

stratēgies
PME

**MAXIMIZING
THE IMPACT OF YOUR
CONFERENCE**



Speakers who have had the most success with their conferences in the past have followed these main rules of presentation design:

- 1. Define a single desired transformation before building your conference.** Before developing your content, complete the following sentence: "At the end of my 30 minutes, I want the attending executives to understand _____ and be able to _____." This exercise helps you design your session around concrete outcomes for the audience, rather than just the information you wish to deliver.
- 2. Capture your audience's attention right from the start.** Do not take their attention for granted. A passive audience's focus typically takes 10 minutes to peak. You can accelerate this process by opening your presentation with a compelling hook, such as a relevant example, a success story, or a common pitfall. Project high energy from the very beginning. Within your first few minutes, clarify what the executives stand to gain from your subject, or what the status quo is costing them. Shift your messaging from "here is my topic" to "here is why this topic deserves your attention."
- 3. Structure your presentation around three key ideas.** For a 30-minute presentation, focus on a few core messages rather than a long list of advice. A simple, effective structure works best: the problem, three key ideas, supporting examples, and actionable next steps.
- 4. PowerPoint, Keynote, Prezi, and others are tools to ensure active listening during your presentation, but they must remain a support.** When your audience is reading a slide, they are not listening to you. Therefore, avoid letting your visuals deliver the presentation for you. Remember that attendees come to your session to hear you speak, not to read your slides. Keep your deck light by eliminating dense text and overly complex graphics. Instead, opt for clean layouts, impactful images, concise bullet points, and keywords that capture the essence of your concepts. Limit yourself to one core idea per slide to maximize audience comprehension.
- 5. Avoid reading your presentation projected on the screen at all costs.** Doing so forces you to turn your back and break eye contact, which quickly diminishes audience engagement.



6. Make sure the text of your presentation is easily readable from a distance. Remember that attendees may be seated up to 60 feet away. Ensure a high contrast between your background color and text. Customize your slides rather than relying on generic templates. Avoid serif fonts and tight letter spacing, as they are difficult to read from a distance, and maintain consistent typography throughout your entire deck.

7. Limit your company presentation to the essentials. Start by delivering value to the executives rather than introducing yourself at length. Your biography and company overview should establish your credibility without becoming the main focus of the session. Limit this introduction to a maximum of two minutes and a single slide.

8. Do not give your presentation to your audience, either during the event or after it. Doing so deprives you of a valuable opportunity to connect directly with your audience. Instead, invite attendees to your booth to continue the conversation, dive deeper into specific topics, discuss their individual use cases, or offer a brief executive summary of your talk. If time is running out, schedule a meeting for later in the event to continue the discussion, rather than simply handing over your entire slide deck.

9. Have your presentation's language proofread. Remember that a presentation is a reflection of your credibility; the audience is actively evaluating your competence. Spelling errors can signal a lack of professionalism and severely undermine your authority as an expert.

10. Do not overuse presentation software animations. They unnecessarily distract the audience and pull focus away from your message. You can use a few simple animations to keep your presentation dynamic, but apply them sparingly.

11. Pay attention to the logical flow of your presentation within the allotted time. This enhances clarity for your audience. To that end, provide a brief, concrete agenda upfront. Keep in mind that you are speaking to SME owners who are general business leaders, rather than fellow subject-matter experts.

12. Avoid overloading the 30 minutes of your presentation with content. Keep your presentation tightly focused on its core theme and avoid trying to cover too much ground. A streamlined, well-paced delivery is much easier for your audience to digest. However, be careful not to oversimplify; ensure you still thoroughly address the specific topic they came to learn about.

13. Use concrete examples as much as possible to illustrate your points. Select examples from SMEs rather than large corporations so your audience can easily relate to them. Leveraging storytelling makes your examples more engaging and memorable. Frame your case studies as short narratives, detailing the situation, the challenge, the action taken, the outcome, and the core lesson learned. Finally, design one or two standout moments in your presentation, whether a striking phrase, a surprising statistic, a demonstration, or an anecdote, that attendees will want to share with their peers the next day.

14. Turn your information into concrete recommendations. After each core explanation, consistently answer the following question: "Practically speaking, what action should an SME take?" Framing your insights this way ensures your expertise is immediately actionable for the business owners in your audience.

15. Adapt your language level and concepts to your audience. Your audience expects an expert, but specifically one who can distill complex concepts into simple terms. Keep in mind that most SME owners lack formal management training; instead, they attribute their success to hands-on, practical experience. Tailor your presentation with this audience profile in mind.

16. Resist the temptation to follow your presentation on the laptop screen in front of you. Maintain consistent eye contact with the audience to demonstrate mastery of your material and project confidence.

17. Manage your time. The 30-minute time limit is strictly enforced; to avoid being interrupted by event staff before properly concluding, it is crucial to stay on schedule. To help you pace your delivery, a timer will be placed on the table in front of you, and our team will provide a 10-minute and a one-minute warning. At the one-minute mark, transition immediately to your conclusion, regardless of where you are in your deck. Never rush through your remaining slides just to finish—you can always invite attendees to your booth to cover any unaddressed points. Ultimately, the best time management strategy is thorough preparation. During rehearsals, aim for 25 to 27 minutes of spoken content. This buffer allows you to comfortably accommodate audience reactions, natural transitions, and minor delays without having to rush your closing remarks.

18. Limit the number of slides in your presentation to about 12 to 15 at most. While you can use a larger number of slides, limit your time per slide to 20 seconds to maintain a dynamic pace.

19. Visual presentations are not at all mandatory. If you feel slides will detract from your message, feel free to forgo them entirely and display only the mandatory title slide provided by our organization. Be sure to include a concluding slide indicating the location of your booth for follow-up questions. If you choose to present without a deck, ensure you have a robust, well-rehearsed structure to keep yourself on track without the visual cues that slides typically provide.



20. Do not underestimate the importance of your body language as a speaker. Your gestures should support your message and add dynamic energy to your delivery. Avoid keeping your hands in your pockets, a common pitfall for many speakers. Additionally, refrain from holding objects such as pens, notes, or pointers; doing so can magnify nervous shaking or lead to unconscious fidgeting that distracts the audience. Conversely, be mindful that excessive or overly animated gestures can be equally distracting.

21. Beware of coffee before your conference. It dries out the mouth and can amplify the normal nervousness at the beginning of a presentation. Water will be served to you before you start your conference.

22. Make sure you cover the room well with your gaze. You will be presenting in front of your audience without a lectern, with your laptop on a table in front of you. While the room layout prevents you from moving backward into the audience, you will have space to walk side to side, as the projection screen will be mounted above you. Take advantage of this mobility to inject energy into your presentation and engage the entire room, particularly attendees seated in the back. Please note that in most rooms, the main exit is located at the front, near the speaking area. As a result, attendees may occasionally need to walk past you to leave during your session; stay focused and do not let this distract you.

23. Make sure you answer the question contained in the title of your conference. Attendees have made the effort to join your session based solely on its title; therefore, they expect a clear, direct answer.

24. Make sure that two people from your organization master the conference. Please have a contingency plan in place for the unexpected absence of your primary speaker, as this has occurred in the past. We remind you that all scheduled sessions must be delivered; failure to do so may result in penalties. Attendees pay for access to these presentations and rightfully expect the published schedule to be honored.

As you conclude, highlight related topics you were unable to cover during your 30 minutes. Next, provide the executives with three concrete actions they can implement immediately upon returning to work, and invite them to your booth to continue the conversation, making sure to explicitly state its location. Finally, script and memorize your final sentence with as much care as your opening hook: it must summarize your core message and deliver a strong sense of closure.

Finally, your presentation will significantly impact your organization's overall success at Stratégies PME. Take the time to thoroughly prepare your session and, ideally, rehearse in front of a live audience. If the attending SME executives are unimpressed with your delivery, they are highly unlikely to engage your services. These leaders use these sessions to gauge an expert's knowledge, professionalism, and motivation before deciding to partner with their company. Capitalize on this unique opportunity, and ensure the staff at your booth are fully briefed on your core message, as they will undoubtedly field numerous questions about it throughout the two-day event.



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