



START WITH A BANG

**7 tips to help you captivate
your audience from the start**

Brought to you by:

HELL YES LIFE 

START WITH A BANG:

7 tips to help you captivate your audience from the start

Brought to you by: normanjbell.com

The first moments of your presentation are crucial. This is your chance to grab your audience's attention and not let go until you reach the end. Unfortunately, many people miss this opportunity by opening with a bland "Hi, my name is xyz. I'm here to talk to you about abc." Don't do that. Instead, use the 7 tips below to help you immediately capture your audience's attention from the beginning.

1

THE OPENING PAUSE

This is a stage technique I often use when giving a presentation. Here's what you do: Stand there, look around at audience, make eye contact with people, and smile a Buddha-like smile. Do this just long enough to pull in their attention—maybe 3 to five seconds. You almost want to make the audience ask themselves "What's going on?" "What's she/he doing?" Then begin. (This technique is compatible with all of the other ones listed below.)

2

JUMP RIGHT IN

Skip the boring intros and just jump into the presentation, ideally by telling a story that is connected to the theme of your presentation. You can always do intros later once you've established that your audience is engaged.

3

SHOW DON'T TELL

Even though it's called storytelling, what you really want to do is paint a picture for your audience so we can picture it in our minds. To do that, you need to use sensory language to help us experience what you experienced. What did you see, hear, feel, think and (yes) smell? Take us there.

START WITH A BANG:

7 tips to help you captivate your audience from the start

4

START IN THE MIDDLE

Starting with a story is great. But instead of starting at the beginning of your story, one alternative is to begin right in the middle, where the action is, so as to grab the audience's attention. You can then backtrack to explain what's happening. This uses JJ Abrams Mystery Box principle. As Abrams says, the questions are more important than the answers.

5

START WITH A BANG

This one's similar to number 4, but this time, you literally, say: "BANG!" or some other eye-opening sound that relates to your story or presentation. Pause for a second, then launch in: "That was the sound the car made as it collided with my bicycle, sending me flying 40 feet into the air..."

6

LEAVE THEM HANGING

You may even want to open with a question or story segment that doesn't get answered until the end of your presentation. This unanswered question creates a knowledge gap that pulls your listener through the presentation to the end. This is what keeps people reading mystery novels, watching shows like Lost, etc.

7

BOOKEND

Bring a theme or story up at the beginning, knowing that you're going to revisit it at the end of your presentation. At the end, you put a different spin on the theme you introduced at the beginning. This leaves a satisfying sense of completion and balance with the audience.