

## Better Than Whiteboard Sales?

*By Milly R. Sonneman*

Just last week I had a question from one of my elite Coaching clients. He has a sales problem he wants to solve. And he wanted my top picks for strategies he could use with PowerPoint and Keynote to get the results he needs. I get this question a lot. Don't get me wrong.

Whiteboarding is hands-down my favorite method for presenting, and his too. And you can use it to win in sales pitches, leadership messages and consultations. It's the fastest way to engage your audience. Drawing at a whiteboard.

When it comes to drawing at a whiteboard, my client confessed that he had started but not gotten too far. I understand. It's tough to make time in a hectic schedule to learn to sketch and write legibly.

Of course, when you see the power of drawing on the spot, you'll be running to the whiteboard to draw ideas while your audience watches. And this allows you to communicate on the spot in ways that slides never can achieve.

But it takes some time for your skills to get to the level you need to be able to truly "WOW" your clients.

Wouldn't it be nice to have some slide-based strategies to use so you can get buy-in and win deals in the meantime? You could use this to pick up speed with sluggish clients and reluctant prospects that are still on the fence.

So, much as it pains me to have to give you techniques for slides (when I know you'll get much more done at a whiteboard), I know this is an issue for many business professionals. You can use storyboarding to plan extremely effective PowerPoint and Keynote slides. While my advice is to always look for how you can shift to conversations, whiteboard interaction, and a blended approach - I know your real world: you are often challenged to present your message with slides-only. I get it. So... let's look at 3 absolutely essential tips for planning your slides to have the maximum impact.

### **Tip 1: Tell Your Story**

Make sure your slides tell a clear and compelling story. This usually requires that you step back from the data, remove yourself from your research, and get an overview. By looking from a bird's eye view, you can determine if your story is simple and makes sense to a non-expert. Keep in mind that even when presenting to experts, you want to tell a remarkably simple story.

### **Tip 2: Check For Excess**

In the heat of planning a robust and detailed presentation, it's easy to err on the side of too much. Trust me. I've seen it. And I've done it myself. In light of Tip 1, check to see if every slide is absolutely necessary. If you find one, two or ten that are redundant, take them out. This can be a little scary, even terrifying at first. It seems as if you are being too Spartan and could appear unprepared. But take the plunge. My experience is that your audience will thank you. And they'll appreciate the hard work you've done to keep your presentation brief and concise.

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### Tip 3: Focus On Action

Check your slides to make sure you are driving to a single, clear and easy action. Set up your entire presentation with this crystal clear focus on the 'next step.' While there are dozens of techniques to achieve this, I recommend one big shift. State the specific desired action — upfront. This plants a seed in the mind of the viewer through which they see your [entire presentation](#). They are able to have a logical and intuitive decision-making process during your entire slide show.

By stating the action in the beginning, you are being open and transparent. This makes your work as a facilitative presenter much easier. It's easier to answer questions, anticipate objections, and guide towards a specific decision.

#### *About the Author*

*Milly Sonneman is a recognized expert in visual language. She is the founder of Hands On Graphics, Inc., a leading visual training firm, and author of the popular guide Beyond Words and her most recent book, The Authentic Message, which was co-authored with Thomas Secheyay and has been received worldwide. Milly helps business professionals give winning presentations, through online presentation skills trainings at Presentation Storyboarding. You can find out more about courses or contact Milly at: <http://www.presentationstoryboarding.com/>.*

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