

the biggest leaders of the tech industry. While on stage, he opened up a glass jar and said, "Malaria is spread by mosquitoes. I brought some here. I'll let them roam around. There is no reason only poor people should be infected." We're told the audience just sat there stunned, as any of us would be. Moments later he let them off the hook, letting the audience know the mosquitoes he brought were malaria free, but he did it to prove a point and point taken. Gates and his wife Melinda have dedicated their lives and their fortune to a lot of different charitable causes . . . including the eradication of malaria in poor countries in Africa and Asia where there are up to 500 million new cases every year.¹

I know this might come as a shock, but television news reports often get things wrong. They did in the Williams piece. Gates did not say that there's no reason why only poor people should be infected. He said, "Malaria is, of course, transmitted by mosquitoes. I brought some here, just so you could experience this. We'll let those roam around the auditorium a little bit. There's no reason only poor people should have the experience."² Also, the audience did not sit in "stunned silence." They roared with laughter, cheered, and applauded. Gates effectively demonstrated:

Secret #5: Deliver Jaw-Dropping Moments

The jaw-dropping moment in a presentation is when the presenter delivers a shocking, impressive, or surprising moment that is so moving and memorable, it grabs the listener's attention and is remembered long after the presentation is over.

Why it works: Jaw-dropping moments create what neuroscientists call an emotionally charged event, a heightened state of

A Google search returns 500,000 links to the event. The original video on the TED.com site has attracted 2.5 million views, and that doesn't include the other Web sites that link to it.

Entrepreneur and Path CEO Dave Morin was the first to announce it on Twitter: "Bill Gates just released mosquitoes into the audience at TED and said: 'Not only poor people should experience this.'" eBay founder Pierre Omidyar tweeted: "That's it, I'm not sitting up front any more." A memorable moment gets shared, spreading the message much farther than in its immediate audience, often around the globe.

Gates spoke for 18 minutes. The mosquito shtick took up less than 5 percent of his total speaking time, yet today the mosquito moment is the part of the presentation people remember the most. Most water-cooler moments last as long as it takes to grab a drink of water before heading back to your office. Gates's water-cooler moment still gets noticed, discussed, and shared five years later.

In journalism we call the mosquito shtick "the hook." It's the wow moment, the showstopper, a rhetorical device that grabs your attention and persuades you to read or to share the story ("You've got to see Bill Gates releasing mosquitoes," you might tell a friend as you e-mail the link).

I'm not suggesting that you bring a jar of mosquitoes to your next presentation, but I am suggesting that you think about your content and identify the most important points you need to make. Then find a novel and memorable way to communicate those messages. Sometimes you need to surprise your audience in order to get them to care.

What's the first thing you should do when creating a PowerPoint presentation? If you're like many people you'll say, "Open PowerPoint." Wrong answer. You should plan the story first. Just as a movie director storyboards the scenes before he begins shooting, you should create the story before you open the tool. You'll have plenty of time to design pretty slides once the story is com-

plete, but if the story is boring, you've lost your audience before you've spoken a word.

I like to tap in to several senses when planning the story—seeing, touching, feeling. Stand up and go to a whiteboard, pick up a pen or a yellow legal pad, use a drawing application on a tablet, or even think while taking a walk—anything that engages several areas of your brain. Above all, regardless of the software you use (PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, etc.), don't open the software as your first step. Your presentation will be uninteresting and uninspired if you do.

PowerPoint gets a bad rap, but it's not a bad tool. It can—and is—often used to create stunning presentations. But if you don't have the story in the first place, your gorgeous slides won't matter. Every memorable story, film, or presentation has one scene or one event that everyone remembers because it's so impactful. It's such a well-known psychological device, researchers have a term for it.

UNLEASH AN EMOTIONALLY CHARGED EVENT

When Gates unleashed his “swarm” of mosquitoes, he hooked his audience precisely because it was shocking, unexpected, and different. It was what brain researchers call an “emotionally charged event.” As with every technique in this book, it works because your brain is wired for it.

“An emotionally charged event (usually called an ECS, short for emotional competent stimulus) is the best-processed kind of external stimulus ever measured,”³ says molecular scientist John Medina. “Emotionally charged events persist longer in our memories and are recalled with greater accuracy than neutral memories.”

Medina says it all has to do with the amygdala, which is located in the prefrontal cortex. “The amygdala is chock-full of the neurotransmitter dopamine, and it uses dopamine the way an office assistant uses Post-it notes. When the brain detects an emotionally

"The brain remembers the emotional components of an experience better than any other aspect."

—John Medina, molecular biologist and author of *Brain Rules*

THE UNDISPUTED KING OF WOW

Steve Jobs was the king of the emotionally charged event, the "wow moment." In every presentation, he informed, educated, and entertained. Jobs transformed a presentation into a spectacle worthy of a Broadway production. His presentations had heroes, villains, props, characters, and that one memorable showstopper when you knew that the price of admission was well worth it.

Years before PowerPoint or Keynote software were even invented, and even years before TED exploded on the scene, Steve Jobs was doing TED-like presentations that kept the audience on the edge of their seats.

In 1984, more than 2,500 employees, analysts, and media filled the Flint Center at De Anza College for a product launch that would revolutionize everything about the way we use computers—Macintosh. The 16-minute product launch also stands the test of time as one of most dramatic presentations ever delivered by a corporate titan.

First, Jobs described the power and the features of the new computer, along with pictures. "All of this power fits into the box that is one-third the size and weight of an IBM PC," he said. Most presenters would have wrapped up, telling the audience when the product would go on sale and what its price point would be. Instead Jobs wowed the crowd with one extra, unexpected surprise.

"You've just seen pictures of Macintosh. Now I'd like to show you Macintosh in person. All of the images you are about to see on the large screen are being generated by what's in that bag." Jobs

his return, Jobs slowed the rate of his speech, lowered his voice, and said, “I think you always had to be a little different to buy an Apple computer . . . I think the people that do buy them are the creative spirits in the world. They are the people that are not out just to get a job done; they are out to change the world and they are out to change the world using whatever great tools they can get. And we make tools for those kind of people . . . A lot of times, people think they’re crazy. But in that craziness, we see genius. And those are the people we’re making tools for.”¹⁰

A showstopper can be as simple as speaking to the audience from your heart—no slides, no props, no video, just you. If you’ll recall from chapter 1, it’s often as easy as filling in the rest of this sentence: What makes my heart sing is . . .”

1,000 Songs in Your Pocket

In 2001 Apple introduced the iPod. The MP3 music player was not the first portable player on the market (remember the Sony Walkman)? The MP3 did transfer music faster from a computer, but that wasn’t the wow moment. Jobs had decided to focus on the size of the device as his showstopper.

“What’s so special about iPod?”¹¹ he asked the audience. “It’s ultra-portable. iPod is the size of a deck of cards. That’s tiny. It’s also lighter than most of the cell phones you have in your pocket. But we didn’t stop there . . . this amazing little device holds 1,000 songs and goes right in my pocket. I happen to have one, as a matter of fact.” Jobs reached into the pocket of his jeans and pulled out the first device that could store that much music and fit into your pocket.

Jobs was a genius at using statistics as showstoppers. Apple executives continue to do the same, introducing statistics in such a novel way that the stats themselves become memorable. Introducing the iPad Mini for the first time, Apple vice president of marketing Phil Schiller said the tablet is “7.2 mm thin. That’s about a quarter thinner than a fourth generation iPad.” Schiller knew

drops, and she says to herself, "Holy smokes, I get it now!" It's the first thing they remember about your presentation and the first thing they say to someone else who didn't see it but wants to know about your presentation. A holy smokes moment need not be fancy. It might be something as simple as a short, personal story. Here are five ways to create a holy smokes moment in your very next presentation (each of these has appeared in TED presentations).

Props and Demos

Mark Shaw created Ultra-Ever Dry, an invention with one astonishing feature—it repels liquids and stays dry. At TED 2013, he demonstrated his superhydrophobic nanotechnology coating that he said acts as a shield against most liquids.

Shaw took a bucket of red paint and threw it on a whiteboard. As the paint dripped down and off the board, letters began to be appear—the giant capital letters were coated with Ultra-Ever Dry. Slowly the audience saw a *T* followed by an *E* and finally the *D* to spell TED. The audience cheered and rose to their feet. Shaw had created a memorable demo that uniquely connected with the conference and its audience. It would certainly be a demo they would always remember.

When I worked with a group of nuclear scientists at one of America's top labs run by the U.S. Department of Energy, I learned two things about nuclear science. First, nothing is more complicated than nuclear technology. So, don't ever make the excuse that your content is too complex or technical to be explained simply. Second, America's nuclear labs are involved in a lot more than protecting the stability of our nuclear resources. They provide important research and data in the areas of global climate change, nuclear nonproliferation, clean energy, and counterterrorism.

This particular group in the organization had the task of developing presentation material that scientists would take to Congress to ask for funding projects. One of the projects involved

A full 90 percent of all strawberries consumed in the United States are grown in California. Importantly, strawberries enrich the communities where they are grown. In my conversation with the spokesperson, I learned that strawberries make up only .5 percent of California's farmland yet create 10 percent of all agricultural jobs in the state. I learned that the payroll taxes paid in one California county alone were equivalent to the combined salaries of all elementary-school teachers in the county and that the average strawberry farmworker made more than the average retail-store employee. These statistics were intended to explain the importance of the industry to the California economy, but the raw numbers themselves would have lost their punch without context. The stats were not new to the executive, but they were to the majority of people he had to influence (consumers, press, retail buyers, partners).

TEDnote

STATS CAN ROCK. Persuasion occurs when you reach a person's heart and head—logic and emotion. You'll need evidence, data, and statistics to back up your argument. Make numbers meaningful, memorable, and jaw-dropping by placing them in a context that the audience can relate to. A statistic doesn't have to be boring. My advice: never leave data dangling. Context matters. If your presentation has a number or data point that is groundbreaking or paramount, think about how you might package it and make it appealing to the listener. Enlist the help of someone else on your team. Sometimes it takes a brainstorm to package statistics in the best, most memorable way.

Pictures, Images, and Videos

Raghava KK is an artist who uses brain waves to manipulate his art in real time. As he spoke to his TED audience, Raghava was wearing a biofeedback headset that recorded his brain activity.

The headset was connected to the computer on which he was displaying the images.

The audience saw a photo of an old woman's face that Raghava affectionately called "Mona Lisa 2.0." The borders of the slide revealed his brain wave activity. In the live demo, Raghava said that not only could the audience see his mental state (attentive, meditative, focused), but he could actually project his mental state onto the woman's face. "When I am calm she is calm. When I am stressed she is stressed,"¹³ he said. Sure enough, when his brain waves or mental state changed, so did the woman's smile. Her frown grew more intense before turning up into a smile.

Visuals have punch. An evocative slide, a funny or insightful video clip, a thrilling demonstration—all are novel elements that could really move the needle with your audience.

Memorable Headlines

Stewart Brand is a futurist who presented a bold prediction to the TED 2013 audience in Long Beach. Biotech is accelerating four times faster than digital technology, he said. In Brand's opinion, that means we can bring extinct animals back to life. "We will get woolly mammoths back," he said. *We will get woolly mammoths back.* In media training, we call that a sound bite—a short, provocative, repeatable phrase that is likely to be retweeted, posted on Facebook, and repeated in the news cycle. At this point in my career, I know a sound bite when I hear it. Sure enough, Brand's prediction blew up on social media networks, including Twitter thanks to a retweet from the National Geographic Channel.

When I started training executives to appear in the media, the sound bite was critical to getting the story across in newspapers and television news. Today, social media make the sound bite even more important. The key to being a great spokesperson is also to craft a succinct message that conveys your big idea. When people share quotes via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social

networks, it's even more important that you feed those platforms with catchy, repeatable quotes.

The sound bite is so important that TED has a site and a Twitter handle dedicated to the best quotes from its speakers (@TEDQuote). Here are some of most popular ones:

- **"If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with any-
thing original."** —Sir Ken Robinson
- **"There's zero correlation between being the best talker and having
the best ideas."** —Susan Cain
- **"Don't fake it till you make it. Fake it till you become it."** —Amy Cuddy
- **"Behind most Afghan girls who succeed is a father who recognizes
that her success is his success."** —Shabana Basij-Rasikh
- **"Numbers are the musical notes with which the symphony of the
universe is written."** —Adam Spencer

If you'd like to see more quotes, you can visit TED.com/quotes and read more than 2,000 quotes from speakers. You can search all the quotes, the top quotes, or browse by category. Repeatable quotes are so important in spreading the message that TED actually attempts to find the most memorable quotes of the talk on which to hook viewers.

Hook people. Craft and deliver repeatable quotes. Your ideas deserve to be remembered.

Personal Stories

I dedicated a whole chapter to storytelling earlier, but it's impossible not to discuss stories here again because personal stories often become the jaw-dropping moment in a presentation. Freeman Hrabowski tells stories to attract publicity for his cause. Hrabowski

After a short pause I quietly said, "Have you ever said that in a public presentation?"

"No, I haven't."

"Well, you will now," I said.

The executive delivered his presentation to thousands of employees and concluded it by taking the card out of his wallet and repeating the same thing he had told us in the conference room. I didn't think he would get emotional again when he delivered it publicly, but he did. The employees saw a different side to their leader. They gave him a standing ovation, some employees could be seen wiping tears from their eyes, and at least one person approached the executive and said, "I've never been more proud to work for this organization."

Several weeks later we reviewed the surveys employees had been asked to fill out. They gave this particular executive the highest marks of any leader in the company's long history. Now he designs a showstopper in every presentation. It's usually a story, a video, a demonstration, a surprise guest, or simply a personal anecdote. All tactics get results.

Secret #5: Deliver Jaw-Dropping Moments

Every performer has at least one jaw-dropping moment—an emotionally charged event that your audience members will be talking about the next day. Every presentation needs one. Get one and use it. Your presentation content will make a better impact if it can be stamped onto the minds of your listeners.