

VITAL FINDINGS

How to Deliver a Killer Storytelling-Based Presentation

The Vital Findings Storytelling Checklist

As insights professionals, storytelling is now table stakes - we need to inspire action, not just report data. To tell an effective story, you must:



"Grab" Your Audience

Get an emotional reaction and connect! This makes stories memorable.



Have Movement

Stories tell us what happened in the past, the present and project a desirable future state.



Be Concise & Focused

Every sentence, word, and data point must support, enrich, or advance the story.



Compel Action

Demonstrate the value of the research and drive your audience to do something.

So how do we do this?

Before you start your next research presentation, leverage this checklist to make sure you're setting yourself up to be a successful storyteller.



"Grab" Your Audience

- Clearly identify what's at stake. Are sales down? Is the market growing or shrinking? Review market trends from other sources and don't be afraid to cite these in your introduction. Showing that you have given some additional thought beyond the data lends legitimacy and gravitas to the research you are presenting.
- Bring consumers/users to the forefront. If you're only doing quant, try and add a "strategic open end" focused on getting good stories vs. coded data. And if you're stuck, try searching for YouTube videos or user review data to pull in.
- Bring your audience into the presentation (literally!). In one of our more memorable recent presentations, we used a personal anecdote the CEO had shared to illustrate a point.



Have Movement

- Heavy/current/lapsed/potential users is a terrific framework we use in all our A&U's.
- A "lifecycle" is an even better framework - rather than a point-in-time crosstab (like the framework above), the "lifecycle" looks at where consumers are in their category or brand journey and asks "why" questions about how they got here and where they expect to go next. For example, we use "Visual Questionnaire Design" to allow consumers to see the lifecycle as they answer questions, giving them a tool to keep track of where we're focusing on in their journey, improving recall and data accuracy (for more information on Visual Questionnaire Design, visit <https://vitalfindings.com/introduction-visual-questionnaire-design/>).
- Let consumers explain the journey of how they first got into the category/product, ideally in an online community or video open end.



Be Concise and Focused

A visual framework is a terrific way to lay out your story and stay focused on it. For example, in our TMRE presentation on using design to connect insight to impact (<https://vitalfindings.com/how-design-is-connecting-insight-to-impact/>), we lay out the three benefits of design and use this framework throughout the presentation. You could also think of these as "chapters" in your story:

EXAMPLE VISUAL FRAMEWORK: THE POWER OF DESIGN



CLARITY

Allows us to explore complex issues with a higher level of accuracy



RESONANCE

Helps us shout above the din of data



SALIENCE

Gives us tools to create the "user experience" of how our insights are received

- Write the key findings first, and make sure it reads as a linear story. If you like to start by having the data in front of you in a slide deck, take a moment to jot down the story as a paragraph or bullets. If slide takeaways don't make it into the key findings, it's a signal that they need to be made more relevant to the story or placed in the appendix.
- Present the story to someone else on your team before rolling it out. At Vital Findings, we "workshop" each deck to make sure the story flows, that the slides are direct, and that the analytic framework comes through loud and clear. Ask your partner what story they took away from your working presentation, and probe on areas where they were not clear on the intent or got hung up on the point.



Compel Action

- Make **specific** recommendations. Don't confuse recommendations with key findings - for example, if the research identifies young males as the core audience, don't just recommend pursuing them, suggest how. By communicating the next move, you start a dialogue and drive action.
- Raise the stakes. Include questions in your research about what consumers might do if the product or service actually delivered on its promised benefits, or if their pain points weren't solved.
- Use physical leave-behinds. An infographic or artfully designed summary of key findings and recommendations makes the research more persistent and tangible. (See examples at <https://vitalfindings.com/portfolio/>)
- Set up a workshop, so stakeholders start using the findings. Our gold standard is a half-day workshop where we review the research, cluster findings in a mind map, and ideate and share solutions to pain points.



Companies are demanding more actionable insights, and researchers need to be prepared for the challenge. Improving your storytelling skills presents a great opportunity to elevate your presence and impact.

Looking for a Partner that's Committed to Storytelling?

Vital Findings' "Insights Hero" process layers new research into your existing data and turns it into a storytelling masterpiece! Email us at insightshero@vitalfindings.com to find out more.

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Research that inspires

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