



## CONTENT STRUCTURE

**Leaders must structure content in order for audiences to pay attention and remember.**

In general, humans struggle with attention and retention. Complex content (like financial results or medical research) and tempting distractions (like smartphones and instant messengers) make this struggle more pronounced.

By the time the average patient returns home from a physician, the doctor's instructions are:

**50%  
forgotten**

**accurately  
remembered  
25%**

**25%  
misremembered**



As with patients and doctors, an audience's attention and retention are not driven by the speaker's accuracy or intelligence. Audiences pay attention and remember when they hear:



### **Numbering**

to show the audience the structure and order of the speaker's content



### **Signaling**

to remind the audience where they are within the structure, what has come, and what is to come



### **Repetition**

to give the audience many chances to hear and understand the most important points



**1 Open the presentation** with a procedural introduction followed by a substantive thesis.

Formally introduce, such as by thanking hosts

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State the thesis or main idea

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**2 Deliver the content** according to a clear structure with three main points.

Establish for the audience the presentation's structure

*There are three things I'll focus on.*

Number and summarize three main points

*First, \_\_\_\_\_  
Second, \_\_\_\_\_  
Third, \_\_\_\_\_*

Number, repeat, and elaborate on each point with specific support (data, examples, stories, etc.)

*First, \_\_\_\_\_  
> \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_  
Second, \_\_\_\_\_  
> \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_  
Third, \_\_\_\_\_  
> \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_ > \_\_\_\_\_*

**3 Close the presentation** by restating the thesis and ending with next steps or thanks.

Restate the thesis

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Restate the number and summary of each main point

*First, \_\_\_\_\_  
Second, \_\_\_\_\_  
Third, \_\_\_\_\_*

Conclude with a call to action, a discussion of next steps, or thanks

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