

# PRESENT NAKED!



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## CLOSING WITH A BANG

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“

*Presentation is the "**Killer Skill**" we take into the real world. It's almost an unfair advantage.*

— M. Rasiel and Paul N. Friga, Ph.D., *The McKinsey World* —

”

BRAD WALDRON

# POWERFUL CLOSING

## A LASTING CLOSE!



Imagine reading a book with the last chapter missing, seeing a musical without a memorable closing number, or watching an action film that ends passively. You'd feel short-changed!

***Your presentations and pitches should not end with a whimper. Ideally, they end with a BANG, rousing your audience to action.***

In the world of presenting, a lot of presentation endings simply aren't compelling, and that's usually because the presenter's focus was on content instead of on a call for action and the "here's the one thing I want people to remember or do" element.

**Closing is about what you want people to think, do, and believe as a consequence of your material. It is what really matters. You must end your presentation with a BANG, not a whimper.**



## THE IMPORTANCE OF CLOSING WELL

People tend to remember more about the last thing they heard than about the middle of a pitch. Yet the majority of speakers just fade away when they get to the end of their talks. I've seen people so relieved their stint in front of the client is almost over that they start to pack up before they finish speaking. So too are their audiences.

**Powerful speakers save a lot of energy and concern for the audience until the end and they make their conclusions taste like a scrumptious dessert, something delicious that leaves a memorable aftertaste.**

### Question

*How do most presentations and pitches end?*

### Answer

*"Any questions?"*

**That's like telling a joke without a punch line or worse still, the wrong punch line!**



## CEMENT A CONNECTION

Closing is just as easy as an opening, but in a close you can be more adventurous. An **opening is quite structured** because you've literally got seconds.

The **close is different**. You can draw it out and that's what good presenters do. Exceptional presenters will finish in a way that links all of their key points together and cements a connection with their audience's hearts and minds. It takes time, thinking, and practise. This is the stuff that will differentiate you.





## A HIGHWAY MOMENT

Andrew Cowan runs Diageo in the UK; he's a real leader, not just someone who's responsible for the profit and loss of a company. He knows that the profit and loss of a business ultimately resides in the hearts and minds of those he leads. He describes **closing a presentation** as a **"highway moment."**

Imagine this, you're the head of procurement for a large organisation. You see dozens of presentations from different vendors every week. On Friday afternoon you're driving home on the highway and you're reflecting on your week. In the quietness of your own mind, you think of that guy or that woman **who made an impact** with you with their presentation. They had the **right messages**, the **right product** and **product strategies** but most of all, they had a **certain spark in their presentation**. And the way they **closed their presentation** made for a compelling reason to place the business with them.

**That's what I call a "highway moment." That's the impact of a Naked Presentation with a compelling close.**

Ask, What do I want my audience thinking and feeling when I close my presentation? **Most presenters don't spend enough time answering that question.** Whatever the answer is, that's how you must write and design a close with a bang. It's the most respectful thing to do for your audience rather than leave things to a random opportunity or even worse — a cliché close.



## ICING ON THE CAKE

Your conclusion must tie in with your opening and your overall purpose. Your ending must connect naturally with your beginning, and that's where presentation structure continues to be important. Conclusions are the way you make your presentation look, sound and feel complete.





## ▶ NEVER ANNOUNCE YOUR INTENTION TO CONCLUDE

### **A word of warning:**

If people get much advance notice that you are going to conclude, in their mind they'll wind up your speech and start to tune you out. Your audience will disengage, start packing up, cell phones will be turned on and texting will start. You've lost. So much for your concluding points.

Be more subtle. Lead into your conclusion with a creative transition instead of the not very dynamic "And so in conclusion, I would like to reiterate the importance of sitting properly on chairs because back safety is important. Thank you very much. Are there any questions?"

**A good conclusion requires a lot of thought and energy. It may be a stirring statement, a joke, or a call to action. Some conclusions try to motivate the audience by containing direct challenges.**

# THE BANG CLOSE

## SIX-STEP CLOSING CHECKLIST

We generally know the things that haven't worked, the things that made people leave before you were finished. So, let's look at what does work.

Take time and make sure you include the following approach. It will serve you well and help you do a bang close.



### Q&A

This is the time to seek your audience's **thoughts, comments** and **questions**.



### Compelling Finish

Put as much energy into **designing** your **close** as you do in your opening.



### Summarize Your Story

Recap your key messages in the form of an **elevator pitch**.



### Finish with a BANG!

Deliver a **memorable conclusion** that leaves your audience wanting more.



### Thank Everyone

Now is the time to **thank people**. A little genuine courtesy goes a long way.



### Call for Action

Ask for what you want — don't leave your audience with **uncertainties**.



## 5 ENDINGS THAT WORK BEST FOR CLOSING



### 01. Demonstrate the presentation's value by summarizing:

#### ► A Positive (pleasure) Spin:

- The vision of the opportunity.
- The value of the vision.
- The positive consequences of achieving the vision.
- The solution.

#### ► A Negative (Pain) Spin:

- Define the problem you're solving.
- Quantify and qualify the size of the problem. When you outline the costs linked to the problem, you will generate more commitment.
- The consequences of not solving the problem in the short and long term.
- The solution.

### 02. Link back to your opening

People like consistency. By referring back to the beginning of your presentation you create a **natural feeling of closure** and it proves you have hit your presentation objectives.

### 03. Use a film clip, poem or quote

Using a motivational film, poem or quote will create **an emotional connection** between your presentation and the message of the clip.

At a recent Diageo conference in Ireland, the On Trade Director Keiran Budds showed a clip from the movie Any Given Sunday. He had everyone stand and huddle up while the clip was being screened. It was enormously powerful. If you haven't seen it yet, go and search Youtube.com for Al Pacino's speech, "Any Given Sunday."





## 04. Use a story or metaphor

Use a story to demonstrate the key relevance of your presentation or to demonstrate the value of what you're saying.

Here's **an example** a talk a sales director used at a quarterly sales conference to motivate the sales team:

*"Every morning on the African savannah a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun and out-think an impala just to stay alive. On that same morning an impala also wakes up and it knows it must outrun and out-think a lion just to stay alive. It really doesn't matter if you see yourself as a powerful lion or a graceful impala, make sure when you wake up tomorrow after this conference you are outrunning and out-thinking the competition."*

## 05. Issue a Call to Action

Challenging your audience with **a call to action** is often a great way to incite action from a presentation.



# CLOSING TEMPLATE

## 01. WHAT'S MY SUMMARY? ELEVATOR PITCH

## 02. BANG CLOSE

## 03. WHO DO I THANK AND ACKNOWLEDGE

## 04. WHAT IS MY CALL TO ACTION?

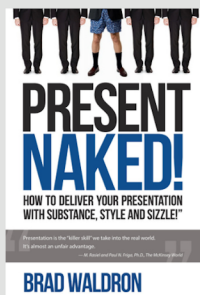
### Final Thoughts

*"There are risks & costs to a program of action. But they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction"* \_\_\_\_\_

*John F. Kennedy*



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