

# Paolo Pelloni

**5** principles  
to design  
and deliver

**persuasive  
presentations**



*"This book is the best starting point  
to become an amazing presenter!"*

**“As you move up through your career path, you're judged on your ability to articulate a point of view.**

**Once you reach certain levels in an executive capacity, the ability to communicate perhaps a little better than others is a tremendous asset.”**

**Don Keough – former president of Coca-Cola**

# Learn the 5 Principles for Persuasive Presentations

Hara Hachi Bu

Be Yourself (Unless You Can Be Batman)

Talk to All the Brains

Audience is King

Visual are Dominant

# 1

## Introduction

Welcome to this introductory eBook.

My name is Paolo and I am passionate about public speaking! I have been helping people communicate for 28 years. That is, with workshops, coaching, presentation design, video courses, and books like this one.

Now, public speaking is an amazingly important skill for everyone: to promote our ideas, our messages, and our careers. Yet, the vast majority of presentations are not effective and do not move the audience. Do you agree? Do you feel you could be more persuasive when speaking before a group? And maybe more relaxed, too!

Good news: effective presentations skills can be achieved by everyone, you, too. In my long experience, I learnt that there are no rules or a model to follow to be successful. There are some principles that are crucial to be good. Those are not rocket science, or difficult to adopt, but not all of them are obvious or always come naturally, and that's probably why so many of us are not born effective speakers.

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Here, in this book, I'll show you 5 principles, 5 guidelines you must know, each one with an example of how to put it in practice. Actionable advice, if you like.

As I said, everyone can do it, so “turn the page now” and join many others to become a persuasive presenter!

# 2 What is This Book About and What Not (Batteries Not Included)

This is an introductory eBook to make better presentations. There is a lot to say, or to cover, on the topic of public speaking and in my workshops and video courses, I do have way more material. But although this one is a basic text, it is a great starting point for learning.

The thing is, to move your audience, persuade them, deliver, and write great presentations, there's no schoolbook. I mean, there's no such thing as a sequence of steps, or rules, to follow to become an effective speaker. But if you look at them, I mean people who are successful when speaking before a group, you can notice that there are some common features, some foundations that happen to be important. This is what this book is about. We are going to cover 5 points that you should always keep in mind, when you are preparing a presentation and when you are delivering it.

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I have been facilitating hundreds of workshops myself and I did attend many courses, too. Some are quite didactic, some more theoretical. Not this book. Our objective is not for you to get only some knowledge, but also to change, for the better, your way of public speaking. So we are going to see each one of those principles, understand what it is, and see how you can move from idea to action. Plus, there is going to be some work for you to do, to give you a chance of learning by doing.

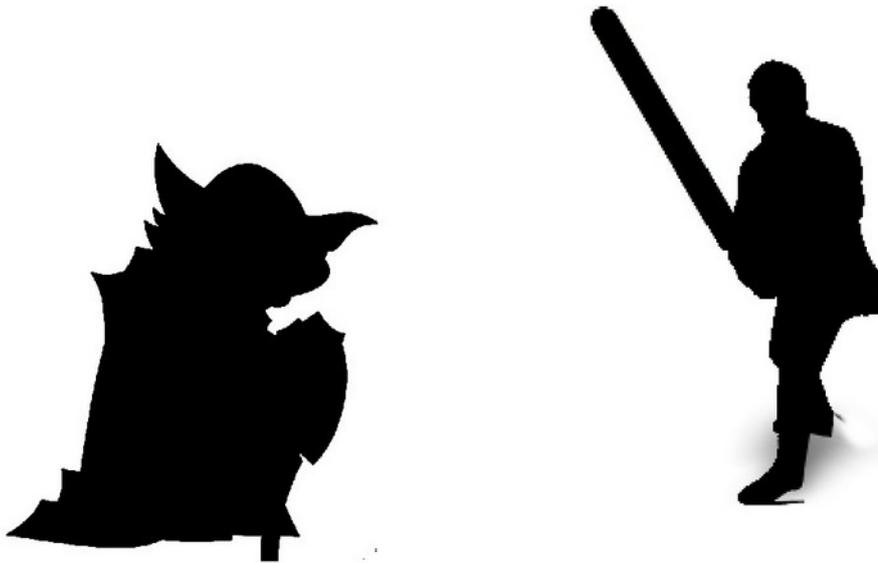
I am truly happy to have you on-board and we have work to do so... let's start.

# 3 Audience is King

We are starting from one of the most important, if not the most important, principles: the audience is king. It is simple, for some, it may be even obvious, but despite that, it is often overlooked. Or worse, forgotten.

What does it mean? It means that the presentation is not about you, but them. It's true regardless if it's a formal speech, a business meeting, a training class, or any other situation. Think about it, you already know what you are going to talk about and you are already persuaded. It's them who matter.

To make this point, I like to borrow a great analogy from Nancy Duarte. Look at those two popular characters. Can you recognise them? Hint: they are from Star Wars. Who do you think you are as a presenter in this picture?



Well, you really are Yoda. You have knowledge, wisdom, and experience in the subject you are going to cover. But they, the audience, are Luke, the hero. They are the ones you want to go out and do something about your message. It can be to behave or think differently, buy something, tell other people something, and so on. No action from them, no success for you.

How can you put this concept in practice? Audience is king is really a state of mind, a guiding principle through everything you do when preparing or delivering a presentation. Here are some examples of how to do it.

Make sure that you design your presentation not to make you look good, but your public look good.



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You may look good, too, there is nothing wrong with that, and you may need it to gain credibility at times, but that's what most of us already do. We care about us, which is fine, but, remember, they are the hero. Focus not on what matters to you, but ask yourself what matters to them, what will put them at the centre.

Speak “their language”, see your topic from their point of view.

Here's a simple test. After you've designed your presentations, try to “sit” in the public and pretend to be one of them, not you. Then ask yourself, “Is it interesting? Does it affect me? Should I care? Should I really do something about it?” If not, try to understand why and how to fix it.

You should be the best speaker possible, but you won't be unless your audience is king.

# 4 Hara Hachi Bu

Have you ever heard of Hara Hachi Bu? This Confucian principle was not originally meant for public speaking, although it serves it well. Roughly, it means *eat until you are 80% full*. Do not over eat, leave a bit of room. If you think about it, when you avoid cramming your stomach, you are satisfied by your meal without feeling sleepy or having that “heaviness” on you. For your presentations, you can see it as “Don't overload your audience with too much information”.

Another way of seeing this comes from an old boss of mine. He used to say, “Tell them more than they expect but less than what you would like to tell them.” Meet their expectations, possibly exceed them, but practice restraint. Most of us tend to over talk, if left to our own devices. We are drawn to always add a bit more. There are many reason behind this: we love the topic, we want to show how competent we are, and so on. But, unfortunately, from the audience point of view, too much is... too much. We said it previously, the audience is king! The amount of content we present

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should be dictated not by how much we can deliver but, rather, how much they can adequately absorb. So how can you apply Hara Hachi Bu to your presentations?

Again, it's a broad guideline and there are many ways of doing it but I would like to give you two of them. First, the amount of messages you want to leave to your audience is only one main message. If you manage to persuade them of one idea, that is already a great achievement. Try to put too many and, chances are, they won't bring home anything. The second is time management: do you have half an hour in agenda? Don't try to squeeze in 35 minutes of content, but allow for 25 to sit in comfortably instead. Satisfy them, leave them some energy to embrace your speech, and maybe leave them also a bit hungry to get more from you.

# 5 Visuals are Dominant

We live in a visual world. Sight is probably the most important of our senses and we humans have developed it amazingly well. They say that “a picture is worth a thousand words” and that's true. Some estimate that 90% of the data our brain processes is visual. Our brain not only processes visual faster (60,000 times faster than text according to 3M) but also the retention level goes up when we receive information that way. And you would like your audience to remember your message, wouldn't you? So you want to feed them not only words but also some visuals to go along with those words.

Try to visualise your ideas with images. They could be pictures, maps, graphs, diagrams, whatever, depending on the context. They will make your concept easier to understand, easier for you to explain, and more mnemonic for your public. Now, the only true risk with visuals is to overdo. Again, Hara Hachi Bu, remember? Use only the visuals that help convey your message, don't aim at looking good. Design for communication, good communication, not for fashion or eye-candy.

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Applying this principle is pretty straightforward. When preparing a presentation, ask yourself, “How can I use visual aids to represent this idea?” Use text only when strictly necessary, and try to use images that are evocative and easy to understand by your audience.

The majority of your audience receptors are for sight. If you don't engage them, well, something else will, and that will distract them from your message!

# 6 Talk to All the Brains

Let me present a concept that may be not entirely new to you: the left side of the brain and the right side of the brain. Chances are, you have heard about it.

The terminology varies, but the theory behind it is that your brain is divided in two hemispheres, with each half performing a fairly distinct set of operations. We know that the left hemisphere controls the muscles on the right part of your body and the right one, the muscles on the left. But we also know that the left side is more in charge of logical reasoning whereas the other side deals more with sensory input and spatial abilities. Simplifying the concept, it is said that the left is the logical side and the right is the creative one.

The point is, when we make decisions, we do not rely only on logical thinking, but much more than that! Emotions play a big role, too. In presentations, we normally aim at moving the audience, we are asking them to take some action, to think or behave differently or to become different. No

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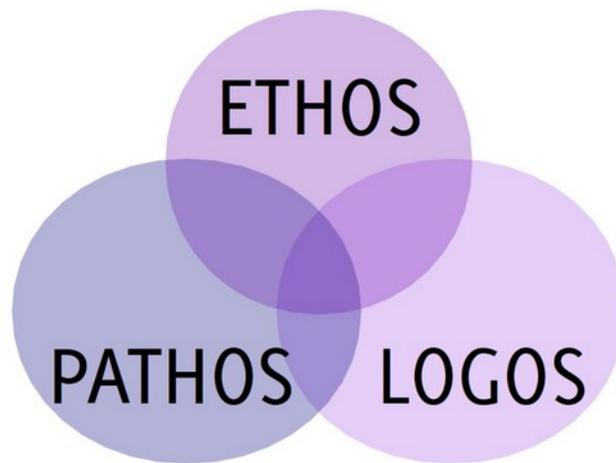
matter what, to be successful, we need to appeal not only to one side of the brain.

Of course, left or right brain is just a representation of the concept. If you don't like it, you can think of four decision organs: the brain, the soul, the stomach, and the genitals.

Again, that's another metaphor on how we make decisions.

In this given example, the brain is the logical thinking, the soul is more about the spiritual values, who we are, who we want to be, and our beliefs. The stomach is the more emotional, instinctive reasoning: the gut feeling. And, finally, the genitals represent our basic, primordial needs that still play a fundamental role in our decision making process.

It doesn't really matter which representation you use, the concept is there is more than pure logic to motivate people to take action. When we prepare a presentation, we need to focus on all of those aspects rather than just one. It is something known since the ancient Greece rhetoric: ethos, logos, and pathos. Ethos is the credibility of the speaker. Logos is persuading by reason. Finally, pathos is convincing by emotional response.



How can you talk to all the brains? How can you apply this idea?

Start when preparing a presentation. Don't focus only on content and the logical flow of it. Ask yourself, "How can I add emotional content to it? Which kind of emotions will resonate with my audience? Can I use story telling or a metaphor to hook the public?" Design a presentation that appeal to both sides of the brain, so to speak.

When you deliver your speech, put passion in it, let your positive emotions flow and connect with the audience. Don't go for a professional cold delivery, it won't do you any good.

Persuade them at all levels, and the audience will respond to you and your message.

# 7 Be Yourself, Unless You Can Be Batman

Days before my workshops start, I ask participants their expectations, and often, I hear something along the line of “Learn a technique to be effective.” I address it at the beginning of the seminar, explaining that, unfortunately, there is no schoolbook answer or a strict model to adhere to. As a matter of fact, it is not unfortunate at all, on the contrary, it means that to be an effective speaker, you don't have to change who you are. A great speaker always connects with the audience, and you cannot do it if you are pretending to be someone you are not.

That, of course, doesn't mean that you are fully ready to go. The first thing you should do is try to have an objective assessment of you as a speaker. What are you good at? Where do you struggle? Answers here can go from audience involvement, explaining difficult concepts, humour, presenting with slides, thrive in a group discussion, educational lectures, using emotions, and so on. Don't be over critical or exceeding in praise, be realistic. If you think it can help, double check with others who know your public speaking skills. Understanding your strengths and weaknesses is very important during preparation. You want to design a speech that builds on your strong points and possibly avoid, or tackle, the weaker ones. For example, if you flourish in an open conversation with the public, plan for it, try to encourage it, don't prepare an hefty set of slides that won't leave

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you any space for a debate. Humour is great, but if you are not yet comfortable with it, you may want to avoid it. Then, when it is show time, boost your confidence by knowing that you are doing what you are best at. Also, when presenting, remember to be yourself: be human, try to establish a relationship with the audience. If you are too tight, too “professional” in a way, it will

be far more difficult; let the real you come out. Audiences appreciate that and respond. Garr Reynolds, who greatly inspires me, talks about the *naked presenter* with the meaning of removing barriers and getting the audience closer to you.

So don't be afraid of being natural, be yourself and no one else.  
Unless you can be Batman, which is always cool. :)

# 8 Summary

We are now almost at the end and it's time to quickly review what we have covered.

As I said, there is no schoolbook to follow or strict rules but there are principles that hold true for effective presentations. The first one is that it's all about the audience. So when you prepare a presentation, spend some time thinking who they are, what they know about your topic, and what they would like to hear. Design your speech around them!

Another thing to keep in mind during preparation is that there is a limited amount of ideas and information you can dump on your public. Review your content and decide what really matters and what can be stripped off. Less is more, because by cutting out the superfluous, you are bringing more focus and attention to the central message of your presentation.

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You communicate with people with all the senses and the visual one is the most important. It's not only about how you look, although that's important, too. Try to visualise your ideas as much as you can, they will become easier to grasp and more memorable. Plus, visuals are great for adding emotions, which bring us to the next point.

Since the dawn of rhetoric, it's known that to persuade audiences, you need to be credible, logical, and emotional. To be effective, you need to tick all the boxes, so keep that in mind when you are designing your next speech.

Finally, the audience is king, but they came to listen to you. You and no one else, so be yourself. Don't put on a mask, don't try to be too serious and detached to gain credibility. Create a connection at a human level with your public and they will be more willing to embrace what you say. A sure recipe for failing is pretending to be someone you are not. Do you like Steve Jobs' style? Seize on the traits that fits you, your way of being. Make them part of you and of your delivering but don't just pretend to be him, it won't work.

You can be a great presenter and this five principles are a great starting point. There's much more to it and for that, I also have an extensive course, but more on that in the next chapter.



public speaking is not  
a theoretical skill

Before closing, I would like to remind you that public speaking is not a theoretical skill. You learn only by practice, so the sooner you try to apply the ideas we covered, the better. You will also see that by being more effective, you'll gain confidence, which, in return, is making you more effective for a continuous improvement. Your ideas deserve better presentations, go, design, and deliver them!

# 9 A Special Offer for You

As I said in the opening, this is a basic, introductory book to the great art of public speaking. It is a tremendous starting point and I am confident that you'll be a better speaker just by applying those principles.

There's more to say and more help I can give and for that, I have a video course of over 5 hours that will cover exhaustively what you need to both design and deliver persuading presentations. There is a whole section just on preparation, one on visual aids, one on engaging the audience, one on questions and answers, and much more. It's basically my 20 years of seminars experience packed in a course that you can follow when you want, as many times as you want. It's normally listed for \$237 but for a limited time, I am offering it a special price for everyone who read this book, subject to a limited amount available. If the offer isn't yet expired or sold out, you can grab the whole package only for \$71, which is less than a third of the normal price. To do so, follow this link: [https://presentations.teachable.com/p/successful-presentation?coupon\\_code=EBOOK523](https://presentations.teachable.com/p/successful-presentation?coupon_code=EBOOK523)

Finally, I would like to thank you for your interest in public speaking, which is such an important skill. Social proof is crucial for me and my content, so if you benefited from *Learn the 5 Principles for Persuasive Presentations*, please spread the word, spread the book. You will help other people and, at the same time, you will help me, and for that, I am grateful.

This is it, I hope to see you in one of my courses, use the aforementioned offer if you can, I believe it is very convenient.

Best of luck and happy presenting!

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