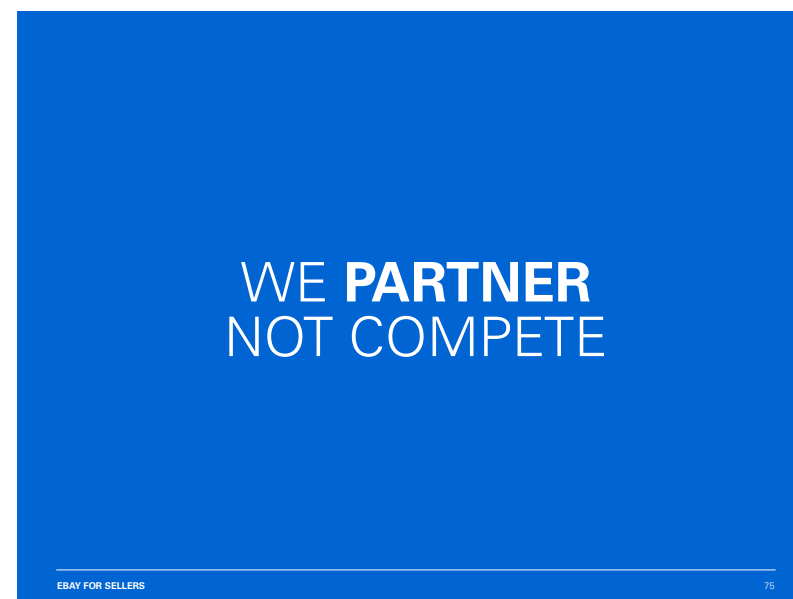
But if we must use it?

Then let's create something different (but let's continue calling it with the same name), **rather then the content we can create an index of the benefits that our audience will get from our presentation** (like an *antipasto*).

Because a good presentation is a transformative experience (for the better we hope), we can declare since the beginning what would be the transformation that we want to provoke in exchange for their time and attention.

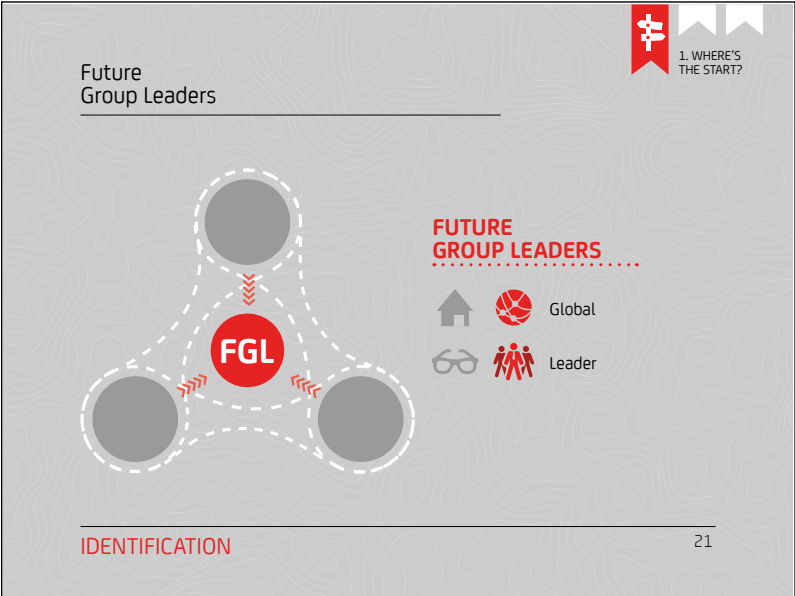
To sum up, a good slide for a live presentation::

- is a **simple** one
- it has a **single concept** on it, explicit or connected with the image
- it has **few words**, to avoid distracting our audience
- it's **coherent in style** with the rest of the presentation: same font, same color, same mood
- and if we choose to use lot of images let's pick them in the **same and shared imaginary** (es: outdoor, music, etc..)

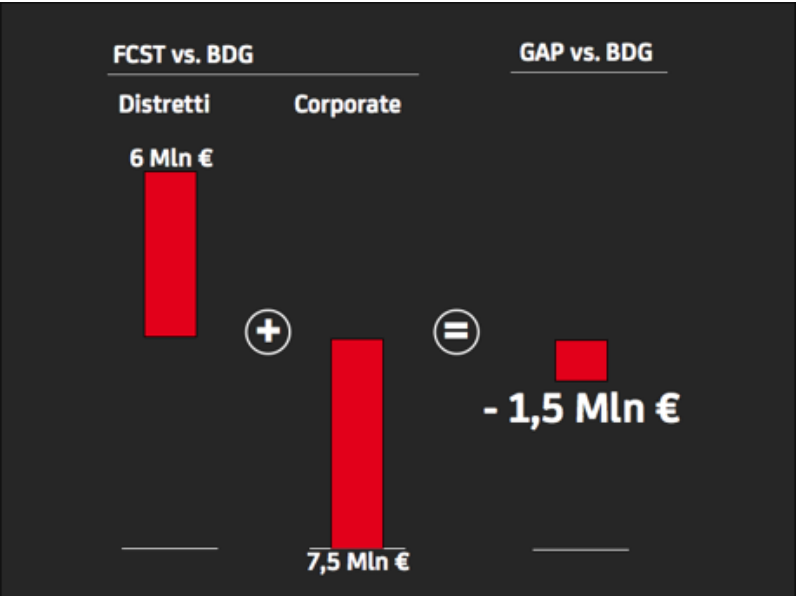
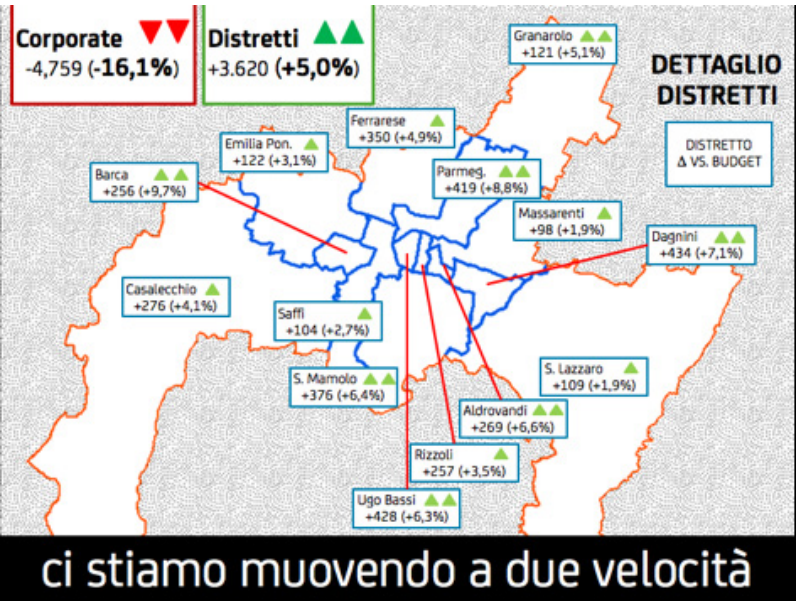
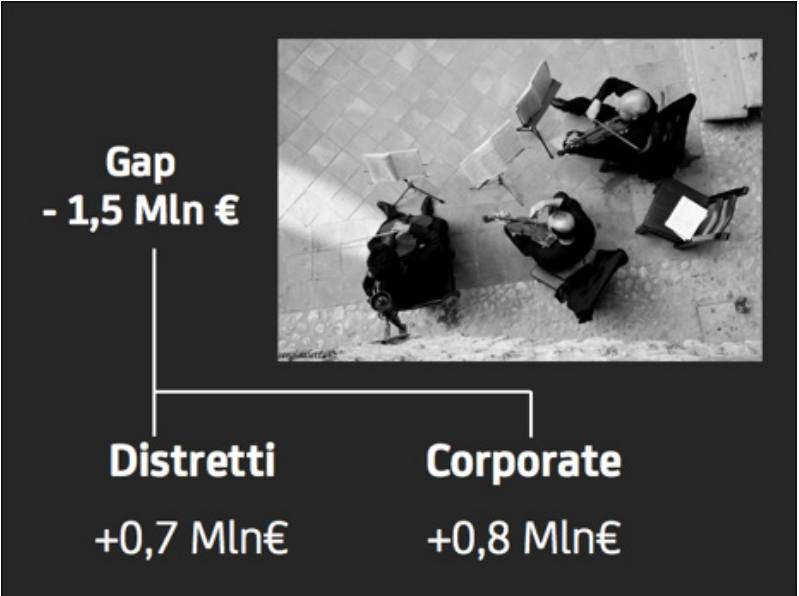


# DESIGNING SLIDES that works for live presentations

Few example of slides that we created for our client that did very **well in a live presentation**



and other examples of slides created during our PowerPitch workshop from participant without any graphic skills (but even so very effective).





# DESIGNING SLIDES

## that works for an Handout

A good slide for a persuasive handout:

- **it has a text that lead the reader hand by hand through the reasoning**, following the speech that a live presenter would have give on that same slide.
- ...therefore the slide could and should have **more text** compared to a live presentation slide
- **it has a coherent aspect and style** with all the other slides of the document

Don't be scared if, in order to unfold a reasoning and respect the rule one slide: on concept, you need more slide then the "normal" number.

**Below a slide sequence** for an handout, a good example of "voiceover"

A handout with **50 slides could be more effective** and faster to read compared to an handbook with 10 complex and messy slides, filled with data and graphs.



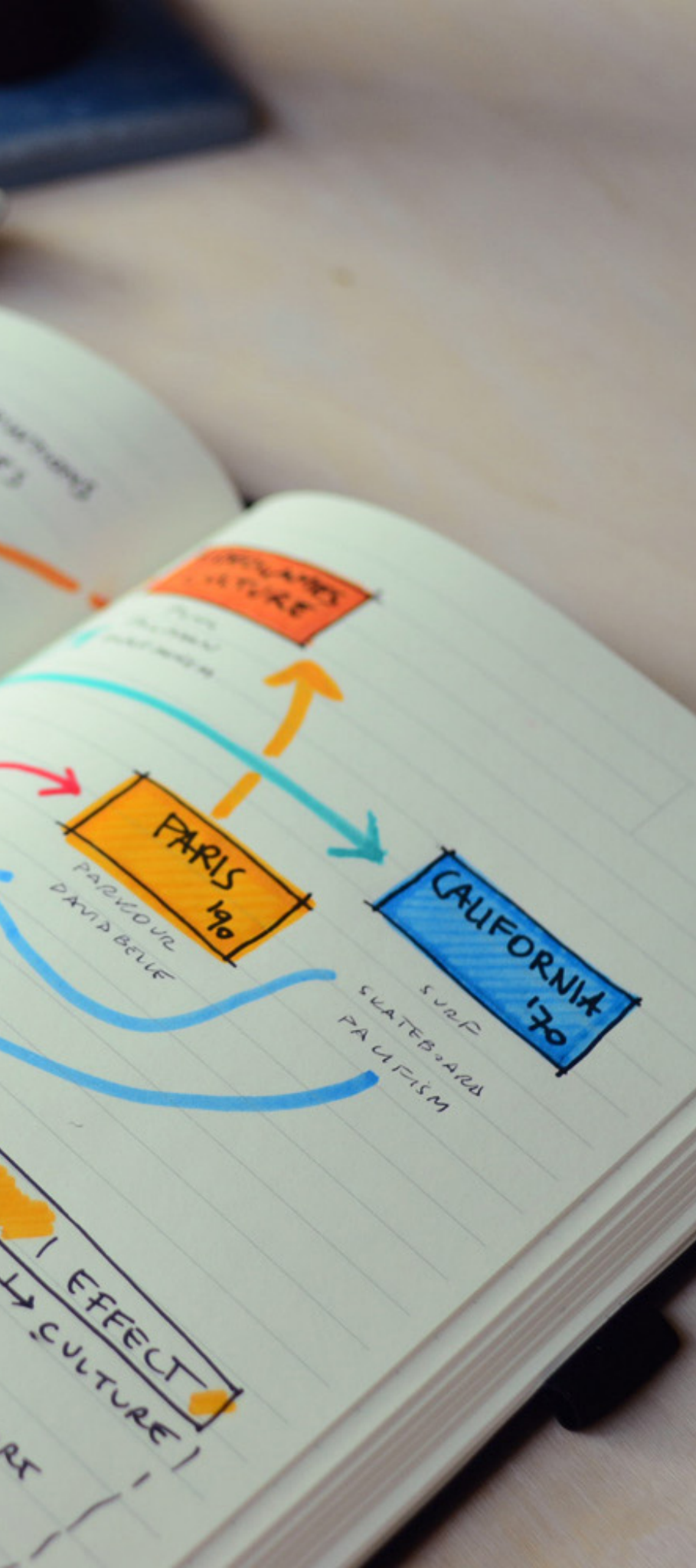
A persuasive handout must necessarily be rich in images? No, the key point is to have the text that unravel the implicit line of thinking.



# TO SUMMARIZE

## checklist for the perfect presentation

1. You are presenting for an **audience**, they are the key player, try to understand **who they are!**
2. Define immediately **what do you want from your audience** and make it an explicit call to action at the end of presentation.
3. If you want their attention, **involve them and find their pain**, that's the starting point to make them accepting your solution.
4. Slides (in a live presentation) **must be simple and easy to decipher**, because you are the presentation!
5. Handout and live presentation are **different communication process**, they work differently and they need two different approach.





## Thanks for reading,

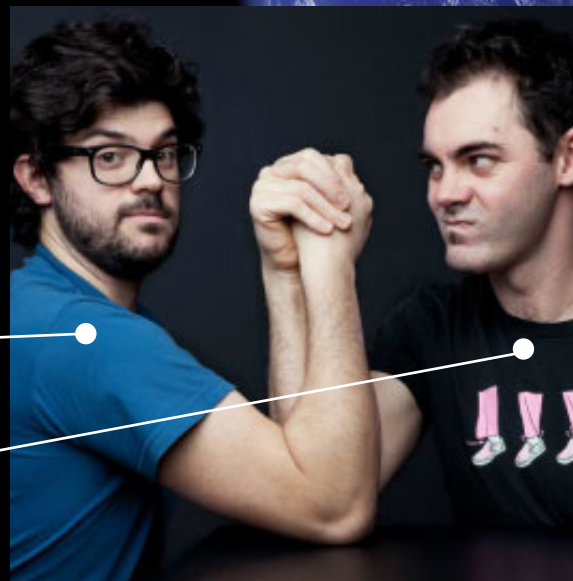
we really hope that this quick handbook (yeah this for us is an handbook) could help you in your daily business routine. If you have some doubt or if you found inaccuracy **write to us!** You would help us make that handbook a better, richer and more useful tool and therefore help many other professional that had to use PowerPoint and they risk, everyday, to design very *harmful* presentation.

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## Write to us!

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# POWERPITCH

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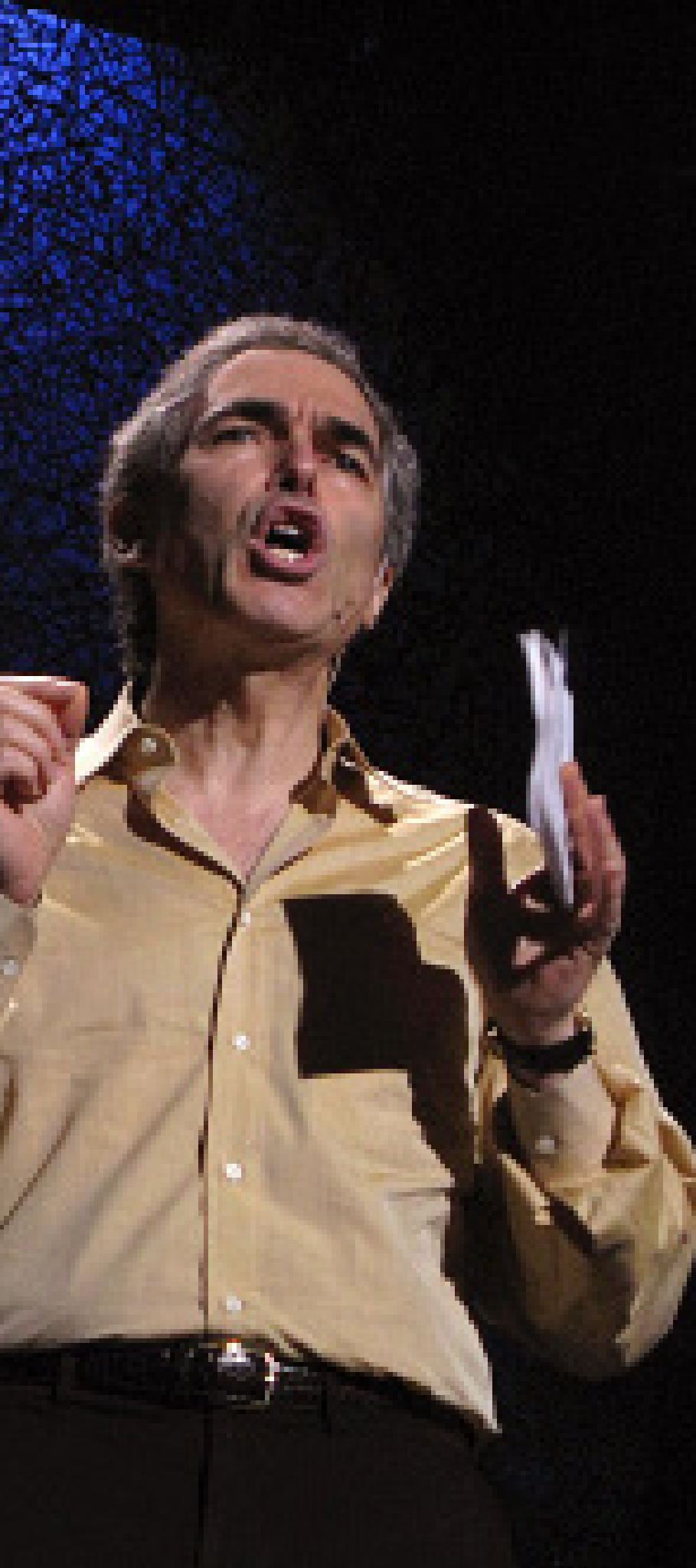
a guide by



**LIVELLO SETTE**

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# EXTRA!!

## ie where to download quality images

Many people think that our presentation real secret are the images.

We don't believe so, in fact, **a presentation correctly designed works pretty well also without slide** and if you start experimenting with our process you will discover it by your own.

Anyway here some websites where we usually find the images that we use (always remember to be careful about the Copyright!)

Pexels - <https://www.pexels.com>

Flickr - <http://www.flickr.com>

Unsplash <http://unsplash.com>

Death to the Stock Photo  
<http://join.deathtothestockphoto.com>

Google Images  
[images.google.com](https://images.google.com)