AN *e*-BURST OF INSPIRATION FROM THE BEST BOOKS

Jerry Weissman

PRESENTATION SLIDE TEXT

Less Is More

FT Press Delivers *elements*
FINANCIAL TIMES

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When giving presentations all text slides come in only two options: bullets and sentences. Each of these options is quite different, with separate forms and functions. Keep them distinct.

A bullet is meant to express a core idea, so craft it in the form of a headline. Look at any newspaper, and you'll see that a headline is not a complete sentence. Basic English grammar dictates that a sentence must contain a subject and a verb, but most headlines are not complete sentences. Generally, headlines omit the parts of speech that form complete sentences: articles (the, an, a), conjunctions (and, but, or), and prepositions (of, for, by, through).

Why are headlines written in this shorthand style? There are several good reasons. When fewer words have to be squeezed into an available space, the size of the letters can be increased, enhancing legibility. Furthermore, by providing the gist of the story in a few words, readers can scan a page full of stories in a few seconds and pick out the ones of interest.

Legibility and speed are equally important in presentation slides. When you create a text slide containing bullets, you are, in effect, presenting headlines only. Where does the body text appear? Not on any slide. As the presenter, it is *your* job to put flesh on the bones of the headline bullets. The presenter provides the body text. The presenter is the focus of the presentation.

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