



LEA PICA'S

DISASTER-PROOF

Presentation Toolkit

The Tech, The Checks, and the Mindsets You Need
to Deliver a Flawless Talk






Don't be a victim of Presentation Murphy's Law.

If you're familiar with Murphy's Law, you'll know it means that "anything that can go wrong will go wrong."

There's no place this law rings more true than in the arena of live presentation. As a professional data storyteller with over 200 corporate and industry speaking engagements under my belt, I can attest that this law used to torture me like the plague.



Last minute setup changes, dead clickers, videos that don't play, cables turning your slides yellow, or parents knocking you off of webinars to ask you if you like broccoli. These are all just from my own bank of experiences.

But those were nothing compared to the day I learned the most painful and valuable lesson around presentation preparation ever.

I was delivering a two-day data presentation workshop to analysts at a Fortune 500 financial services firm. I had just upgraded all of my equipment including a state-of-the-art MacBook. I was psyched to use my blazing fast new machine to beautifully present my slides.

Except that when I got on location, I noticed that I had purchased the wrong video adapters for my new laptop. I had confused Apple Thunderbolt with USB-C, an understandable yet critical error. As a result, we had to scramble to figure out how to project my slides.

That one fateful mistake kicked off a series of unfortunate technical events...

Logistical mishaps that day included (but were not limited to):


- My fonts looking totally jacked on my client's computer
- The client's projector dying halfway through the day
- The client's computer missing an HDMI hookup, so I had to run to Best Buy to buy multiple adapters and daisy-chain them together--after my Uber driver got lost on the way back.



cont'd

By the end of the day, I was considering researching whether the conference room was built on an Indian burial ground and rituals to exorcise what I had suspected to be a Presentation Poltergeist. These are classic newbie mistakes, right? They happen to the best of us, yes?

Except, I wasn't I newbie at all.



I had already logged 4 years as a professional speaker. Up until that day, I had miraculously scraped by and had some serious close calls. I'd show up with very little time to set up with a disorganized bag full of random dongles and adapters commingled with snack bags and crumpled tissues. I'd rely on the organizer to have the right adapters and plugs and hope for the best.

I was so tempted to play the victim and blame ol' Murphy for my workshop woes. But then I did some soul-searching and realized that **I was responsible for 75% of what went wrong that day.** Murphy's law can feel inescapable, but the truth is that it is mostly avoidable with the right planning.

I knew it was time to clean up my act.

Just days later, I listened to [Pat Flynn's Smart Passive Income podcast interview of Andrew Warner of Mixergy](#). Andrew recounted how incredibly prepared Pat was at an event they both spoke at, and I realized that I wasn't showing up to my job the way I should have been.

The truth is, showing up unprepared to your events will reflect on your professionalism as a speaker and your client's satisfaction. Mishaps make us nervous and the audience will pick up on that. You'll make your life and the lives of your organizers a lot less stressful by taking charge of your technical setup.

This toolkit is the blueprint for doing just that.

What's Inside My Master Toolkit



I am a traveling RadioShack, and I no longer rely on the event venue to have the right equipment.

The key to my toolkit is that I have two, sometimes three of every item I may need. This is because I've had one adapter not work on certain computers and was grateful to have a backup.



Here is a description of each item and links to purchase. A more convenient shopping list can be found on page 7 of this guide.

KIT ORGANIZER

The first upgrade I made was purchasing a dedicated organizer for my connectors. I'm loving the [Amatory 2-Tiered Electronics Organizer](#). It has two compartments for separating thinner wires from larger components like chargers.

The mesh and zippered pockets keep each item neat and tidy, KonMari style. If you want to take presenting seriously, I highly suggest investing in this item.

For day-to-day commuting, I keep an extra laptop charger, USB wall adapter, and HDMI / VGA dongle in this [stylish felt carrier by Procase](#).

CLICKERS (OR REMOTES)

No one tells you this when you embark upon your speaking career, but **clickers are scientifically proven to be possessed by demons***. The clickers provided by events are often outdated, finicky, and not fully charged.

This creates unpredictability, which is the kiss of death to your confidence. **That's why I HIGHLY recommend asking to use your own clicker instead of the one at the venue.**

*not actually scientifically proven, but should be.



What's Inside My Master Toolkit – cont'd



After both of my mid-range clickers died the same day, I invested in the Bentley of clickers: the [Logitech Spotlight Bluetooth Remote](#). This beautiful piece is ultra-reliable and Bluetooth enabled so there's no need to fumble with a USB receiver (which you may eventually end up losing). Its companion software allows you to set countdown timers to keep you on track as well.

I frequently get questions and compliments on this clicker, which I believe demonstrates that I'm willing to invest in the best for my audience.

You *can* opt to use your smartphone using the [PowerPoint](#) or [Keynote](#) apps. The upside to this is that you can store and project the slides from your phone and have Presenter View displayed to keep you on track.

The downsides are that the apps require setup with the event's host computer and that our phones get inundated with interruptions. One wrong tap and you could be taking a call from your parents in front of hundreds of people.

I much prefer having a dedicated device for advancing my slides that won't accidentally open a private love note from my partner. And I now keep a backup clicker to my Spotlight just in case.

Note If you're speaking at a larger conference, **you may not be able to use your own equipment**. In this case, I suggest thoroughly testing their clicker with your deck and asking if they have a backup contingency plan.

ADAPTERS & DONGLES

One of the biggest mistakes I continually made was relying on my event organizers to provide the right audio and video adapters. You CANNOT depend on them for having the right hookup for you. **I suggest keeping an array of adapters in your bag with at least two of every required connection.**



A Look Inside My Master Toolkit – cont'd



The first thing I suggest is to take stock of the ports on your computer. Check whether you have:

- HDMI (video and audio)
- VGA (video only)
- 3.5mm headphone jack (audio only)
- Ethernet (more reliable than WIFI)
- USB 3.0
- USB - C
- Firewire

It is CRITICAL to be aware of your connections and purchase the right adapters. If you don't already have HDMI and VGA connections built-in, **I recommend having at least two adapters with both HDMI and VGA that hook into your ports.**

Note that slowly but surely, USB-C will become the new industry-standard connector--hence why Apple replaced everything else--so keep this in mind as you invest in new equipment.

CHARGERS

I recommend bringing at least 2 laptop chargers with you if you're presenting from your machine. Every time I was tempted to leave one behind, the other one didn't work. MacBook chargers in particular are super unreliable so it's worth the peace of mind.

BACKPACK / CARRIER

After Workshop-Gate, I chucked my dilapidated mess of a messenger bag and invested in a sturdy, spacious, and super-comfortable travel backpack as my technical transport. I typically don't invest in expensive travel gear because my schedule inflicts a lot of wear and tear and I don't fret over replacing it.

I love this reasonably priced [Matein travel laptop backpack](#) which sports a padded laptop compartment and tons of zippered and mesh pockets. My favorite feature is its luggage handle strap for powering through the airport at a rapid clip!



Your Presentation Toolkit Shopping Guide



All items on this list may be found on Amazon; prices are quoted at time of writing (July 2019).

GEAR CARRIERS / ORGANIZERS

- ☐ [Matein travel laptop backpack](#) - \$35.99
- ☐ [Amatory 2-Tiered Electronics Organizer](#) - \$19.99
- ☐ [Procase small charger and adapter felt storage bag](#) - \$11.99

PRESENTATION CLICKERS / REMOTES

- ☐ [Logitech Spotlight Bluetooth Remote](#) - \$99.70
- ☐ [Logitech Professional Presenter R800](#) - \$49.98
- ☐ [Logitech Wireless Presenter R400](#) - \$30.94

ADAPTERS / DONGLES

- ☐ [USB-C Multiport Hub](#) (HDMI, VGA, USB, Ethernet, 35mm Audio, SD Card) - \$39.90
- ☐ [USB-C to HDMI + VGA](#) - \$13.29
- ☐ [USB-C to USB-C cable](#) - \$11.99
- ☐ [USB-C to USB 3.0](#) single adapters - \$8.99
- ☐ [USB-C to USB 3.0 multiport](#) - \$19.99
- ☐ [USB-C to Ethernet](#) - \$22.99
- ☐ [Ethernet to USB 3.0](#) - \$13.59
- ☐ [USB 3.0 to HDMI + VGA](#) - \$19.99
- ☐ [Thunderbolt to HDMI + VGA](#) - \$13.99

Always keep these in your organizer:

- ☐ 2+ laptop chargers
- ☐ AA Batteries and AAA Batteries
- ☐ The PowerPoint or Keynote smartphone apps



Event Organizer Prep Checklist



The best way to to make your event organizers' jobs is to come prepared.

Organizers are in a pressure cooker of stress by the time the event rolls around, and you don't want to add to their plates by not having what you need to present your talk.

Here's what to do before presentation day to create a flawless experience:

- ☐ Make a copy of my [Speaking Event Questionnaire](#) in Google Forms, customize it for your needs, and send it to every event organizer you work with at least two weeks in advance.
- ☐ Ask the organizer if you can present from your computer, whether you can use your own clicker, and whether you'll have a confidence monitor with Presenter View to see your current future slides.
- ☐ Make a copy of my [Speaker Bio Information](#) in Google Docs, customize it for your needs, and send it with your event organizer. The document should contain:
 - ☐ An introduction the MC (Master of Ceremonies) can use to welcome you on stage
 - ☐ How to pronounce your name
 - ☐ Descriptions of all of your signature talks
 - ☐ Bio blurbs of 50, 100, and 150 characters with fun facts for the audience
 - ☐ Websites and social media links
- ☐ Ask who is introducing you and connect with them before the event.
- ☐ Confirm your screen aspect ratio-- 4:3 standard or 16:9 widescreen--and design your deck accordingly.
- ☐ Embed any video files directly into PowerPoint (do NOT rely on an internet connection to YouTube).
- ☐ [Set your video to play automatically](#) when you advance the slide so you don't have to stop and click to play.
- ☐ Run through your slide in Presentation Mode at least twice to catch issues with spelling, font display, animation, and video play.
- ☐ If you're using custom fonts, make sure that you can either present from your computer OR package your fonts with the slide deck.
- ☐ Save your slide deck to your computer and back it up to a flash drive AND Google Drive.
- ☐ Send the organizer a link to the Google Drive folder with your slide deck and/or custom fonts.



Pre-Flight Audio / Visual Technical Checklist



On presentation day, make sure to:

- ☐ Double-check that your laptop and clickers are fully charged
- ☐ Double-check and bring your Presenter Toolkit
- ☐ Arrive at least 30 minutes early to set up and test
- ☐ Connect with your MC or whomever is introducing you (make sure they can pronounce your name!)
- ☐ Take note of where the confidence monitor and the timekeepers are
- ☐ Restart your computer to clear the memory
- ☐ Disable your screensaver
- ☐ Shut down all browsers, email, and instant messaging applications
- ☐ Shut down any programs running in your taskbar that could trigger a popup window
- ☐ If you use Google Hangouts (or GChat), click [here](#), go to Settings, and disable calls for 8 hours
- ☐ If you're using your smartphone as a clicker, put it on Airplane Mode and enable Bluetooth
- ☐ Mute your computer if you're not playing audio / video
- ☐ IF you need internet, see if a hardline Ethernet connection is available and test. But its best to avoid relying on web-based content.
- ☐ Turn on Presenter View to see where you are, keep track of time, and see what's coming
- ☐ Have a bottle of water within reach in case of a dry throat

For Mac users:

- ☐ Go to your Notifications window (upper right menu) and enable Do Not Disturb
- ☐ Disable Night Shift (or your slides will turn orange at sunset)
- ☐ Install and activate the Antisleep app to prevent screensavers and hibernation
- ☐ Bring all dongles needed for HDMI / VGA and audio connection



Bring A Mindset Built for Success



The most powerful tool you can bring to your presentation is a mindset for success. This is a game of mind over matter, where the “matter” of technical issues can be overcome by the “mind” of preparation.

Throughout my career, I've collected a number of helpful affirmations that I repeat to myself before and during my sessions to stay in the zone.



If you're struggling with confidence beforehand, you can try affirming:

- ❖ “I'm being asked to speak because I know more about this topic than anyone else here.”
- ❖ “I'm speaking because I am the only one with my unique voice and experiences.”
- ❖ “I'm speaking because I am committed to bringing value to my audience.”

If you're getting nervous leading up to the talk, try the following affirmations and techniques:

- ❖ “I am here to serve, and the audience wants to see me win.”
- ❖ “I have something valuable the audience needs.”
- ❖ Meditation can be one of your most powerful allies in keeping your cool in the face of adversity. You'll be amazed at how different you'll feel after taking a few minutes before your talk to get grounded. There are hundreds of meditation apps that help you get calm in just a few minutes. My favorite apps are Calm, Headspace, and Insight Timer.
- ❖ Just before going onstage, I make a ritual of visually connecting with different audience members and mentally asking them what they need and want. This helps me tune in to the mission of service I bring to speaking and remember that they don't want to see me fail.

And if you're REALLY struggling through dealing with crotchety A/V techs, slide decks gone awry, or plain old nerves, here are my “break the glass” affirmations:

- ❖ “I'm going to get out of this alive.”
- ❖ “No matter what, I am going to serve this audience with my vital information.”
- ❖ “I did everything I could do in my power, and now I let it go. It just IS.”



Final Thoughts...



The truth is, it's impossible to completely eliminate Technical Murphy's Law during presentations. Sometimes stuff just goes go wrong.

But I believe the best disaster insurance you can take out on your talk is taking every possible precaution to minimize technical glitches.



Do things still go awry at my events? Oh, yes. There are so many variables outside of our control that the most powerful tool in my belt is a mindset of detachment. If the screen goes dead, if the sound goes out, if the lights go out, etc., at least I know that I did everything I could to succeed. That one way or another, I'll deliver my information to my audience.

Even if that means performing an interpretive dance.

Today, my clients and organizers rave about how I'm the most prepared speaker they've ever worked with. I humbly accept their appreciation with a chuckle, remembering how painful this lesson was to learn and how grateful I am to help you avoid it.

I hope that this guide will help you skip learning the same lesson I learned the hard way, and that you can look forward to a fulfilling and Murphy-proof speaking career.

And always remember: present responsibly, my friend.

Namaste,
Lea

**"Prepare for everything you possibly can, and then let the rest go."
LEA PICA**



THANK YOU!



I'm grateful that you've included me in your journey towards a rewarding speaking career as marketer, analyst, or coach. Together, I believe we can achieve your dreams of showing the world your unique gifts through the art and neuroscience of presentation.

▶ **Be sure to stay in touch with me @ LeaPica.com.**



Lea Pica teaches data storytelling to thousands of digital analysts, data scientists, online marketers, and professional speakers. She hosts the popular Present Beyond Measure® Show Podcast, and blogs at LeaPica.com.

She headlines conferences like Digital Summit, Digital Analytics Hub, Microsoft OneAnalyst, SearchLove, ConversionXL Live, Domopalooza, Web Analytics Wednesday, and eMetrics,. Lea is frequently rated in the "best of" category of her events, cited for delivering engaging content and massive value in short spaces.

