



# FireFly Presentations Guide

A minimalist approach for content creating, visual aspect developing and speech delivering in Business presentations



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## Introduction

### What is FireFly Presentations?

FireFly Presentations is a simple and practical method of collaborative design and delivery of professional presentations. The method has been used successfully for business environment presentations since 2012.

The FireFly Presentations Guide is a succinct example of defining, planning, and managing the necessary activities for designing and delivering impactful presentations. It includes:

- Defining key activities
- Work principles
- Templates and work documents for realizing presentations

### For whom?

FireFly Presentations is destined to those who need to follow a work recipe, with whose help to realize, possibly, in each context, the best presentations:

- The level of knowledge of audience's needs
- The level of audience accessibility
- The experience and preparation of people who will develop the presentation
- The collaborative possibilities thereof
- Culture, habits, and preferences of the organization where the presentation will be delivered
- Available information
- Objectives and motives for which the presentation is being realized

Without limiting ourselves to a certain position within the organization, between the users of the method we can list: managers, project managers, salespeople, marketing and communication specialists, technical people, employees in the financial-accounting departments, production, and also, students, professors, not for profit organizations' employees

### When do we use FireFly Presentations?

We use FireFly Presentations whenever there is the need for us to develop, by ourselves or in teams, quality presentations whose delivery we want to enjoy success.

Reality shows us that the ability of creating quality presentations becomes essential for certain key positions in the organization or specialist's hierarchy.

### Challenges for presenters

Statistics show that around 75% of the population is affected by the fear of speaking in public. Though they are not unique, among the difficulties that those who create and deliver presentations face, we can recognize:

- **Attention:** How do I capture and maintain attention of the audience?

- **Image:** How to “look” good in the eyes of others?
- **Time:** How do I manage the time constraints?
- **Acceptance:** What should I do so my points get accepted?
- **Results:** How do I manage to achieve my personal goals?
- **Self-control:** How to control my emotions?

## The specifics of business presentations

What is special in presentations created and delivered within business environment?

- Well known environment (colleagues, partners, clients)
- Time-boxed duration (between 15 min – 2 hours)
- The audience is accessible for needs and expectations identification
- Tight deadlines for preparation
- The presentation file must be clear and compelling even for the people that don't attend the presentation meeting
- Focus on informing / persuading vs “amusing”
- There is always something important at stake

## FireFly presentations principles

In creating presentations with the FireFly method, we shall consider the following principles:

**#1 Fitness for purpose:** *fulfill the needs and expectations of the audience while achieving your own goals*

**#2 Content is king:** *success comes 85% from content, 10% from delivery, 5% from personal talents*

**#3 Preparation is key:** *good preparation secures delivery timing and helps controlling emotions*

**#4 Collaboration:** *working with others maximizes the quality of the final product*

**#5 Follow a process:** *develop your presentations using a “mini-project”*

**#6 Work with your brain:** *separate creation from the build*

**#7 Learn from mistakes:** *continuously improve based on feedback*

## Advantages of using FireFly Presentations

**Transparency:** by practicing the steps of the method, you can gain control over the content and aspect of the presentation. Though inspiration and talent are important ingredients, the practitioners of the method understand that the successful presentation is realized by a consistent effort, by collaboration, following a structure of activities and using a „standard” set of techniques for creating and delivering presentations

**Predictability:** following a work plan, the users of the method can create credible estimates, related to the development time needed and the delivery duration of the presentation.

**Opportunities for delegation:** by using a content scheme harmonized with the needs and expectations of the audience, the opportunity appears to delegate parts of the presentation to other colleagues, decreasing the individual effort. In the situations in which some parts of

the presentation are delegated to other colleagues, one can obtain visibility upon progress in developing the material.

**Increased impact and quality:** using an interactive process of development increases the level of quality of the presentation by increasing the degree of contentment and satisfaction of the audience.

**Decreased duration of presentations development:** by constantly practicing the method, the presenters rapidly develop the skills for creating and delivering content, with effect in the decrease of necessary time for presentations realization.

**Control of emotions:** by utilizing a structure and by repetition, the presenters increase their self-assurance in delivery and develop the capacity to control their emotions in a positive way.

## The project of developing and delivering FireFly Presentations

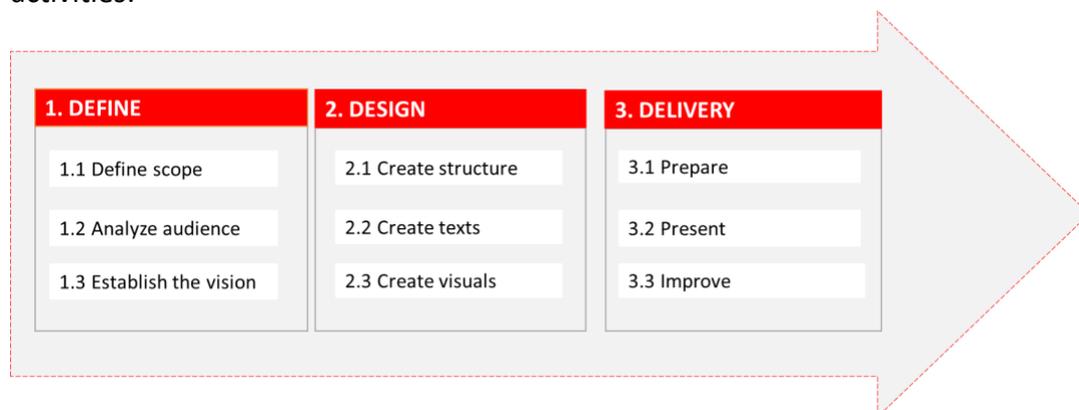
### Presentation Cocktail

The constructive elements of a presentation can be structured in:

- Content (written, spoken)
- Visual support
- Support information
- Discourse

### Activities structure

The FireFly Presentations mini project can be described by 3 phases containing each 3 key activities:



*FireFly Presentations – The process*

## 1. Plan – Defining the plan

### Clarifying the purpose

Though every presentation can have a particular purpose, very often the purpose can be placed in one of the following categories:

- To inform
- To persuade / to get agreement
- Motivate and inspire

- Engage
- Mobilize to action

For this activity it is necessary the formulation of the purpose, taking into account one of the above-mentioned categories, or by creating a new category, if the case.

### 1.1 Define scope

- Clarify purpose and theme
- Define objectives to be achieved during the presentation
- Draft an initial agenda
- Estimate duration
- Develop an action plan

### 1.2 Audience analysis

Due to the fact that the success of the presentation depends on the identification of the audience, the understanding of the needs of the audience and the building of adequate content for addressing these needs, those who build presentations can isolate the segments of the audience using some criteria:

- Departments / Divisions / Teams
- Internal / External
- The level of topic knowledge and understanding
- Learning style, Personality profile
- Attendance of the presentation delivery: Yes / No
- Hierarchical levels
- ... the list remains open depending on the situation

Methods of needs and expectations identification include:

- **Direct approach:** 1 on 1 talk, telephone conversation, e-mail questions
- **Indirect approach:** Query the colleagues and close partners of the participants
- **Guessing:** based on history and personal experiences
- **Intuition:** sometimes what you feel can be more valuable than the information that you have available

All of these could be identified and written down in a structure similar to that of the table below:

Audience Profile	Needs/Expectations

### 1.3 Establish the Vision

The approach for each presentation project can differ from case to case. For clarifying the approach, it is necessary to make some choices or obtain information, as:

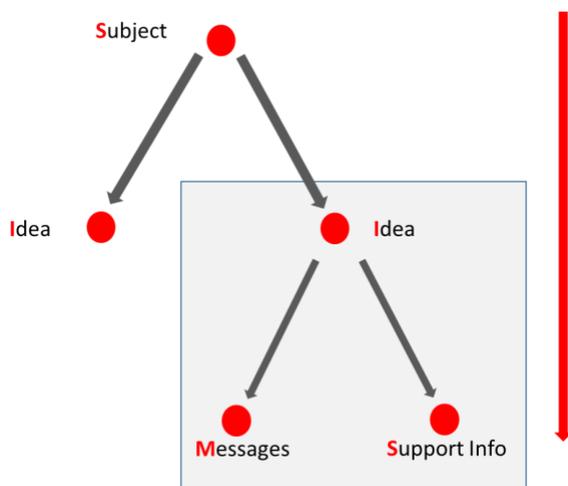
- What are my personal goals?
- Who should I collaborate with?
- Shall I use a video projector?
- Am I supposed to send it to email before the meeting?
- Question and answer session?
- Support information format?
- ...the list remains open depending on the context

## 2. Design – Creating content

### 2.1 Create structure

The structure components of the presentation are:

- Topics
- Content
- Supporting information



- What are subjects/topics? key points from the presentation agenda
- What are ideas? Notions, concepts, principles, values that will be transmitted using messages
- What are messages? Information, meanings, ways, directions that will be built and communicated for supporting an idea

- What is supporting information? It is concrete data that offers credibility and detail to the content:
  - Extracts from internal databases
  - KPIs; financial data
  - Extracts from commercial databases and official statistics
  - Marketing studies
  - Benchmarking standards
  - Press information
  - Customer feedback

Taking into account the needs and expectations of the audience, as well as one own’s objectives, in this stage the hierarchical content structure is being defined, by identifying **S**ubjects, **I**deas, **M**essages and **S**upport information (**S.I.M.S**)

The obtained result can be represented by a content schema, as in the table below:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Ideas</b>	<b>Messages</b>	<b>Support Information</b>
Subject 1	Idea A	Message A1	
		Message A2	Information A2
	Idea B	Message B1	
		Message B2	
		Message B3	
Subject 2	Idea C	Message C1	Information C1
		Message C2	
...			

*FireFly Presentations – Content schema*

## 2.2 Create texts

This activity consists of formulating texts for topics, ideas, messages, and support information, as well of assembling the content in the form of a story (script, scenario).

When utilizing presentations dedicated software, i.e. Microsoft PowerPoint, it is necessary to separate the written content that will be presented in slides from the content that will be presented verbally. A separation method of these type of information is by employing the presentation brief.

Slide	Idea/Message	Written content	Verbal presentation	Support information
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
...				

*FireFly Presentations – Slides deck structure*

### Assembling the content

Valuable content is the content that can be easily shared, both by the presenters and the audience, after finalizing the presentation.

Assembling the content consists of putting together the elements of content, following a logical line, with the help of a story.

By using the STORY, we get:

- Flow
- Fluency
- Consistency
- Ease of reproduction by the audience
- Logic

### Validating the content according to the audience profiles

To make sure that the needs and expectations of the audience are fulfilled by specific messages, we can validate the content by using a validation matrix.

	Profile A	Profile B	Profile C	Profile D	Profile E	Profile F
Message 1	✓		✓			
Message 2				✓	✓	
Message 3		✓				✓
Message 4	✓					
Message 5		✓			✓	✓

*FireFly Presentations –Content validation matrix by audience*

### Discourse vehicles

For assembling the discourse, we can use some discourse vehicles:

- Rhetorical questions
- Explanations

- Transitions
- Subject introduction
- Conclusions
- Encouragement
- Action plan
- Asking for help
- Examples
- Joking
- Positioning
- The story
- Probing emotional state

### Maximizing credibility

The content can gain credibility by using the following techniques:

- Using quotes
- Using hyper words
- Sharing of personal and professional experiences
- Using concrete examples
- Mentioning references, recommendations from clients and users

### Transition techniques

The transition from one idea to another, from one slide to another, or from one message to another, can be made easier by using one of the transition techniques

- **Say directly:** mention the next topic, idea, message, slide
- **The Story:** say a story that is connected to what you are about to present
- **Audience's opinion:** ask the audience for an opinion on the topic ("What do you think about...?")
- **Relevance:** introduce the topic by one of the techniques for creating relevance

### Techniques for creating relevance

Powerful arguments fulfil your audience's expectations

- **Benefit:** outline the advantages your counterpart/team/company may benefit of by accepting your proposal/idea/suggestion
- **Similar experience and success stories:** explain how this approach is common among other areas, departments, companies, etc.
- **Frequency:** this approach is chosen very often
- **Impact:** assert the positive or negative effects of choosing a specific option
- **My opinion:** very often the weakest argument!  
It works very well only when the presenter is recognized as an authority in the field

## 2.3 Create visuals

The way content elements are visually arranged matters. Some of the motives for which we use visual elements in presentations are:

- Maximize the impact of messages
- Ease comprehension
- Maintain a high level of focus
- Create a pleasant mood
- Decrease the pressure on the speaker

Elements by which one can control the visual aspect of the presentation:

- Background
- Letters (font)
- Colors
- Images
- Page layout
- Bullet points
- Tables, graphics, diagrams
- Animation

### 3. Delivery – delivery of the presentation to the audience

#### 3.1 Prepare for presentation delivery

The preparing offers certainty and self-assurance to the presenter and decreases the occurrence of nonproductive emotions. Here are some reasons for which it is worth allotting time for preparation:

- **Memorize:** by rehearsing, one can guarantee the passing into the long-term memory of the presentation content elements and discourse vehicles
- **Presenting vs. reading:** those who prepare themselves have less often the tendency to read from the screen/slides, keeping this way a better contact with the audience
- **Risk minimization:** when you prepare yourself and when you take into account the potential problems that can appear during the presentation, you will develop solutions also, so you will not be taken by surprise at the moment of the delivery
- **Feel secure:** by repetition, the improvisation component is diminished, so, consequently, the presenter will deliver the content with an increased degree of self-assurance
- **Respect timeline:** by successive iterations of the delivery, the presenter becomes aware of the content delivery durations and he/she can deliver the presentation within the allotted time. Furthermore, if time constraints appear, he/she will be able to decide consciously which parts of the presentation can be “sacrificed”, so as the objectives of the presentation be attained, despite constraints
- **Content refinement:** during preparation session, one can identify ways of simplifying the manner of content delivery, and implicitly the restructuring, reordination and rephrasing of the written content and discourse elements

- **Avoid disaster:** the non-correct functioning of presentation technical equipment, the incompatibility of work formats, not knowing the presentation venue/room, can lead to the failure of the presentation
- **Proactive manage audience reactions:** the delivery of the presentation as a manner of preparing can surface possible reactions of discontent related to the content and manner of presenting; thus, preparing in advance allows the identification of avoidance or retreat strategies, should these reactions appear.

### Rehearsal techniques

- Practice the presentation in simple words using the slides
- Measure how long it takes the speech on each slide and write it down
- Record yourself (audio / video) and study the performance
- Simulate presenting in front of the people you know
- Identify the elements that "do not fit" and adjust the content

### 3.2 Delivering the presentation

Delivering the presentation consists of opening, delivering the content for the agenda points and closing the presentation.



*FireFly Presentations – Presentation delivery steps*

#### Opening

Though it is not compulsory the inclusion of the below mentioned points, it is necessary that the presenter decide in advance how he/she will structure the opening:

- Your presentation, the audience presentation, why are we there?
- Presentation of key objectives for the audience
- Communication of the estimated duration
- Communicating / establishing a way of working
- Agenda presentation
- Check if the agenda is clear and according to expectations
- Request agreement for the start of the presentation

#### Delivering the content

The content will be delivered according to the presentation brief.

Apart from delivering the content, the presenter can use some techniques of capturing and maintaining attention:

- Presenter authority
- The right tone
- Surprise, mystery, suspense, using the right rhythm
- Address the participants using the first name
- Use specific vocabulary
- Summarizing
- Positioning topics / ideas
- Parables, stories, comparisons
- Questions, requesting the point of view / perceptions analysis
- Questions, eliciting points of view/perception analysis

### Closing

Though it is not compulsory or opportune the inclusion of the below mentioned points, it is necessary that the presenter decide in advance how he/she will structure the closing:

- Summarize and conclusions
- Perception analysis
- Identifying next steps/Formulate plan of action
- Asking for feedback

### 3.3 Improve presentation skills

Based on the perception analysis and obtained feedback, the presenter/presenters can set for themselves the developing of new knowledge and abilities, that can help them creating and delivering presentations in the future.

A practical modality of defining and executing these activities is:

- **Reflection:** an inventory of lessons learned after the created presentation
- **Defining:** define a list of concrete actions by which you can raise your level of knowledge, develop new skills or consolidate existing ones, identify persons that you can collaborate with in order for you to develop yourself as FireFly Presentations practitioner
- **Implementation:** implement the action plan

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