Features of effective final presentations

The Final Presentation in 2.009 is as real as it is big: A house packed with a diverse and enthusiastic audience, in Kresge Auditorium, a major MIT venue, creates a demanding yet exciting situation.

To begin preparing, first read the detailed description on the 2.009 site here: http://web.mit.edu/2.009/www/assignments/FinalPresentation.html. Also look at the review form, distributed to all audience members, to understand key presentation dimensions: http://web.mit.edu/2.009/www/assignments/FinalPresentationImages/finalReviewForm.pdf

There are many touches that make a final presentation engaging and persuasive, and your team’s presentation should be as unique as your product and consistent with your vision. It should tell a story. Be sure to review Prof. Wallace’s Nov. 28 lecture notes on presentation structure (especially slides 6-17). Still, compelling 2.009 presentations have several noticeable features in common. We bring them to your attention as examples and for inspiration.

Pleasing overall structure. The Nov. 14 lecture (slide 19) showed a time allocation for the presentation components. Although you should keep this balance in mind, the arrangement of the sections is up to your team. Think about the order of information about your product that tells its story and builds its case most powerfully. Remember, as in all product presentations, to describe and to demonstrate the product itself early on.

Petra: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Petra.html. The presentation opens with a demonstration that shows the audience clearly the need that Petra, the automatic rappelling and ascending device, was developed to address. The two demonstrations grab the audience’s attention and set the scene for the next speaker to explain how the device was designed to operate. The features are understandable to the audience because they have just seen for themselves how they would need to function for the device to be deployed successfully. The value proposition follows and its argument is strong because the need for a product with just its features has been convincingly established.

Terrainer: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2014-Terrainer.html After a short, attention-getting opener, comparing indoor bike training to outdoor training with the product, this presentation unfolds around three clear segments: demonstration of the actual apparatus with live results, a verbal and visual description of the technology, and a compelling business case. Interactions among the three presenters and the cyclist are seamless, and the handoff is smooth, particularly between last two presenters – their speeches fit logically, and they pass the slide remote in a way that seems practiced and friendly.

Up-Beat: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2014-UpBeat.html Variation on an otherwise routine structure can be captivating if it is meaningful: This team altered the chronology of a typical product presentation by showing the “magic” of the product (i.e. the “end of the story”) before explaining the details (i.e. current problem and need). The drummer begins with a nice drum solo, and then the audience learns how he got to that skill level by using UpBeat.
**BitDex:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-BitDex.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-BitDex.html) The opening of the presentation describes the use context and technical problem with precision, which is appropriate for one of the product's key attributes, and invokes the environment of a machine shop. After the brief demonstration, the business case presentation follows logically, with a graceful bridge linking the demo to primary customers. The design and engineering description concludes the presentation, with an emphasis on the drill bit, at the center of the product use.

**HelmetHub:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-helmetHub.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-helmetHub.html) The presentation has a clear beginning, middle, and end - with graceful transitions between the speakers and the narration of product demo. Furthermore, the beginning and the end are ‘in conversation’ with each other.

**Engaging beginning.** The first line of your presentation extends an invitation to your audience - captivate them with a specific and intriguing story. How can you get the audience to connect with your product? How can you make its use, or the need for it, vivid? Who, specifically, are your potential customers? A strong, original, and evocative beginning primes the audience’s interest in your product and may cue them how to think and even feel about the need for it.

**LaserKites:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Laser%20Kites.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Laser%20Kites.html) The presentation opens with an very upbeat kite flyer running across the stage and the first speaker telling the audience “when I was a kid, I loved that magical moment when the wind would catch my kite and it would just soar off into the sky.” The excitement about the product is palpable and the audience is with the speakers and their product right from the beginning.

**KOACH:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2014-KOACH.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2014-KOACH.html) The scenario for the product demonstration is well designed and really engaging; it immerses the audience in both the use and the feel of the product. Two students, a 90-pound young woman and a 180-pound man compete with each other using Koach’s punching bags and electronic app.

**EquiTemp:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-EquiTemp.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-EquiTemp.html) Short, staccato phrasing, along with vivid images, conveys the safety problem and arouses audience concern. The product description, at 29 sec in the video, punctuates an opening that fully describes the use context.

**Verda:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Verda.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Verda.html) In introducing the product, the speaker also advocates powerfully for food access in underserved urban neighborhoods, fully describing the context.

**Clydesdale:**  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2012-Clydesdale.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2012-Clydesdale.html) The presentation begins emphatically, with the first speaker’s welcoming gesture and friendly statement, as the audience is invited to consider the physical problem of beer delivery in Boston. The speaker uses physical action and vivid language to convey how beer kegs are “kneed or dollyed down the stairs,” and repeats this action as the video shows of the problem beer delivery: delivery men “feel each jerk in wrists… shoulders… and chest.”
**Fluent description of technological challenges or innovations.** While it is critical to convey what your product does and who uses it, your presentation should go deep into your product and communicate – through careful choice of images and remarks – how it was designed and built. It is challenging to do this in a way that informs and engages engineers and non-engineers alike; teams who do this effectively link a visible part of the design or functionality to a technical part, use a precise and stable terminology, and work their way from big picture to details.

**SleepTight:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-SleepTight.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-SleepTight.html) At nearly five minutes into the presentation, the technical discussion of the SleepTight back brace begins. It features a very clear image of the device’s internal mechanisms and the audience sees its components move to simulate actual operation. The speaker’s explanation of what the audience sees is highly reinforcing.

**Mira:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Mira.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Mira.html) The technical portion of the presentation begins at 4:45 in the video with an overview of the technology; at 5:00 in the video, the speaker ingeniously engages the audience in an experiment that illuminates the need for a core component of the technical design. The fluent remarks are well paced and coordinated with the Solidworks images.

**Phil:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-phil.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-phil.html) Animated Solidworks images are used well, first in a segment that summarizes details of design and operation in a way carefully tied to user needs, and second in a segment that focuses on engineering, that incorporates images of a hand, sink, and water to show the use context.

**Dash:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-dash.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-dash.html) The slides and remarks specify the three areas of innovation; focus audience’s attention on the function; and then explain the engineering behind each.

**BitDex:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-BitDex.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-BitDex.html)

**Poseiden:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Poseiden.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Poseiden.html)

**Well-choreographed product interaction.** Show what you learned during your market research, user interviews, and ergonomics testing. Interact with the product using some of the behaviors that potential customers or users mentioned. Show off features that make the product particularly attractive, powerful, and even fun to use. Show through demonstration how you met the product’s specifications. Let the product command the audience’s attention.

**Orion:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html) The relationship between the automated spotlight and lighting designer needs was punctuated by a taped interview with a real potential end-user. That end-user’s words and a number of examples, live and on tape, allowed audience members to see for themselves the ability of Orion to meet marketplace needs.

**Glow:** [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Glow.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Glow.html) The relationship among the speaker’s narration, the demonstration by the student yogi, and the slides is smoothly coordinated and timed so that the audience can fully observe/experience the product use cycle.
HelmetHub:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-helmetHub.html The interaction with the product by two kinds of users – the bike renter and the vendor employee – is described by the speaker as a team mate demonstrates interaction, at the same time slides communicating both design and engineering are shown.

Point-Guard:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2008-Point-Guard.html Presenter introduces basketball player to demo product, and intermittently narrates the demonstration, with helpful pauses, while player shoots, waits for basketball to return, and shoots again.

Grocery Mate:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-groceryMate.html Presenters and demo-er, a person in a wheelchair, both speak. Presenter coordinates remarks with both product demonstration and description of the technology)

Clydesdale:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2012-Clydesdale.html

**Full use of the set.** The physical location for your product is an important element in telling the story. If the world of the product feels real, the scenario you present will be credible. Become familiar and comfortable with the set’s design. Brainstorm some storytelling opportunities the set itself presents: How might the set help you describe or role-play the customer, show the use cycle of your product, or even showcase your product’s technical advantage over other products? Incorporate your use of the set at various points in the presentation.

Petra:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Petra.html The audience did not ever have to rappelled to understand Petra, not after its initial product demonstration. Petra’s presentation is notable for using every dimension of a stage – horizontal and vertical. Yet the demonstrations do not really overshadow the product and the technology it incorporates.

Cobalt:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html The bike rack in an urban setting is revisited several times in the presentation, as features of the bike lock are described.

Noribo:  http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-noribo.html The set is a sushi bar, and the speakers take turns interacting with the product while one of them narrates; the sushi bar is “open for business” throughout the presentation.


**Credible business case.** A lot of work goes into preparing a believable case for your business. Refer to the principles presented in lecture on Nov. 30 and in tutorials on Nov. 14, Dec. 1 and Dec. 5. Recall Prof. Wallace's business case lecture before drafting a business case for your product that is fact-based:  http://web.mit.edu/2.009/www/lectures/30_business.pdf Only a distillation of your research goes into the presentation of your business case, and not all of the calculations or minutiae. There is no one-size-fits-all business case, so present a model that is well researched and consistent with your product.
Orion: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html) The path to market that the Orion team lays out in their presentation links clearly and logically to the user context. The team, understanding the “reluctance of the lighting industry to adopt untested technologies,” planned to loan Orion to a small number of Boston-area theatres in exchange for valuable data to help them refine the product. In year two, production would grow to 1,000 units and to 5,000 units in year four. Revenue projections seem believable, and scaled to the roll-out plan the team has devised with an obvious understanding of the lighting community.

San-X: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-San-X.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-San-X.html) The business case begins with the product’s cost and safety benefits, enumerates potential customers, summarizes pricing and a business plan, and believably indicates a clear plan for expansion into other user bases.

Cobalt: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html) The speaker and slides illustrate clearly how the innovative bike lock will fit into the “specialty” portion of the existing market, and they use the comparison to competitors to reinforce key design + manufacturing details.


Clydesdale: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2012-Clydesdale.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2012-Clydesdale.html)

**Relevant and gentle humorous touches.** Use humor if possible, but use it sparingly and in service of your product. Whenever you cross cultures or speak to a diverse group that may not share your particular view of the world, humor can be risky. Still, humor makes ideas memorable. Because it’s easy to think of funny moments that come from ad-libbing, improvising, and generally winging it, the temptation is to avoid planning and rehearsing humor. Resist that temptation. Practice, and let your teammates comment. Cut out lines that make anyone groan, and avoid tinges of sarcasm, teasing, or a laugh at someone’s expense.

Orion: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Orion.html) The presentation opens with Justin standing in the back of the audience. Then, to the very recognizable theme of Pink Panther, he travels the aisles. He even hands flowers to a woman seated in one of the aisles. All the time the automatic spotlight tracks him before the focus returns to the stage. Then at about 6:40 into the presentation, Justin returns eating popcorn from the audience and Orion again tracks him. The effect is warm, gentle humor under the more serious message that the device is able to deliver a pool of light that can accurately surround a performer without human intervention.

Cobalt: [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html) There is a bike thief around 2:48 into the presentation. Overall, the presentation employs good visual and physical humor, well acted.
HappyEgg: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-happyEgg.html Here, the demo section is engaging because Grace, the speaker, had a light, almost ironic touch when describing the product and subtly acknowledging that there was something almost whimsical about it.

Ixa-Walker: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2009-ixa-walker.html Describing their product’s intended users, the team evokes “fashion-conscious elderly” who want to be cool. The speaker says this with complete sincerity, and the audience enjoys the surprise in these remarks.

San-X: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-San-X.html (at 5:10 in video)

Definitive ending. Endings – such as the final paragraph in novel, image in a movie, message in a presentation – are challenging to compose. Yet endings are critical because they leave an audience with a way to think about what they’ve just seen. In crafting an ending for your presentation, decide on the key message you’d like to leave the audience with. The message should be specific to your product, and it should logically emerge from the presentation story itself. The message may be implied or made explicit, but you must be conscious of what that message is.

TouchLess: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-touchLess.html Touchless ends its presentation just as it started it – with a petri dish full of bacteria collected from bathroom stall doors. It makes the point very clearly that with Touchless installed, people will never again touch bacteria as they wave in and wave out of restroom stalls.

Poseiden: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2013-Poseiden.html In her summary of the business case, the final presenter takes an opportunity to educate the audience more about the user, triathletes who are “not professional athletes, but are serious athletes.” She ties the product to the theme, “Be well!” and ends on an original tagline, “Chase the laser.”

HelmetHub: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-helmetHub.html After a clear presentation of a compelling and unique business case, the speaker returns to key message about HelmetHub that resonates with the presentation’s beginning.

Elika: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2008-elika.html A photomontage economically conveys the process of designing the product, and the happiness of a user interacting with the product.

Note: In the 2.009 final presentations, a “Questions?” slide is unnecessary because the event moderator will call for questions.

😊 And about those thank you slides: You can design them interestingly -- more than a list.

Vantage: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2015-Vantage.html. Because the product is aimed at youngsters and was actually tried out at a local elementary school, TY slides feature photos of the youngsters and of the Vantage team.

Cobalt: http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2011-cobalt.html TY slide uses the icon of a bicycle as animation to reveal each line of acknowledgments – fits well with product, so animation is logical.
Spence:  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-spence.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-spence.html) TY slide overlays acknowledgements on a team photo, and conveys it takes a village to design a flour dispenser.

Noribo:  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-noribo.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-noribo.html) Slide carries graphic touches from the presentation through to the acknowledgements.

HappyEgg:  [http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-happyEgg.html](http://designed.mit.edu/gallery/view-2010-happyEgg.html) Photograph of prototype is filled with eggs, perhaps representing the many helpers who helped incubate the product.