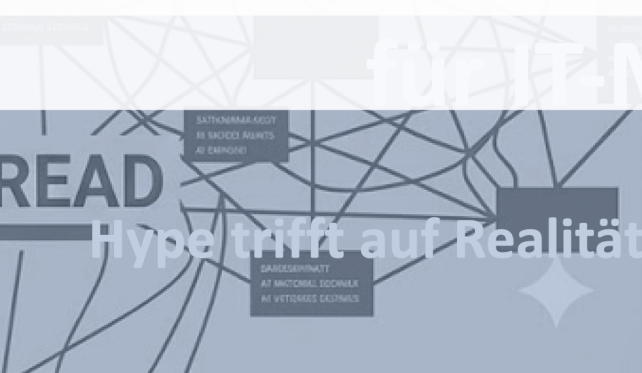


# How to Build Presentations That Stand Up in Management Meetings



Wolfgang Keller

# Situation Complication Solution

How to Build Presentations That Stand Up in  
Management Meetings

Wolfgang Keller

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# Before We Begin

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## About the Author

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## **Foreword**

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## **Why I Could Finally Write the Book**

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### **Is the Book Worth Buying?**

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# 1: Introduction and Overview

## 1.1: Why This Book

You know how it goes: you sit in a meeting, someone shows 40 slides, and after slide 12 no one remembers what the topic actually was. The headlines read “Market Overview” and “Next Steps”, the diagrams have no sources, and the recommendation – if you get that far – is on slide 38.

At the same time, you have seen decks from large consulting firms like McKinsey, BCG, or Bain where, after five slides, it is clear what the problem is, why it is urgent, and what needs to be done. That is no accident: the big strategy consultancies systematically train their people in techniques that are barely known outside their walls – the Pyramid Principle, action titles, storyline architecture, MECE structuring.

This book makes that knowledge accessible, as a practical guide for anyone who builds slide decks that actually drive decisions – in board meetings, steering committees, architecture review boards. Written from 25 years of experience in enterprise IT at large corporations, from the perspective of someone who has not produced these decks as a junior consultant, but evaluated, reviewed, and built them as a sponsor.

## 1.2: Example of a Slide with Room for Improvement

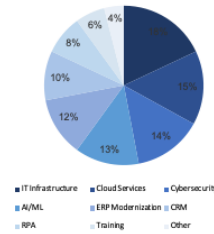
You have certainly seen slides like the following one. After working through this book, you will be able to articulate what is wrong with them – and, ideally, you will stop building such slides yourself, because you will know what is problematic about them and how to do it better.

## Digitalization Strategy 2025 – Status and Outlook

### Current Situation and Objectives

The digital transformation of our company is proceeding according to plan, and last year we achieved numerous milestones that have brought us a major step closer to the complete digitization of all business processes. 87% of all departments now use at least one digital tool in their day-to-day operations. Employee satisfaction with the new systems stands at 4.2 out of 5 points. The ROI of investments to date is 340% over a three-year period. 94% of managers rate the strategy as forward-looking.

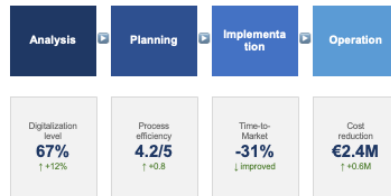
2025 Budget Allocation



### Next Steps

- In the next quarter, we will complete the implementation of the new CRM platform and simultaneously begin the rollout of the ERP module, with training initiatives running in parallel.
- The cloud migration of core applications is scheduled to be completed by Q3 2025, which requires close coordination with the IT security team.
- Establishment of an internal AI competence center, initially with three employees, with plans to expand to ten FTEs by the end of 2026.
- Evaluation of RPA solutions for the Finance and HR departments with the goal of reducing repetitive processes by at least 40%.

### Process Model



Digitalization Strategy 2025 | Corporate Development Department | As of March 2025 | Confidential – for internal use only | V 3.2 Draft

Figure 1. Example of a slide with significant room for improvement

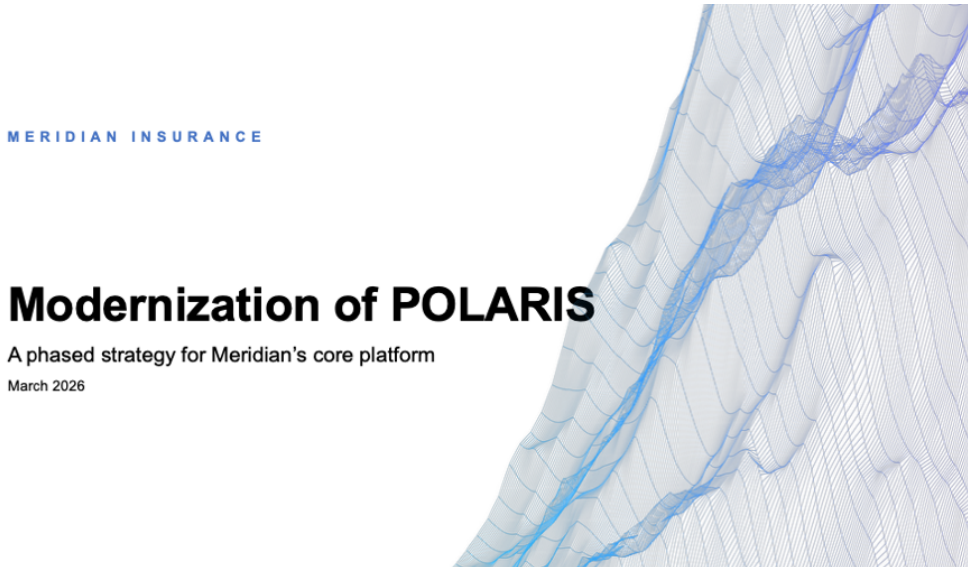
The example is extreme. Let us start with the punch line (the headline): it should state, in a single sentence, what the slide is actually about. Looking at the slide, it quickly becomes clear that far too many topics are being covered. On top of that, the pie chart is unreadable. The layout is restless and topics are wildly mixed together. You would need to break this slide into at least four slides, each with a meaningful punch line – and you would still need an overarching story that holds together. Of course, you would never get into this extreme situation yourself. But you will learn here the toolkit to safely navigate the more subtle pitfalls and to lift your slides to a level that stands out positively.

## 1.3: The Meridian Deck: Our Reference Example

So you immediately have a picture of where this journey is going, let me show you the deck that will accompany us throughout the whole book: a strategy recommendation for the board of the fictional Meridian Insurance, proposing the modernization of their core system POLARIS. The deck has 24 slides (plus

seven backup slides in the appendix) and consistently applies the techniques you will learn in the chapters that follow. Five key slides below; the full deck with all slides and annotations is in Appendix A.

**The cover slide** sets the frame: who, what, for whom.



**Figure 2. Slide 1: Cover slide – title, sponsor, confidentiality note**

**The Management Summary** (slide 2) phrases the recommendation as a complete sentence – not a topic, but a conclusion. Note the headline: this is not a “Summary” or “Executive Summary”, but a concrete action recommendation with costs, timeline, and rationale.

### Meridian should now approve the POLARIS program—Phase 1 ensures DORA compliance, knowledge retention, and the customer portal timeline

<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Three-phase modernization of POLARIS over 36 months (€32 million). Strangler Fig approach. The legacy platform remains in operation while new functionality is developed in parallel. Phase 2 delivers the customer portal by month 18. Phase 3 decommissions the legacy system.</p> <p><b>Decision today:</b> Phase 1 (months 1–12, €4.2 million) — new API layer, DORA compliance, knowledge preservation. Without a Phase 1 launch in Q3 2025, the regulatory timeline cannot be met and the window of opportunity will close irrevocably.</p>	<p><b>INVESTMENT</b></p> <p><b>€32 million total</b> over 36 months Phase 1: €4.2 million   Phase 2: €14.8 million   Phase 3: €13.0 million</p> <p><b>NEXT STEP</b></p> <p>Approve Phase 1 budget: €4.2 million for months 1–12 Kick-off: Q3 2025</p>	
<p><b>Regulatory Compliance</b></p> <p>Phase 1 ensures DORA compliance through January 2027. 340 interfaces must be auditable. Phase 1 delivers API documentation, a monitoring framework, and an audit log within the statutory timeframe.</p>	<p><b>Knowledge retention</b></p> <p>Phase 1 closes the 18-month knowledge window 3 of the 5 senior developers will leave the company by mid-2027. Phase 1 transfers their system knowledge into documented APIs and automated tests.</p>	<p><b>Early Business Value</b></p> <p>Phase 1 enables the customer portal by month 18. The customer portal (Phase 2, months 10–18) requires the new API layer from Phase 1. Without Phase 1, there is no early business value.</p>

Figure 3. Slide 2: Management Summary – the recommendation comes first

The three converging risks (slide 8) shows the complication – the reason action is necessary. Three columns, mutually exclusive and complete. At the bottom, a red consequence line that tells the board unambiguously what inaction means.

### Unless action is taken by mid-2027, Meridian risks compliance violations, operational disruption, and regulatory sanctions

<p><b>Vendor End-of-Life</b></p> <p><b>BMI AppSphere Traditional: End of extended support in 2027.</b> No security patches after the cutoff date. Compliance certification no longer applies. Migration path requires application changes.</p>	<p><b>Regulatory pressure</b></p> <p><b>DORA compliance deadline: Jan. 2025.</b> 340 undocumented interfaces. 47 downstream systems without oversight. Last architecture documentation: 2014.</p>	<p><b>Loss of expertise</b></p> <p><b>Average age of the POLARIS team: 57 years.</b> 2 out of 3 claims calculation experts will retire within 18 months. No formal knowledge transfer program. Recruiting for legacy skills is becoming increasingly difficult.</p>
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**Implications for the Executive Board: Every month of delay increases the likelihood of an unplanned system failure starting in 2027**

Figure 4. Slide 8: Complication – vendor end-of-life, regulatory pressure, knowledge loss

The Strangler Fig phase plan (slide 14) presents the three-phase approach

as a timeline with the investment frame, and assigns to each phase, on the right, the risk it addresses.

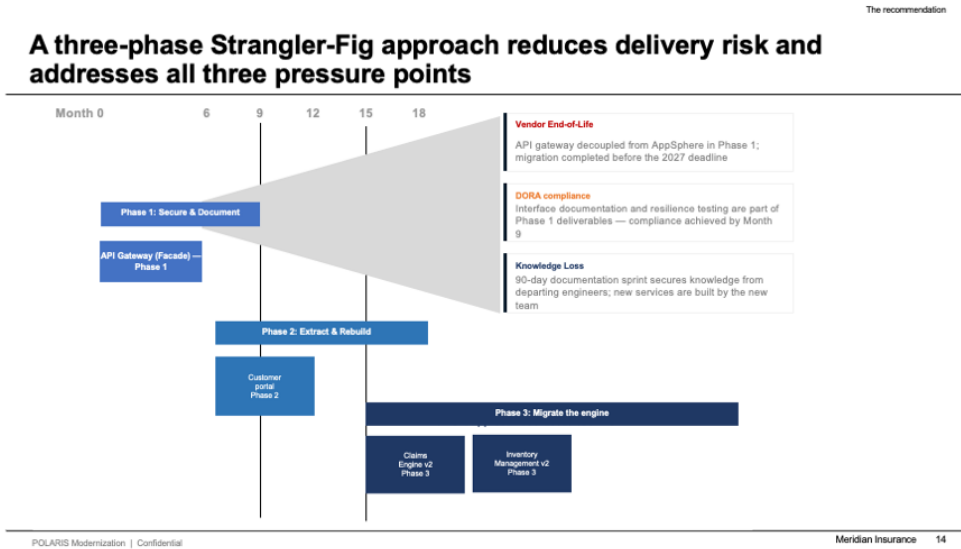


Figure 5. Slide 14: Solution – phase plan and risk mapping

The Strangler Fig architecture (slide 15) shows, in three panels, how the new system grows step by step around POLARIS – from the gateway facade through the portal extraction to full migration.

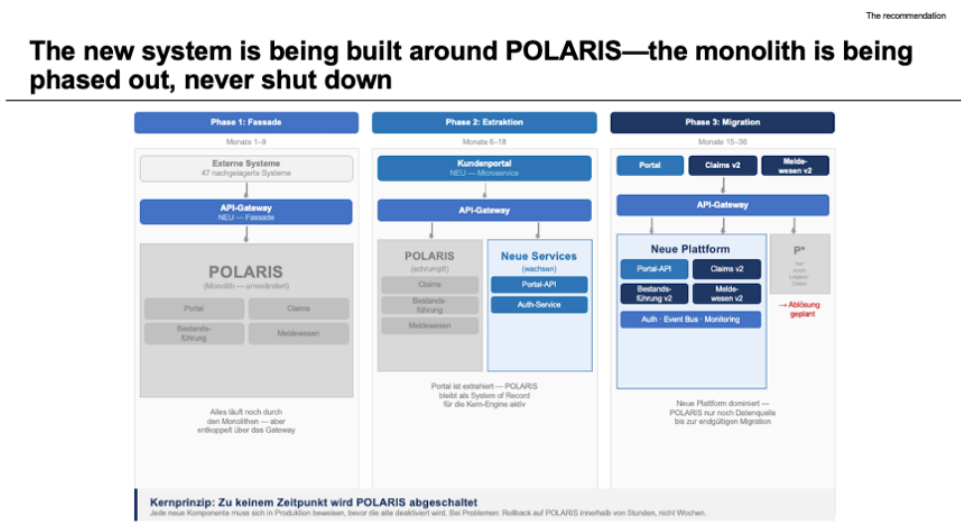
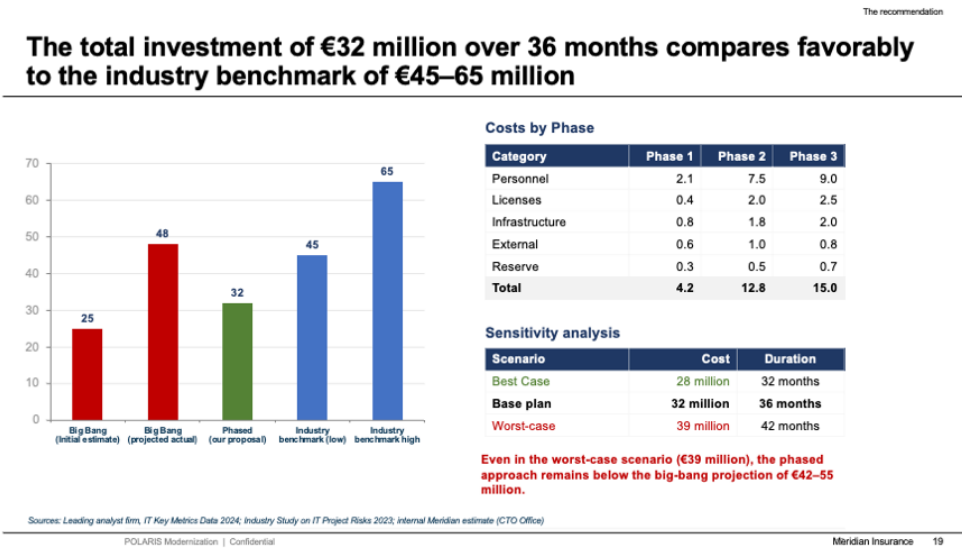


Figure 6. Slide 15: Solution – architecture progression of the Strangler Fig approach

**The cost comparison** (slide 19) proves the economic viability: €32 million for the phased approach vs. a projected €48 million for Big Bang vs. an industry benchmark of €45–65 million. On the right, a sensitivity analysis: even in the worst case, the phased approach stays below the Big Bang projection.



**Figure 7. Slide 19: Cost comparison with industry benchmark and sensitivity analysis**

Looking at these five slides, you may notice how different they feel from the “Digitalization Strategy 2025” slide further up. Each slide has a statement as its headline, not a topic, and each chart proves that statement instead of merely illustrating it. If you read only the five headlines back to back, a coherent story already emerges. That is no accident – it is the result of a technique we will take apart, step by step, in the following chapters.

## 1.4: The Problem This Book Solves

Walk into a bookstore, physical or digital, and look for books on presentations. You will find dozens. Most of them teach you how to be a better *speaker*: how to overcome stage fright, how to keep eye contact, how to modulate your voice, how to command a stage. These are useful skills, no question. But they solve a problem that most readers of this book do not actually have.

Your problem is not that you stand nervously in front of an audience. Your problem is that you sit in front of an empty PowerPoint on Thursday evening,

and by Monday you need a deck with which a steering committee will make an architecture decision. Or that you have to build a status report for the board, explaining on 15 slides why the program is on schedule but 20% over budget – and why that was still the right call. Or that you have to formulate a strategy recommendation that compares three options and ends in a clear recommendation that holds up even when you are not in the room to explain it.

This book teaches you how to *build a document that argues*. That is something fundamentally different from giving a speech that inspires.

## Zen Decks and Consulting Decks: Two Worlds

There are essentially two traditions for building slide decks, and they could hardly be more different.

The first tradition comes from the world of conference talks and keynotes. Garr Reynolds made it popular with his influential book “Presentation Zen” [Reynolds 2019]: large images, little text, emotional impact. A slide shows a single photo of a mountain peak, and the speaker tells the story of the climb. This works wonderfully when you are on stage, you have 45 minutes, and your goal is for the audience to leave inspired.

The other tradition comes from the large strategy consultancies. A McKinsey deck looks completely different: each slide has a complete statement as its headline, with data, analyses, and structures underneath. The deck is built so that it also works without a speaker – because the board may read it on Sunday evening on a plane, without anyone sitting next to them explaining it. The goal is not inspiration, but a basis for decision-making.

Both approaches are legitimate. But most presentation books and courses cover only the first one. They preach “less text on the slide” and “images instead of bullet points” as if it were a universal law. For a conference talk, that is true. For a deck that has to convince a CIO to invest 12 million euros in a platform migration, it is a recipe for disaster. Anyone who shows the board a photo of a mountain peak and says, “Our legacy platform is the abyss, and the cloud is the summit”, will probably not harvest much inspiration.

## When You Need What

The honest answer is: it depends. And it depends on the context, not on your personal preference.

**Keynotes and conference talks:** Here the Zen deck is exactly right. You are on stage, you are the protagonist, the slides are scenery. Little text, strong images, emotional anchor points. The audience should remember you, not slide 17.

**Workshops and working sessions:** Here you need something in between. Slides that provide enough structure to steer a discussion, but are not so dense that they replace it. Often these are frameworks, models, or prepared questions. The deck is working material – neither a talk nor a decision paper.

**Status reports:** Here we enter consulting-deck territory. A status report has to be understandable for someone who was not in the meeting. It has to deliver facts, explain deviations, and point out needs for action. “A picture is worth a thousand words” holds true here only if the picture is a clearly labelled Gantt chart.

**Decision papers:** This is the core territory of this book. A decision deck has to describe a problem, analyze options, apply criteria, and state a recommendation. And all of that in a way that lets a decision-maker, seeing the topic for the first time, understand enough after 15 slides to make an informed decision. You cannot do that with big images and little text. You do it with structure, well-thought-out arguments, and linguistic precision.

**Strategy recommendations:** The royal discipline. Here you not only have to convince – you also have to show that you have thought through every relevant aspect. A strategy deck that ignores a significant counter-position will be torn apart in the steering committee, and rightly so.

The techniques you learn in this book are primarily intended for the last three categories. If you want to give keynotes, read Garr Reynolds. If you want to drive decisions, read on.

## Why These Conventions Exist

A legitimate question: why follow the conventions that McKinsey, BCG, and Bain have developed? Are they not arbitrary rules from an industry that is known for wrapping the obvious in expensive slides?

No. These rules are not arbitrary, and they did not arise for aesthetic reasons. They arose under a very specific pressure: the pressure of skeptical boards with little time and high expectations.

When a McKinsey partner advises a CEO, they typically get 30 to 60 minutes. In that time, they have to explain a complex problem, present an analysis, and state a recommendation – to someone who does not know the topic in detail but who knows very precisely which questions to ask. If the storyline does not hold, the CEO notices after three slides. If the data does not hold, they notice after one follow-up question. And if the recommendation is not well founded, there is no second chance.

Under this pressure, the big consultancies have developed and refined techniques over decades, with exactly one goal: to convince with maximum clarity in limited time. Action titles, so the story can already be read from the headlines. The Pyramid Principle, so the most important statement comes first. MECE structuring, so nothing essential is missing and nothing is duplicated. Storyline architecture, so the deck builds a logical chain of thought instead of being a loose collection of slides.

These are not style prescriptions, but tools that have been tested under fire. They work not because McKinsey invented them. McKinsey kept them because they work.

## **Who This Book Is For**

This book is for people who build decks for decision-makers, not for conference stages.

Concretely: enterprise architects who have to defend a target architecture in front of an architecture review board. IT managers who have to explain to their division head why a project needs more budget. Project managers who have to steer a steering committee through a difficult status. Solution architects who have to package a technology decision such that non-technical people can follow along.

People, in other words, who work in companies – typically in large companies, often in regulated industries – and whose slides are not shared on Twitter but end up in SharePoint libraries. People whose decks are not rewarded with applause, but with approvals, budgets, and go decisions. And also people experienced enough to know that a bad deck does not just waste time – it

delays decisions, endangers projects, and in the worst case leads to the right recommendation being rejected because it was poorly presented.

If you recognize yourself in this description, you are in the right place.

## 1.5: Promise to the Reader

This book will not teach you how to paint pretty slides. It will teach you how to convince with slides. The difference is bigger than it sounds, and it determines whether your deck leads to a decision or ends up in an endless loop of follow-up questions and rework. Concretely, after reading you will be able to do the following:

- **Build slides that argue**, not just inform. Each slide will have a conclusion, not just a headline. That is the difference between a deck that takes your audience through a chain of thought, and one that piles up information and hopes the listener will assemble the through-line on their own. The result: decisions instead of follow-up questions.
- **Develop a storyline** before you even open PowerPoint. You will understand why “Situation, Complication, Solution” is not a theory but the fastest path to a convincing deck. Many decks fail not because of bad slides, but because no one thought beforehand about which story should actually be told. Building the storyline first lets you notice within ten minutes whether the argument holds – instead of finding out after three days of slide production that the deck has no point.
- **Write action titles** that pass the “skim test”: anyone who reads only the headlines still understands the whole story. That sounds like a small thing, but it is the single most powerful technique in this book. Action titles (aka punch lines) force you to formulate a clear statement on every slide. That automatically removes the slides that actually say nothing, and your deck becomes shorter and more convincing.
- **Visualize data convincingly**: with the right chart type, credible axes, and a message you grasp in three seconds. A chart without a clear message is decoration. A chart with the wrong visualization form is more problematic still, because it suggests a statement that the data does not support. Master the basic rules of data visualization and you will build slides that get trusted instead of slides that get second-guessed.

- **Know the difference** between a deck that has to be read aloud and one that speaks for itself – and know when you need which. A board deck that is unintelligible without a speaker has a problem. A workshop deck that spells everything out has a different one. Mastering both formats means adapting the deck to the context, instead of using the same all-purpose format every time, which works nowhere properly.
- **Waste less time.** First think, then structure, then design: that produces better decks in half the time. Most people open PowerPoint first and start pushing slides around. The result is three versions, two all-nighters, and a deck that still does not convince. The methods in this book reverse the order and save not only time, but also nerves – for the people producing the slides as well as for those consuming the deck.

After you have worked through this book and applied its content, you will build presentations where your audience knows what is going on after five slides – and is ready to decide after fifteen.

## 1.6: Overview of the Book

The book is structured in five parts:

**Part A: Why Consulting Slides Work.** We are still before that part. Part A briefly lays the foundation. Chapter 2 dissects the anatomy of consulting slides and shows precisely what distinguishes them from normal slides.

**Part B: Thinking Before Designing** covers the intellectual groundwork before slides are produced in your drawing tool, like PowerPoint. Often you will do these steps in your head, without explicitly running through the phase. That depends on the size of the topic at hand. If it is a single ADR, the phase will run in your head alongside the writing of the slides. If you are tackling big topics – say, the organizational redesign of a division with hundreds of staff – you will run through this phase explicitly, producing several intermediate deliverables, before you sit down at the computer and start building slides.

The part covers techniques for working out the “stories” behind slide decks, such as the Pyramid Principle (chapter 3), hypothesis trees and issue trees (chapter 4), storyline architecture (chapter 5), action titles (chapter 6), and audience analysis the consulting way (chapter 7).

**Part C: The Craft of Consulting Slides** goes into the detail of individual slides. It covers the things that get done wrong over and over, and the rules

and practices for how to do them better. You will read here about lead-ins and the five-part architecture of slide decks (chapter 8), concept slides (chapter 9), data slides (chapter 10), formatting and visual consistency (chapter 11), and distinctiveness practices (chapter 12).

**Part D: Building the Deck** shows the path from the so-called ghost deck to the finished product (chapter 13), introduces common deck types and their patterns (chapter 14), dissects a real consulting deck in a case study (chapter 15), and covers quality assurance with five review checklists (chapter 16).

**Part E: Beyond the Slide** looks past pure deck production: how to present a consulting deck (chapter 17), when the method does not help (chapter 18), and what is changing in the age of AI (chapter 19).

The Meridian deck (Appendix A) serves as the running reference example throughout the book – a strategy recommendation for the board of an insurance company that applies every technique in the book. You have already seen the five key slides in the previous section.

# Part A – Why Consulting Slides Work

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## **2: The Anatomy of Consulting Slides**

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### **2.1: The Three Layers of Every Consulting Slide**

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### **2.2: How the Eye Reads a Consulting Slide**

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### **2.3: The Skim Test**

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### **2.4: The Slide as a Unit of Argument**

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# Part B – Thinking Before Designing

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# **3: Start with the Answer: The Pyramid Principle on One Page**

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## **3.1: Barbara Minto's Core Idea in Five Minutes**

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## **3.2: Top-Down vs. Bottom-Up: Why Consultants Start with the Answer**

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## **3.3: The Pyramid Through a Concrete Example**

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## **3.4: MECE: No Overlap and No Gaps**

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## **3.5: Inductive or Deductive?**

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### **3.6: The Question-Answer Dialogue**

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### **3.7: The Vertical and Horizontal Logic Tests**

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### **3.8: A Typical Mistake: Activities Instead of Arguments**

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## **4: From Question to Structure: Hypothesis Trees and Issue Trees**

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### **4.1: The Problem Statement Worksheet**

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### **4.2: From Question to Issue Statement**

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### **4.3: Hypothesis Trees: When You Know Enough to Conjecture**

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### **4.4: Issue Trees: When You Still Know Too Little**

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### **4.5: Prioritization: Not Everything Matters Equally**

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## **4.6: “Get to Paper Quickly”: The First Draft May Be Incomplete**

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# 5: The Storyline: From Pyramid to Narrative

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## 5.1: What Structure Alone Cannot Do

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## 5.2: SCS: The Basic Structure of Every Consulting Story

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## 5.3: The SCQA Variant: When the Question Should Be Explicit

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## 5.4: The Ghost Deck: Making the Storyline Visible

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## 5.5: Storyline vs. Agenda: The Decisive Difference

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## **5.6: How the Storyline Maps onto the Slide Structure**

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## **5.7: The Opening: Why the First Three Slides Decide**

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## **5.8: The Iterative Loop: How a Deck Really Comes Together**

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## **5.9: When the Storyline Tips Over: Warning Signs**

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## **5.10: Enough Planning. Build.**

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# 6: Action Titles: The Single Most Important Skill

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## 6.1: What an Action Title Is and What It Is Not

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## 6.2: The Grammar of the Action Title

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## 6.3: Length: One Message per Slide

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## 6.4: The Newspaper Test

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## 6.5: The Consistency Rule: What Is in the Title Must Be in the Chart

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## **6.6: Ten Slide Titles: Before and After**

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## **6.7: The “So What?” Test**

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## **6.8: Advanced: Action Titles as Transitions**

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## **6.9: Why It’s Worth Taking Action Titles Seriously**

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# 7: What You as a Consultant Should Know About Your Audience

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## 7.1: Three Questions Before the First Slide

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## 7.2: Pyramid Depth: How Much Proof Does This Audience Need?

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## 7.3: The Four Author Roles

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## 7.4: The Pre-wired Deck

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## 7.5: The Uncomfortable Deck

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## **7.6: Reading the Room**

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## **7.7: The Cover-Your-Bases Slide**

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## **7.8: The Difference Between Writing and Communicating**

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# Part C – The Craft of Consulting Slides

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# 8: Lead-Ins, Deck Structure, and the Five-Part Architecture

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## 8.1: The Lead-In: The Bridge from Title to Chart

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### When the Lead-In Is Needed, and When It Is Not

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## 8.2: The Five-Part Architecture

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### The Cover Slide: Frugality as a Virtue

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### The Executive Summary Slide: The SCS Miniature

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## **Section Dividers: Orientation Without Breaking the Narrative**

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## **Recommendation Slide: What, Who, By When**

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## **Implementation Questions: The Silent Awareness**

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## **The Appendix: The Memory of the Deck**

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## **Numbering and Navigation**

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## **8.3: The Meridian Deck as Archetype**

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## **8.4: Why This Order Works**

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## **8.5: What Has to Be Decided Before the First Chart**

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## 9: Chart Design: Concept Slides

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### 9.1: The Slide That Showed Everything and Said Nothing

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### 9.2: What a Concept Slide Should Do

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### 9.3: The Grammar of Visual Elements

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### 9.4: The Six Basic Types as a Toolkit

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### 9.5: When the Template Replaces the Message

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## **9.6: The Message First, Then the Chart**

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## **9.7: The Meridian Slide, Second Try**

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## **9.8: Where to Find 150 More Types**

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## **9.9: Craft Means Deciding**

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# 10: Chart Design: Data Slides

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## 10.1: The Slide That Did Not Lie and Still Misled

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## 10.2: The Three Mechanisms of Unintended Deception

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## 10.3: Zelazny's Method: Message First

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## 10.4: The Three Types That Cover 80 Percent of the Cases

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## 10.5: A Word About the Other Nine

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## 10.6: Anatomy of a Credible Chart

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## 10.7: The “One Message” Rule and the Role of Annotations

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## 10.8: Data Integrity as Craft

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# 11: Visual Consistency and Formatting

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## 11.1: The Template as Contract

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## 11.2: The Type Decision

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## 11.3: Color Is Function, Not Decoration

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## 11.4: White Space, the Most Underestimated Design Tool

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## 11.5: The Grid

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## **11.6: The 3-Second Rule**

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## **11.7: A Catalog of Sins**

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## **11.8: What the Meridian Deck Does and Does Not Do**

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## **11.9: The Reference Card as a Tool**

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## **11.10: Consistency Is Discipline**

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# 12: Sharpening Perspectives: The Four Distinctiveness Practices

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## 12.1: Why Good Technique Alone Is Not Enough

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## 12.2: Expand: Put on Several Pairs of Glasses

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## 12.3: Link: Turning Data Points Into Patterns

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## 12.4: Distill: The Courage to Leave Things Out

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## 12.5: Challenge: Step Uncomfortably Far Back

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## **12.6: How the Four Practices Interact**

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## **12.7: Integrating the Practices Into the Workflow**

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# Part D – Building the Deck

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# 13: From Ghost Deck to Finished Product

This content is not available in the sample book. The book can be purchased on Leanpub at <https://leanpub.com/sitcompsol>.

## 13.1: The POWER Workflow

This content is not available in the sample book. The book can be purchased on Leanpub at <https://leanpub.com/sitcompsol>.

## 13.2: P as in Profile: Understand the Sponsor and the Audience

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## 13.3: O as in Organize: Pyramid and Storyline

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## 13.4: W as in Write: The Ghost Deck

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## 13.5: Three Paths to the Ghost Deck

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## **13.6: The Ghost Deck Review: The Most Important Quality Gate**

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## **13.7: The Just-Start-Writing Rule**

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## **13.8: E and R: The Review Cycle**

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## **13.9: Time Management: The 40-30-20-10 Rule**

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## **13.10: The Personal Slide Library**

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## **13.11: The Workflow as a Scaffold, Not a Corset**

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# 14: Common Deck Types and Their Patterns

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## 14.1: The Common Scaffold That Applies to All

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## 14.2: The Strategy Recommendation: When You Want to Win the Race

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## **14.6: Reading Copy and Presentation Deck: Why You Sometimes Need Two Documents**

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## **14.7: The Three-Slide Version: First Distill, Then Expand**

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## **14.8: What the Deck Types Have in Common, and What They Don't**

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# 15: Dissecting a Real Consulting Deck: The USPS Case Study

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## 15.1: The Crisis No One Could Ignore

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## 15.2: The SCS Storyline of the Deck

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## 15.3: Progressive Disclosure: The Base Case First

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## 15.4: Action Titles: What Good Slide Titles Actually Deliver

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## 15.5: Data Slides: Waterfalls, Scenarios, and Quantified Impact

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## **15.6: MECE Structuring of Recommendations: What It Delivers and Where It Ends**

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## **15.7: What Sets This Deck Apart From an Average Strategy Deck**

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## **15.8: What You Learn From a Politically Uncomfortable Deck**

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## **15.9: The Limits of Case-Study Analysis**

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# 16: Quality Assurance: The Five Review Checklists

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## 16.1: Why the Order Matters

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## 16.2: Checklist 1: Relevance and Completeness

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## 16.3: Checklist 2: Brevity and Clarity

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## 16.4: Checklist 3: Persuasiveness and Style

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## 16.5: Checklist 4: Tone and Audience Fit

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## **16.6: Checklist 5: Final Editing**

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## **16.7: The Five Slides You Should Always Cut**

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## **16.8: What Makes a Strong Closing Slide**

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## **16.9: The “Fresh Eyes” Check**

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## **16.10: Why the Process Is More Than the Checklists**

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# Part E — Beyond the Slide

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# 17: Presenting a Consulting Deck

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## 17.1: Interruption as a Quality Marker

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## 17.2: Read the Room, Not the Slide

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## 17.3: The Parking Lot

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## 17.4: Navigating to Backup Slides

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## 17.5: When the CEO Flips Ahead

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## 17.6: Remote Presentations

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## 17.7: Sending the Deck Ahead

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## 17.8: Preparation and Stress Test

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## 17.9: What Remains

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# 18: When the Method Does Not Help

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## 18.1: When Persuasion Is the Wrong Goal

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## 18.2: When the Action Title Burns the Bridge

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## 18.3: When the Problem Does Not Yet Have a Thesis

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## 18.4: What Remains

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# 19: Consulting Slides in the Age of AI

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## 19.1: The Amplifier Paradox

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## 19.2: What AI Tools Can Do Today

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## 19.3: What AI Tools Cannot Do

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## 19.4: Integrating AI into the POWER Workflow

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## 19.5: The New Noise

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## **19.6: The Principles Become More Important, Not Less**

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## **19.7: What Remains**

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# Part F – Appendix

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## 20: The Meridian Deck – All 31 Slides

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## 20.1: Slide Overview and Export Mapping

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## **20.2: The Skim Test: Action Titles Only**

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## 20.3: The Individual Slides

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## 21: The Ghost Deck Template

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## **21.1: The Template**

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## **21.2: How to Use It: Three Passes**

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## **21.3: The Ghost Deck Review**

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## **21.4: The Filled-In Meridian Example**

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## **22: Action Title Cheat Sheet**

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### **22.1: Strategy**

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### **22.2: IT and Architecture**

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### **22.5: Regulation and Governance**

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## 22.6: People and Organization

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## 22.7: How to Use This

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## 23: Chart Type Decision Tree

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# 24: The Twelve Consulting Special Charts

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## 24.1: The Consulting Special Charts Explained

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## 24.2: Why You Should Use a Good Master

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## 25: Formatting Reference Card

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## 26: Bibliography

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