



This Is Your Life Podcast

Episode 29: “Seven Rules for More Effective Slide Presentations”

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Hello and welcome to this episode of *This Is Your Life*. My name is Michael Hyatt, and this is the podcast dedicated to intentional leadership. My goal is to help you live with more passion, work with greater focus, and lead with extraordinary influence.

In this episode, we’ll be talking about seven rules for better slide presentations. Whether you’re a professional speaker or someone who only makes the occasional presentation, this podcast episode is for you. I’m going to be sharing with you from my experience, and I’ve sat through hundreds of presentations, maybe thousands. Some of them were stunning; most of them honestly were mind numbing. I’ll also share with you from my experience as a professional speaker who doesn’t have it all figured out but who is committed to never-ending, lifelong improvement.

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So let’s talk about seven rules for more effective slide presentations. I have spent most of my career in the corporate world. I’ve been subjected to hundreds if not thousands of presentations as I mentioned in the introduction. I remember all the way back when Microsoft launched PowerPoint in May of 1990. I instantly saw the potential of it. I loved it.

I had actually prepared slides back in the day when you used 35-millimeter film and created the film that was surrounded by the little cardboard holder or frame and used those in a carousel slide projector. I know that dates me, but that’s how committed I was to slides. I actually presented or prepared slide shows that were indeed slides. Not a metaphor for slides, but actual slides. PowerPoint changed everything. I saw the potential of it. Evidently everyone else did, too. I built hundreds of slide shows in PowerPoint.

Then something happened in 2004 that really changed everything, at least for me. I first saw my Keynote presentation, which is a presentation software package Apple had developed for Steve Jobs to use at Apple. I was sitting in a board meeting when my friend Joel Smith at Comprehensive Media turned on his slide projector and from his Mac laptop began running the slide show for the board meeting. I was blown away. The typography was beautiful; his images, stunning. I've always been kind of a type geek I guess as somebody who has been in publishing most of my life. I love beautiful type, and the Mac was rendering the type through the Keynote software in just a beautiful way.

It so motivated me that I bought my very first Mac. I thought initially I would just use it as a presentation computer but I would continue to use my PC, which I thought was the serious computer for serious work. I would continue to use that for everything else, but after about 60 days of that I abandoned my PC, I adopted the Mac, and I've never looked back.

Let me hasten to say PowerPoint has come a long way since then. As much as I love Keynote (and I do love it), I would acknowledge it's only one of a number of tremendous tools that are available today on the market, including PowerPoint, which is very sophisticated.

Here is my premise for this episode: ***You can make your presentations more effective by following seven simple rules.***

1. Make sure you start with a solid presentation. No tool, no matter how fancy it is, no matter what the bells and whistles are, no matter what you do will save a bad or mediocre presentation. The presentation has to be there before you begin to put the slides together, the content, the story, whatever it is you're presenting. There has to be a solid presentation if you're going to hope to make good use of slides.

Like everything else, speaking is an art. You have to study it. You must practice. I really feel like just even in the last year I've improved dramatically just because I'm doing it so much. I'm out there on the road. I'm giving the same presentations over and over again. I'm learning what works. I'm figuring out what doesn't work. I'm adding more of what works and subtracting what doesn't work. Speaking just takes a lot of work.

By the way, that's one of the reasons why Ken Davis and I teach the SCORRE Conference. This is a conference we hold to help you prepare and deliver powerful, memorable presentations. That's where it begins. You have to have a solid presentation.

For me just in terms of my workflow, what I always do first is get the presentation nailed. I get the outline. I get the flow. I get the whole thing done before I begin to work in Keynote. I don't start there. I think frankly for most people if you do start there, you're going to get sidetracked. Your presentation may have some razzle-dazzle, but it's not going to flow, it's not going to be memorable, and it's not going to be helpful to your audience.

So rule number one is make sure you start with a solid presentation.

2. **Don't give your presentation center stage.** This is the biggest mistake I see speakers make. They forget their PowerPoint, their Keynote, or even Prezi are tools designed to *augment* their presentation, not *be* their presentation. They are the show, not the slide presentation.

As I said earlier, no amount of razzle-dazzle or slide effects or great photographs can overcome a weak presentation. If you don't do your job, slides won't save you. It only makes a bad presentation worse and possibly even more distracting. Never forget you're the presenter. Your message should be the focus. Not your slides, not your props, not your handouts. You're in the lead role, and you need to retain that role.

So what does that mean practically speaking? Well a couple of things. Don't read your slides to your audience. There is nothing worse. I've been in a ton of presentations, particularly in New York in the financial district, where I've been with investment bankers or investors or some other financial meeting where essentially the speaker just droned on and on reading his slides. I'll tell you what, nothing is more boring than that.

I would say another thing too is don't turn around and look at the screen. The screen should be an adjunct or an augmentation of your slide presentation. Make sure you keep the audience's focus on you. If you turn around and look at the slides, it's distracting, and it puts the focus not where it should be, which is on you and on the message you're delivering. Instead, I would stay focused on the audience. Engage with them. Look them in the eye. Make sure you're connecting with them individually.

So rule number two is don't give your presentation center stage.

3. **Use big, compelling images.** I get mine from iStockphoto.com, but there are lots of services out there. On iStockphoto you have to pay for the images obviously, but they have an enormous database of images. It's very easy to search their image database by keyword. It still takes some time, but at least they're categorized by tag and I can find them more quickly than I can at a service like Flickr. The advantage of Flickr is obviously it's free, and that may be the place you want to go. There is also Shutterstock, and there are a number of services out there if you just Google "images."

When you do these big images, they really do illustrate. It's like opening the windows and letting the sunlight in so your audience can kind of feel the air, see the sunshine, and envision what you had in mind. Whatever you do, avoid photo clichés. Do you know what I'm talking about? When somebody is talking about relationships or selling, they put a picture up on the slides of two men shaking hands. Ugh!

That's the worst possible thing you can do because it's overused. It's a cliché. Or the drop of water landing on a puddle of water to show impact. Or the confident, perfect man with his arms crossed across his chest. You know what I'm talking about. These are just clichés. You have to be more creative than that and take the time to find great images. This can make all the difference in your slide presentation.

I would recommend reading a few books that will explain this technique in more detail and give you some great pointers. Probably my favorite book of all time on presentation is *slide:ology* by Nancy Duarte. She is a friend and a great author. She runs a design firm that really specializes in making beautiful presentations.

I first heard of her when I saw the Al Gore movie *An Inconvenient Truth*. Whether you agree with Al Gore or not, you have to admit his presentation was stunning. It blew me away, so I said to my assistant at the time, "I want you to track down, find out whoever built that slide show because I want to hire them to do a presentation for me." This was when I was at Thomas Nelson. They did, and it was stupendous. Since that time Nancy has become a friend, and you can follow her on Twitter. You can read her great blog posts. Most of all, get the book *slide:ology*. Then her second book, which is called *Resonate*, is also great. Both books on public speaking.

Another book I would recommend: *Presentation Zen* by Garr Reynolds. I love Garr's work. It actually came out before Nancy's, and it was the first thing that really moved me toward this style of using big images, less words, bigger images, and letting myself deliver the primary message. He also has another book that kind of expanded on what he wrote in *Presentation Zen*. It's called *Presentation Zen Design*, also by Garr Reynolds.

Then another book that is excellent... In fact, you might want to start with this because it's really basic, and it will give you sort of the outline of all the things you need to consider. It's called *How to Be a Presentation God*. It's by Scott Schwertly of Ethos3. He is a good friend of mine, was in my mentoring group. Scott covers all the bases. Those four books I would recommend, five if you count *Resonate*. I have links in the show notes for you to go directly to Amazon if you want to buy those.

So rule number three: Use big, compelling images.

4. Stick to one point per slide. Avoid bullets. Just like a gun, bullets kill. I'm afraid this has become a very lazy style of speaking in many corporations where people just kind of move aimlessly from one topic to the next and think if they have a number of bullets on a slide, somehow they're actually making a presentation.

Let me give you an example of where I discovered I was using bullets just recently. I can't believe I did this because I know better. In my *Platform* speech (this is a speech I've given all over the country) I had one slide about the benefits of building a platform.

Now the essence of my speech was not about the benefits of building a platform (it's *how* to build a platform), but I thought in the introduction I needed to have at least a persuasive block there where I talked about what the benefits were and why you need to build a platform. So I said there were four: visibility, amplification, connection, and options. These are the four benefits of building a platform. So I had all those bullet points on a slide. I'm not proud of it. Yes, I've used bullets, but I decided this last week after I'd given the speech twice that I was violating my own rules.

So I took this one slide with four bullets, and I created four slides. So I had one slide that was just *visibility*. It has the word *visibility* on it, and it has a really cute picture of a man standing with his head above the crowd. Then I took a second slide and talked about *amplification*, again with that word on the slide and then a picture of a megaphone. Then a third slide with the word *connection* and then a picture of two people laughing, obviously engaged with one another. Then I had a fourth slide with the word *options* and a picture of some tennis shoes on top of an arrow demonstrating a path that is full of options. The arrows went out in different directions.

So that's just a way of taking something that is very conceptual, very cerebral and making it more visual by using photographs and again making one point per slide. That's the key thing here.

5. Make your slides readable. This is so crucial. How many times have you sat in a presentation and squinted, trying to read the slides, even if you were up front? Again I see this violated all the time in the financial services industry. Here are a couple of sub rules that really go under this rule number five.

Number one, *avoid paragraphs for long blocks of text*. If you really, really must use a paragraph, then whittle it down to the bare essentials. Use an excerpt, a couple of sentences. Emphasize the important words. Put the text block by itself on a single slide.

Number two, *use appropriate fonts*. I recommend a sans serif font for titles like Arial or Verdana or Helvetica or my own personal favorite, Myriad Pro, which is what Steve Jobs uses on his slides if you've ever watched one of his presentations. Then I would use a serif font for bullets or body text, something like Times New Roman, Georgia, Garamond, Goudy, Palatino, or one of those. Most books are typeset this way because it makes them more readable. Serifs help you recognize the characters and thus the words faster, and it makes the text more readable. It's also customary to use sans serif fonts for chart titles.

Number three, *avoid using detailed reports on your slides*. If you need to include a report in your presentation, hand it out. Don't force people to try to read a ledger printout on a slide. Again, financial people take note. If you have to show a report, use it as a picture and then use a callout to emphasize the part of the report you want people to focus on.

Better yet, just fill up a whole slide with the one number you want people to take away from the presentation. People cannot focus on a bunch of things at one time, and you have to direct their focus. Not everything is of equal importance. If you think it is, then nothing becomes important. Focus their attention on the one number you really think is important.

Number four, *avoid title capitalization unless it's a title*. In other words, if you have a sentence you're using on a slide, don't capitalize each word. That's what title capitalization is. It makes it much more difficult to read. Use sentence capitalization where you capitalize the initial word and then write it out as a sentence. It's much easier to read that way.

So rule number five is make your slides readable. The suggestions I've given you are not the only thing to say about this topic, but I think they're a few things you'll find helpful.

6. **Eliminate clutter.** There is a French writer I really admire. I'm going to butcher the pronunciation of his name, but let me give it a shot here. It's Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. He said, "A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away." (By the way, if you're in France and you're listening to me, I'm sure you're laughing right now. It's all right. I did the best I could.) That's a great quote, isn't it? "A designer knows he has achieved perfection not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away."

Here are some suggestions when it comes to eliminating clutter. Number one, please, please *don't put your logo on every slide*. I mean, really? When was the last time you forgot who was making the presentation? You don't need to be reminded with every slide. It's just clutter. I get branding, but putting your logo on every slide quickly becomes annoying. It would be like attending a dinner party and saying your name every time you made a comment. What's the point? People know who you are. They know the company you represent. The introduction is enough to set the stage. Now just add value. If you want to be memorable, that's the best way to do it. Add value. Don't just be hammering your logo and your brand identity into your audience.

Number two, *don't put your presentation's title on every slide*. Again, they're not going to forget that. You're going to remind them at the first. You may remind them at the end of the presentation. You don't need to bludgeon them over and over again by putting the title on every slide.

Number three, *don't put your name on every slide*. Again, it's needless clutter.

Number four, *don't put a copyright notice on every slide*. Your presentation is copyrighted from the moment you create it. That's how copyright and intellectual property law works. You don't need to put the copyright notice on every slide. If you want to put it on the front, fine, but frankly you don't even need it there. The copyright notice does not give you the copyright; the creation of the content is what creates the copyright.

Number five, *if it doesn't help you communicate the message of that slide, it's just noise*. It's just a distraction. Remove it.

7. **Have a backup plan.** Write this down. Your technology will fail usually at the worst possible moment. There are usually several things I do in preparation for my presentation. I have what's called a *contract rider*. In other words, it's an insular document that comes with the speaking contract that specifies what I need technologically to succeed and so we have an understanding before I ever arrive of what I have to have.

Here are a couple of things I have, and then I'll tell you how I back up from it. I typically have my laptop on a cocktail stand on the stage. So it may be adjacent to the podium, but it's there on the stage where I have my laptop and where I can be running it in what's called *Presenter view*, which means

the slides are being transmitted to an external monitor and the current slide and the next slide are displayed on my laptop. That's just me. Some guys don't work with that at all, but that's how my presentations typically work.

Here is my backup plan. I always, always copy my slide presentation in Keynote to a flash drive along with a PDF of that same presentation. For example, about a year and a half ago I was speaking at Catalyst in Dallas. For whatever reason, we couldn't get my laptop connected to the projector. They weren't running Keynote. It was on a Windows machine, so they had to have a PDF of my slide presentation and just flip through the pages of the PDF as I was making the presentation. It wasn't optimal, but it was better than nothing. So fortunately I had that PDF on my flash drive so they could get it up and running in a matter of minutes.

Recently (about two weeks ago) at Sales Mastery, I couldn't get my laptop to connect to the external projector because there was this bug in Mountain Lion. I won't go into the technical stuff. It took me a week to actually figure it out, but we had to go with the house computer. Fortunately, they were using Apple computers. They had Keynote running on their computer, and I had on my flash drive my Keynote presentation plus (by the way, this is important) the embedded fonts I knew they were unlikely to have. I already had those on my flash drive, which made it very easy for them. We were able to get it up and running. That would have been a very stressful situation if we had not been able to do that. I always have a copy of my slide presentation again in Keynote and PDF on a flash drive.

In addition that, I always print out a hard copy of my notes. It's never happened to me, but I'm waiting for the day when my laptop stops working in the middle of a presentation. What do I do? I have usually the outline memorized, but to have my notes there just in case I get lost is very helpful. Frankly it's kind of my security blanket. So I always take up my notes to the podium and have those there in front of me even if I don't refer to them very often.

Then I always take with me to the event an assortment of connectors. In my case I want a Mac Mini Displayport to VGA so I can go out of my Mac directly to a VGA projector. I also carry with me a Mac Mini Displayport to HDMI. Increasingly the kinds of projectors and the kinds of displays I'm having to connect to use an HDMI connector, and so it's important for me to carry that in case the sponsor didn't think to have one or somebody forgot it or whatever. I'm not out of business.

Hopefully these seven rules will make your slide presentations more effective and make you more comfortable and more dynamic as a presenter. So let's go from that to a few listener questions. The first one comes from "DJ Wade-O."

DJ Wade-O: Hey Michael, how are you doing? This is Wade "DJ Wade-O" Harris from the Wade-O radio podcast as well as wadeoradio.com. I have a quick question about slide decks and presentations. Do you believe there should be a correlation between the length of your slide deck and the length of your presentation? So for instance, say you had to do a quick Keynote or a 30-minute workshop or an hour-long workshop. Do you think the slide deck should be in proportion to the number of minutes

you'll be speaking? Just curious to hear what you think about that. Again, love your blog and your podcast. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks.

Michael Hyatt: First of all, great question. I would say there is not a necessary correlation. There is probably some relative correlation. I wouldn't want to overwhelm people with slides, but from my perspective the point is to not make the slides noticeable. I want them to enhance what I'm saying, but I want to keep the focus on the message, what I'm delivering to them. So however many it takes. I don't think there is a magic number.

I'm going to answer that question in a moment for someone else, but I just think you have to use common sense, probably a little experience. It probably is true that the longer the presentation is the more slides you'll have, but I've seen very effective presentations that were long with a very few slides. I've seen on the other hand short presentations that were frankly funny that had a lot of slides. The person was flipping through them very quickly.

Wade also had another question. I want to get to that, as well.

DJ Wade-O: I have another question. My question this time has to do with the actual background and design of your slide deck. I remember when I used to work at Corporate America, I had a boss who pretty much every single slide our group used for presentations he wanted to be the exact same format, layout, and design regardless of what we were presenting.

Obviously I've noticed in what you do when you give different workshops on different titles, you use different slide decks. I actually prefer that myself. So obviously I know what your philosophy is, but just wondering if you have any thoughts on that whole concept of keeping it the same or keeping it different or if it's just something you just kind of did and really didn't think much about it. Again thanks for everything you do. Look forward to hearing from you.

Michael Hyatt: Wade, I generally don't like this, especially if it's a corporate-wide thing, but I understand it. We did the same thing when I was the CEO at Thomas Nelson because usually that branded deck, that template if you will, was better than what people could come up with on their own. If you didn't do that, it was the Wild, Wild West. You'd get some people who were very qualified and very capable of producing beautiful slide decks and most people quite frankly who didn't do that. So you had it all over the map. Some slide shows were not as effective as others.

I would prefer actually a third alternative, which is to teach these people some basic design principles and then let them express their creativity and give them some really honest critique. The exception to this is when you have a conference. For example, last week Ken Davis, my partner, and I were in Vail, Colorado. We were presenting two conferences: the Launch Conference and the SCORRE Conference, both designed for public speakers.

At the Launch Conference in particular we had a slide deck designed that we didn't have our logo on every slide as I talked about earlier. We didn't have the title of the presentation on every slide. We had

nothing except an image and a word, but we used the same type font throughout. We used the same basic color palate. So while there was a lot of creativity among the various presentations, there was still this sense that they all hung together.

Again this is art, not science, but my personal preference is don't standardize so much that you lose the life of it because there is much people can bring to the table that will increase their effectiveness and give them a chance to express their personality, which is one of the keys in communicating if you'll just kind of back off of that control a little bit if you're a leader and let people express themselves.

If you're in a situation where you have a boss who insists on that, obviously you may have to go with the flow. I've been in situations where I was part of the larger presentation team, like when we were at Thomas Nelson. We were owned by a private equity company, and so all of their portfolio companies came in. They wanted to make it easy for the investors who were viewing those portfolio presentations to be able to assimilate similar information. So we had to conform to a group template, and that's fine. I don't make a big stink about it, but it's not my preference.

The next question comes from Dwayne Morris.

Dwayne Morris: Hello Michael, this is Dwayne Morris from Spartanburg, South Carolina. You can find me on the Web at morrismatters.com. Hey Michael, Guy Kawasaki preaches 10 slides or less. Just wondering if you'd agree with that and want to get your thoughts on that. Thank you.

Michael Hyatt: Actually I don't agree with that. Guy Kawasaki is a friend. He is a very good speaker. Excellent speaker actually, but I don't agree with that rule. I've seen very effective presentations with no slides, and by the way that's always an option, sometimes even to this day. In fact, I'm giving a presentation tomorrow, and I won't use any slides. Why? Just because I don't think it's going to enhance the presentation. I don't think it's going to be helpful.

I've seen effective presentations with five slides. I've seen effective presentations with 150 slides. The main thing is use as many as you need to communicate and have an impact on the audience. That's the key thing. It should always be from the audience's perspective. What will get the message across? What will make it memorable? What will make it clear so they walk away remembering what it is you said with the outcome you envisioned when you began?

Matt has another question.

Matt McMoore: Hi Michael, my name is Matt McMoore. I'm an associate pastor at a church in Moline, Illinois. I'm calling because my question is in regard to the fact that I see some presentations where there are main points and there are sub points. Do you do all of that? Also before those some guys use numbers. Some guys use bullets. Some people don't use anything at all. I'm just wondering if there is any significance as far as the aesthetics of it in regard to that that you have any thoughts on. So I'd love to hear from you. Thanks.

Michael Hyatt: Yeah, for me, Matt, I typically want to make it very clear what my major points are. I don't want to get too lost in a lot of detail or confuse people so they're wondering where we are in the presentation. So I would typically use a similar design to signal the main points. Maybe I'll number them. I may use a transition when I'm going to a major point. Normally I use just a simple dissolve transition between all of my slides except the major points because I want to signal to them in a non-verbal way that we're now moving to another major point. I'll usually repeat the point, and then I'll go to the next point. You probably heard me doing that a few minutes ago when I was talking about rules.

So those are just a few ways to do it, but don't get lost in the weeds. There is such a thing as too much structure, and it leaves people confused. Then they're frustrated because they feel like they missed a point, or they're not clear if the point you're on is a major point or a minor point and where it appears. Depending on how compulsive your audience member is, that can be a real frustration to them. So again, I would stick to the main points.

The next question comes from Mike.

Mike Hansen: Mike, this is Mike Hansen from Parker, Colorado. I'm at chaplainmike.com. I'm curious what a bad slide looks like. What does a bad slide make you feel like? I imagine many of us do bad slides without even knowing it, and I'd be curious if you could give us some pointers on how to avoid doing bad slides. Thanks. I appreciate your podcast and your website.

Michael Hyatt: That's a great question because it's approaching the whole thing from the reverse. That is, I tried to describe in the outline of my presentation on this episode what a *good* slide looks like, which is usually an image and at most a word, but I think a *bad* slide is a slide that creates cognitive dissonance.

Here is what I mean by that. It causes you to focus on two things at the same time, and it becomes very disconcerting. You're trying to listen to what the speaker has to say, but then you're looking at a complex slide or a confusing slide, something where there is bad design or too much information. Your attention goes off the speaker, and you're not quite sure what to focus on. That's what you want to avoid.

Again you want a slide that augments the point you're trying to make as a speaker. You don't want to compete with what you're trying to say. So a bad slide again is confusing, bad design, too much information. You want it simple, elegant, to really augment, to enhance, to expound upon the point you're making so there is no cognitive dissonance.

Ryan has a question about Skype.

Ryan Parker: Hi Michael, this is Ryan Parker from ryankparker.com. I've seen a couple of your Skype interviews, and I would really love to know what you use as your Skype recorder because it has such great quality. I'm on a Mac and I know you're a Mac lover, so it would help me out a ton if I knew exactly where to go for that. Thank you so much, and have a wonderful day.

Michael Hyatt: Ryan, I have written on this on my blog, and I'm going to leave a link in the show notes to this blog post. It's called "How to Record a Video Interview," and essentially I walk you through my process of doing Skype recordings. I use a couple pieces of software. I use Call Recorder for Skype, which is a Mac program. There are also some Windows programs like this. It simply records the digital image in the Skype call. The nice thing about Call Recorder for Skype is it then takes the image on the remote end, the person I'm interviewing, and then it takes my image, and then it will put them side by side into essentially one video. There are a lot of variations you can do within that piece of software, and it's pretty inexpensive.

I don't use the iSight recorder inside of my computer. Instead I use an external web cam. I use the Logitech HD Pro Webcam C910. I think there is a new model, a C920. Regardless these are pretty inexpensive, less than \$100, maybe about \$80 on Amazon. That just hooks up via USB on to my computer, and it gives a much better HD image and much better audio fidelity than I'm going to get out of my standard camera that is built into the computer.

So those are two pieces of equipment, if you will, I use in producing those. I actually edit it inside of iMovie once I've created it. So the blog post will go into more detail, but that's kind of off the top of my head what I use.

The last question comes from Scott.

Scott Kantner: Hi Michael, this is Scott Kantner calling from Hamburg, Pennsylvania. I blog at scottkantner.com. My question has more to do with the technology aspect of presenting rather than the slide content. Nothing drives me crazier than when the presenter hasn't done his homework and checked out how his laptop is going to work with the projector he'll be using. Do you have any sort of pre-flight checklist you use to make sure the technical details are taken care of before you present? Thanks.

Michael Hyatt: There is nothing quite as painful as watching someone's technology fail in front of a large crowd. I remember distinctly I was at an industry trade show maybe four years ago or so. The guy stood up. I knew him. Very articulate guy. He was really well prepared, but he hadn't tested out his equipment before he began speaking. His system locked up, and we were forced to wait while he rebooted. Of course he felt very uncomfortable and tried to make some small talk and tried to make a few jokes. He rebooted it. He still couldn't get it to work. Now he's flustered. He doesn't know exactly where he is at or where he is supposed to go. It was extremely painful, and I don't want to be that guy.

So yes, I do have kind of a pre-flight checklist. Let me just kind of run through this for you. First of all, I have a conversation with the event sponsor before the event. I want to know some specific things about the technical equipment they're going to be using, and I want them to understand what I'm expecting. I also have a contract rider as I said earlier that specifies all my technical details. They're literally written out, what I'm bringing, what I expect. This isn't to be demanding, but it's to facilitate congruence so we

both have the same set of expectations. So I have that first conversation with the event sponsor before the event.

One of the things I've had to start doing in the last year is make sure I know what the screen resolution will be. It used to be simple. It was 1024 x 768 in most places, but now we've moved up to the 1280 format. It's a very different slide format. So if I haven't prepared beforehand, what will happen if I'm trying to project that 1024 x 768 format on a 1280 x 720 is it gets black-barred on the right hand and the left hand side. It just doesn't fill out the screen like it should. So I want to know what the screen resolution is going to be.

Another thing I do is I carry all the major connectors when I go. I described those earlier in the podcast. I want to make sure I have all the cords so I'm ready for every situation I might encounter. I also show up for a sound check at least an hour before the event starts so I can make sure my equipment is running. It used to be if you had a Mac it was pretty easy, but I would say in the last several months at almost every engagement there have been complications. I don't know if this is a Mountain Lion issue or if it's the fact that there are now more kinds of projectors, but there have just been issues. We have to work through those issues. I've become pretty proficient at it, as has my manager.

We don't want to be doing that in front of a live audience. I want to be doing that before the crowd shows up so I can be focused on them when they arrive and not my equipment. By the way, one of the things that often happens if the audience is in the room when I'm trying to set up or I'm trying to figure this out is people come up to me and start wanting to talk to me. I may be lost in trying to solve a technical problem and getting this equipment working, and I don't want that.

So again I try to come really early so it gets fixed and so it's working and so I can step up on to the stage with confidence with (as I described earlier) my backup plan if something fails in the middle of a presentation, even though I've tested it out previously.

So let me leave you with this question... ***What presentation tips do you have to offer that I haven't covered?*** My list isn't exhaustive. I'm in process myself, but if you have a tip you think I should have mentioned or you would like to add to the conversation, then please go to MichaelHyatt.com/029 (as in episode #29).

If you've ever thought about writing a book, I have a brand new course you have to get. It's called "Everything You Need to Know to Get Published." If you already have a book contract or if you have a book out but you want to do everything you can to reach the most people possible, this course is for you.

It includes everything I've learned about publishing in 30 years in the industry as a publisher, most recently as the CEO of Thomas Nelson, but also as a literary agent, as a two-time *New York Times* bestselling author myself. I've distilled all of that into 21 audio lessons along with a workbook. The special introductory offer ended, but you can still get this course for \$100 off and four free bonuses worth more than \$150. You can find out more at MichaelHyatt.com/getpublished.

My next podcast will be on the topic of "How to Get the Most out of the Meetings You Attend." If you have a question about this topic and you want a chance to get on the show, leave me a voicemail message at MichaelHyatt.com/podcastquestion. There will be a link in the show notes. Frankly this is a terrific way to cross-promote your blog or website because I'll link to it just like I did with the callers in this episode.

Well, that's about it for this episode of *This Is Your Life*. I'd be so grateful if you would rate my podcast on iTunes. That helps tremendously with keeping my podcast visible so people who have never heard it can discover it. If you'd like to comment on this episode, please go to MichaelHyatt.com. Scroll down the show notes to this episode, and you can leave a comment in the comments section. I would love to hear from you. A comment, a question, whatever.

Until next time, remember: Your life is a gift. Now go make it count!