Content and Format:

Basic Presentation Skills + Requirements of Project Work 1 presentation

Dr. János Tanács

CONTENT

I. **Structure** of the Project Work 1 presentation

II. **Most common mistakes** in presentations and how to avoid them

III. **Lessons from the first years** of teaching Project Works

I. STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT WORK 1 PRESENTATION

Content and format requirements

CONTENT OF THE PROJECT WORK 1 PRESENTATION

1. Title page
2. The business problem/research question in a sentence
3. Introducing the background, frameworks, and conditions.
4. Presenting and justifying the methods that will be used to answer the business problem/research question?
5. Expected outcome of Project Work 1/2 (or the Thesis)
6. Schedule of the Project Work 2

CONTENT OF THE PROJECT WORK 1 PRESENTATION

1. **Title page**
2. **The business problem/research question in a sentence**
   - What is the **new + important + business-relevant information** we want to obtain?
3. **Introducing the background, frameworks, and conditions.**
   - What are the existing knowledge and situational analysis on which are you trying to find a solution to the problem?
4. **Presenting and justifying the methods that will be used to answer the business problem/research question?**
   - What methods and data will enable you to find an answer to the business problem/research question?
5. **Expected outcome of Project Work 1/2 (or the Thesis)**
   - Who will benefit from your Project Work, and what will be the benefit for which they will be ready to pay as a client?
6. **Schedule of the Project Work 2**
   - Risks related to the feasibility of the Project Work: what are the critical and/or still unresolved steps in the process?

THE BUSINESS PROBLEM/RESEARCH QUESTION IN A SENTENCE

What is the new + important + business-relevant information we want to obtain?

- You must summarise the business problem/research question in one sentence.
- But it must be a terminologically precise, accurate and detailed summary of the problem
- This only one sentence is good if you can get into the „live show" with it!
  - Elevator pitch/elevator speech
  - You jump in the elevator next to the boss:
    - "Boss, I've got a good idea. Can I tell you?" or "Can I briefly tell you how I'm doing on the assigned task?"
    - "Yes, until we get down to the ground floor, I'm all yours; start the stopwatch!"
  - The one sentence should convince the boss: there is a reason for him to listen you further, to let you say the rest of the presentation, to give more time for you to be listened!
  - If you don't make the grade, you won't get on the Boss's live show + you won't get the same amount of time next time!
    - This is a one-off opportunity to get the boss's attention!

THE BUSINESS PROBLEM/RESEARCH QUESTION IN A SENTENCE

- **What should your elevator speech be, and what should it NOT be?**
  - The only sentence is not a pep talk; that's NOT why get attention!
    - Your enthusiasm should show in the quantity and quality of your work, not in the speed of your breathing in the lift!
  - It's not what you care about or what you are interested in; it's how you benefit the boss, the company, and the organisation.
  - You don't need to take on something big and over the top, just something that you can back up with data and facts at the end of your Project Work!
    - If you set your expectations too high and you can't meet them, you're in trouble!
    - An informed, backed-up-with-data-and-facts answer to a small but real, important business problem, the result of which can actually be used is more valuable, while an unfulfilled promise is not!

INTRODUCING THE BACKGROUND, FRAMEWORKS, AND CONDITIONS

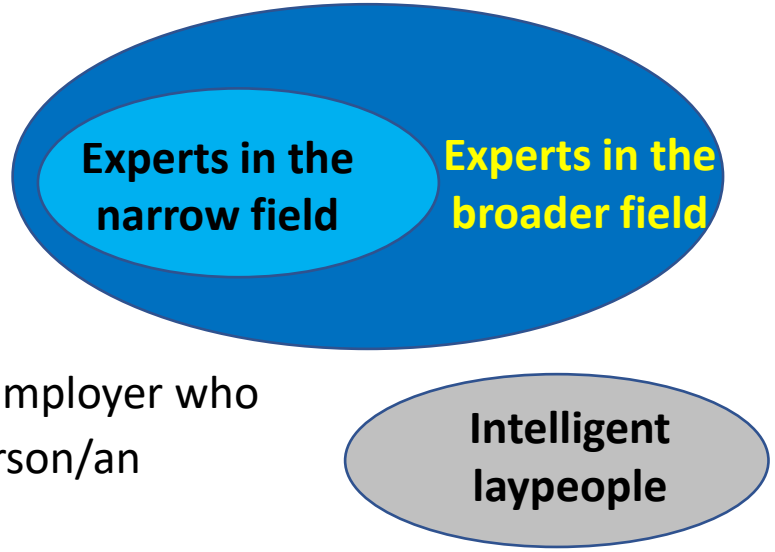
- **The purpose of the background slide:**
  - To present the relevant **scientific and business** context in which the research question/problem arises, in which it needs to be addressed.
- **What is the background?**
  - The company background, company history of the problem, problem framework, best practices, contexts (based on the literature) to be used, models, research analysis methods, and data.
  - The background you must present is not the secondary research in general or the literature itself but **the results** of the secondary research and **the results gained from** the literature analysis.
  - The background is based on sources, and each item of the sources must be given in parentheses in the format used in the bibliography.
  - You should only refer to information that can be used for the intended solution.
    - Do not give a general overview, and do not explain, use or refer to textbook items/theories!

THE BACKGROUND INFORMATION SLIDE

- **Attention!**
  - The background information is for experts!
  - Remember: for **experts in the narrow field** **and** **experts in the broad field**!
    - *These two categories are explained on the next three slides.*
  - The lack of background knowledge gives a very bad impression!
  - Without a comprehensive and clear presentation of the background, the question hangs in the air.
  - Without it:
    - you cannot understand the business relevance of the problem from the company's perspective,
    - you have absolutely no knowledge of the methods you can use to solve the problem,
    - you do not know the alternative methods from which you can choose.
    - you don't know the pro-con reasons why you chose the particular method you are proposing!

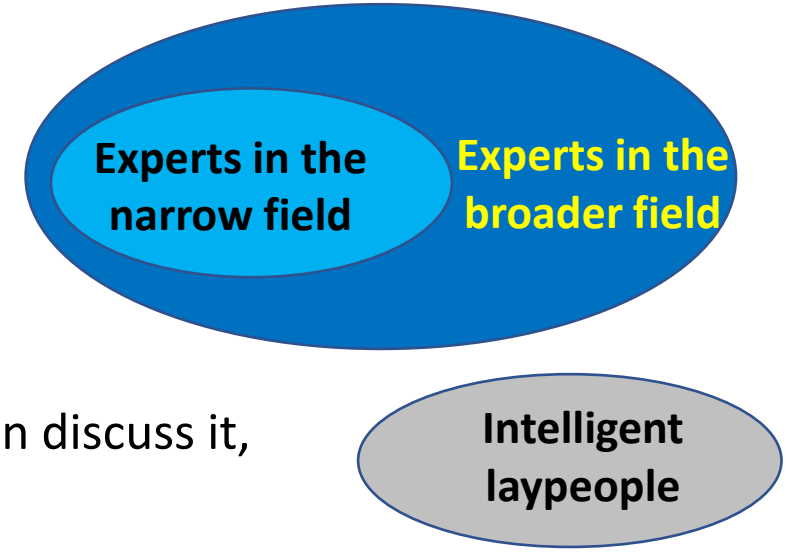
PROFESSIONAL AUDIENCES FOR ORAL PRESENTATIONS

The target audiences for **professional oral** presentations can generally be in one of the following three categories.



- The purpose of your presentation may be to convey messages to
  - an expert in a narrow field
  - an expert in a broader field
  - an intelligent layperson (e.g. a potential client/ a colleague at a prospective employer who is not at all familiar with the subject but might recommend you to her HR person/an important decision-maker who is not at all familiar with the subject, etc.)
- Sometimes only people in one of the above categories will listen to your presentation; in other cases, you will speak to people in different categories at the same time:
  - For example, you speak to an expert in a narrow field **and** to an intelligent layman at the same time.

TARGET AUDIENCE: EXPERTS IN THE NARROW FIELD



- **An expert in a narrow field:**
  - knows the relevant literature and the related concepts,
    as well as the methods, models etc. actually used.
  - understands the content of the presentation in all its details and can discuss it,
    and can assess the validity and reliability of what is said.
- For the Project Work presentations, **at least one member of the committee,** but possibly both, will be an **expert in the narrow field**.

TARGET AUDIENCE: EXPERTS IN THE BROADER FIELD

- **An expert in the broad field:**
  - focuses on the methodology meant to solve the problem, the argument you present, the reasons you give to support your claims and the structure of the presentation.
  - can apply hard no-go standards: a presentation that is problematic in technical details (from the perspective of an expert of the narrow field) may pass through its filter, but a presentation that is seriously problematic in methodological terms will not.
    - does not have a full understanding of the specific relevant literature and related concepts, but is familiar with typical approaches,
    - does not know the exact definition of all the technical terms in the field, but knows what they are typically.
    - can assess what the typical problems in the field look like, what methods are used to investigate them, what types of evidence are used to support them, when the main message is meaningful and when it is empty bullshit.
- At Project Work presentations, **one member of the committee might be an expert in the broader field, but certainly not two.**

THE TARGET AUDIENCES OF THE TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

When listening to presentations of other students' project works, you should pay attention to:

- During the oral presentations of the Project Work, you have to listen to and evaluate your classmates' presentations as an expert of the broader field!
- You need to learn to apply no-go standards that separate the "maybe it's the deeper technical content that's the problem, but I don't get it" and the "it's just a show, a presentation of a con artist, if I were the client or the boss I wouldn't pay a penny for it" filters!
- **In your presentation group, all those things that you, as an "expert in the broader field", see and evaluate as problems in the presentations of others are also seen by the committee members, and they obviously see more and further problems.**

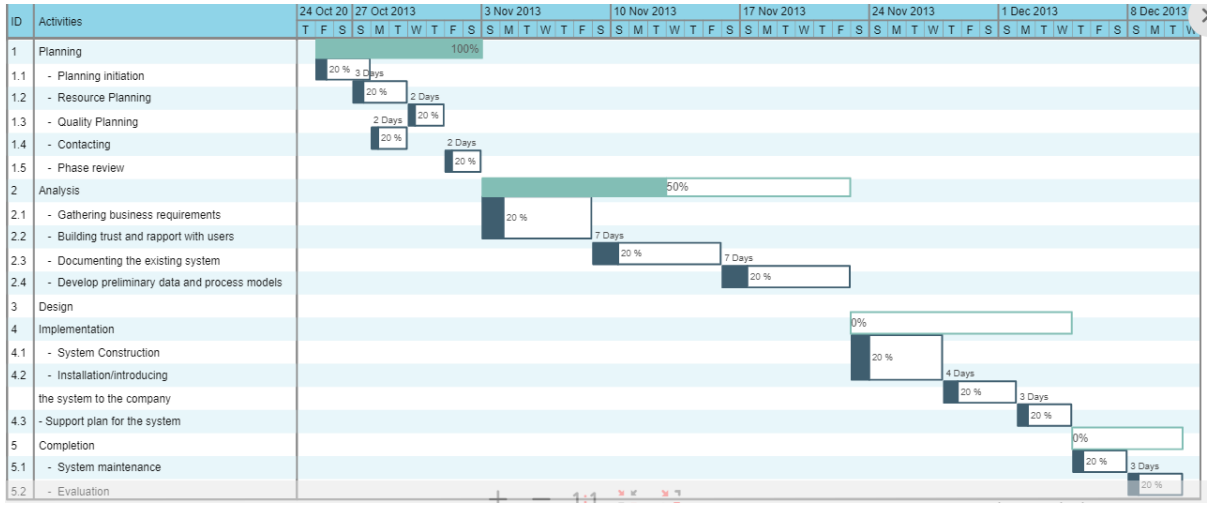
EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT WORK

- **What will be a valuable, well-established, usable outcome to the boss/client/company/organisation/academic world?**
  - If you manage to solve the problem in the end, why will it be good for the boss, the client, the company, the organisation, or the scientific world?
  - **It is not a mistake if you end up with an answer to a small but important and relevant business/scientific problem**, but it is a big mistake if you are not able to deliver a solid and usable result.
    - Don't be overconfident, don't overcommit yourself: **you should not aim to set the bar too high on the scale of the problem**.
    - Set the bar high on the scale of soundness: Would you bet your two months' salary/scholarship that the result of your work is true and can be built on?
  - Be prepared for that: the boss/client would be an opponent and look for weaknesses in your Project Work
    ⇒ She would be even stricter and more teasing than your university teacher/supervisor.
    ⇒ Her point of view would be: is it good to spend money, human resources on your Project Work? Or is it a waste?
    ⇒ It's good to think of it as a business competition: the boss/client can spend the available amount once, which she can give to you or someone else: the question is why should she let you continue with Project Work 1, and why not the other one if he can only afford one?

SCHEDULE OF THE PROJECT WORK 2

- The schedule should include the following headings:
  - Name of task, activity
  - (Short) description of the task, activity
  - Time required
  - Starting date
  - Closing time
  - Expected result product(s)
  - Link to other activities, dependencies
  - Related risks

- It is recommended to present the schedule in a **Gannt diagram** or **in a table.**



Source: https://www.edrawsoft.com/gantt-chart-examples.html

Task No.	Task name	Time required (days)	Start date	End date	Expected result(s)	Links with other project activities/Dependency	Risk
	...						
2	Planning literature research	2	2023.10.09	2023.10.11	Bibliographical collection plan	2	
3	Literature research: review of relevant scientific journals	6	2023.10.15	2023.10.21	List of relevant scientific journals (online+print	3	No access to some of them
4	Literature research: review of relevant scientific articles	14	2023.10.25	2023.11.07	Collection of scholarly articles (online+print)		Not available for me
	...						

II. Basic presentation skills and their associated mistakes

How to avoid them?

Most common mistakes in general

1. Circumstantial introductory thoughts
2. Badly chosen slide colour
3. Wrong font size, too much text
4. Useless visualisation
5. Lack of rehearsal of the presentation

1. The mistake of the cumbersome introductory thoughts

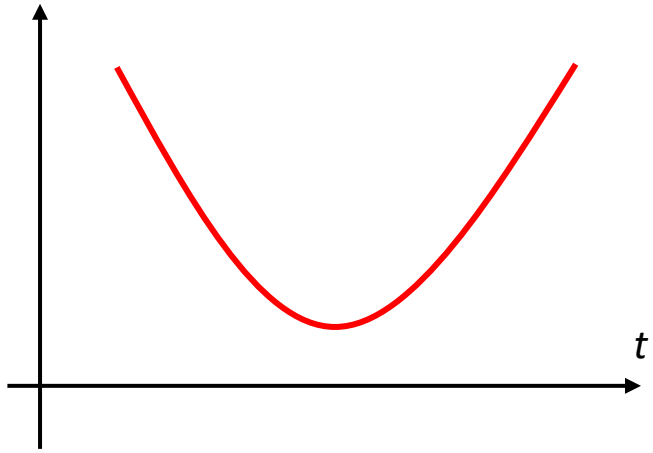
The essence of making mistakes:

- the speaker starts from a long way off and finds it difficult to get to the point.
- long explanation; unnecessary historical introduction; enthusiasm about how much she loves the subject, etc.

Why is this bad?

- It does not take into account the expectations of the audience: e.g. why would all this be important or interesting to the audience?
- It does not take into account the attention curve: recall efficiency is high at the beginning and end of the presentation

$\Rightarrow$ these are the most valuable, most effective parts of the presentation!

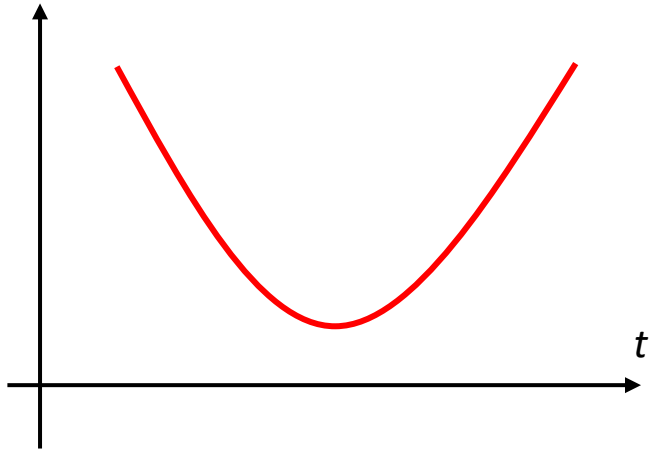


Attention curve: recall efficiency (RE) as a function of presentation time

1. Avoiding the „cumbersome introduction” mistake

Do this!

- After welcoming the audience and introducing yourself, you can get down to business in a single sentence:
  - *In this project, I am looking for a solution to the problem ...*
  - *In this presentation, I will examine...*
  - *The research question of my project*



Attention curve: recall efficiency (RE) as a function of presentation time

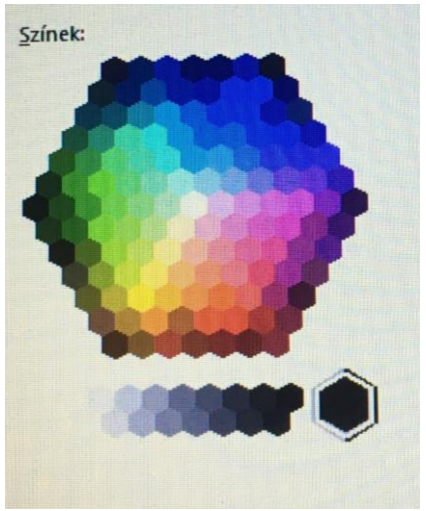
2. The mistake of a badly chosen slide colour

- **What is the mistake?**
  - The performer plans as if the slide projection conditions of the presentation are ideal and takes the colour tones displayed on his computer as a given.
- **Why is this a problem?**
  - Presentation conditions are *usually* not ideal:
    - low brightness projector, poor colour fidelity of the projected image/slide,
    - the curtain cannot be extended to the projection wall, the sun shining in from the side reduces brightness and contrast, etc.
    - the curtain cannot be drawn up to the projection wall; the sun shining from outside reduces brightness and contrast, etc.
  - The result is: a functionally problematic slide show instead of the visual experience envisioned in the design ⇒ the very essence is lost in the projected text, figures and diagrams!

Color palette of fonts on a notebook

2. How to choose the colours?

1. **Avoid using bright greens!** ⇒ These colours are the most unpredictable!
2. **Avoid fonts that are too thin!** ⇒ They are the easiest to become pixelated!
3. **Avoid light shades of grey!** ⇒ They often appear white as a result of the projection!
4. Text and graphic elements should be based on **the highest dark-light contrasts**!
5. **Check the colours used via your phone's camera!** ⇒ How do the shades and contrasts get lost?



Top: screenshot
Below: a picture taken with a phone

3. The mistake of wrong font size and/or too much text

What is the mistake?

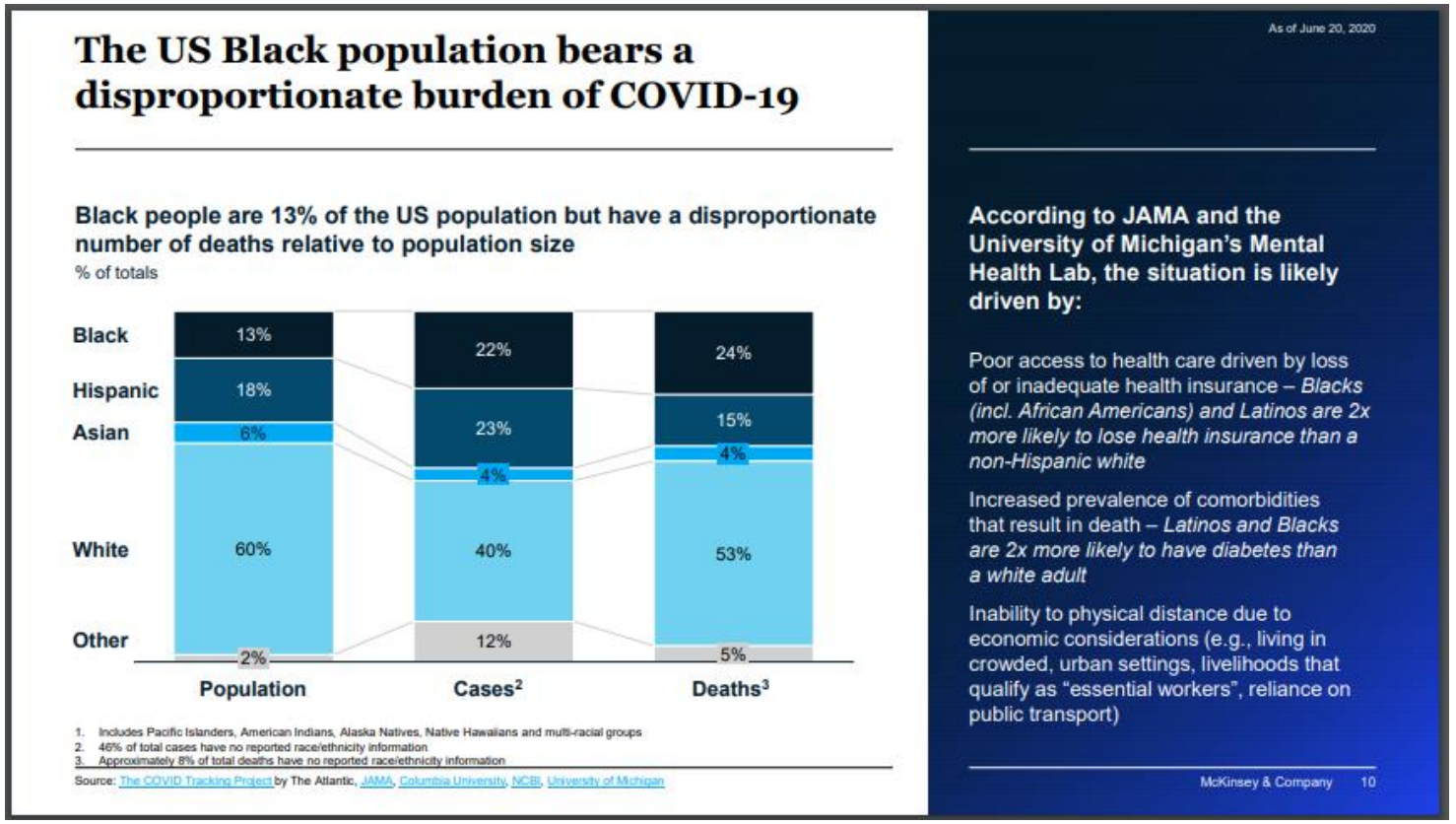
- the amount and layout of the text on the slides, the font sizes used, the precision of the expressions are **not appropriate to the type of presentation and the nature of the presentation situation**.

Why is this a problem?

- Ignore the fact that ppt slideshows are made for different purposes and have to satisfy other user needs in different situations.
  - For example, the ppt for a course material on which a test is based must necessarily be text-centred, using complete sentences.
  - A business slide show is **a dual-function presentation**: it can be the basis for an oral presentation, but it can also be a full-fledged written document:
    - presentations for tenders, presentations for project reports for clients.
  - At first glance, such dual-function business presentations do not seem to comply with certain widely accepted rules that apply only to single-function oral presentations.

3. Dual-function business presentations

- This is a typical dual-function presentation:
  - it can be the basis for an oral presentation or
  - it can be a full-fledged written document
- This dual-function slide does not fit the following stereotype:
  - No font size smaller than 18!
  - No complete sentences, only keywords or short slogans!
  - No long text!



Source: https://www.mckinsey.com/~/media/McKinsey/Business%20Functions/Risk/Our%20Insights/COVID%2019%20Implications%20for%20business/COVID%2019%20July%2023/COVID-19-Facts-and-Insights-July-23.pdf

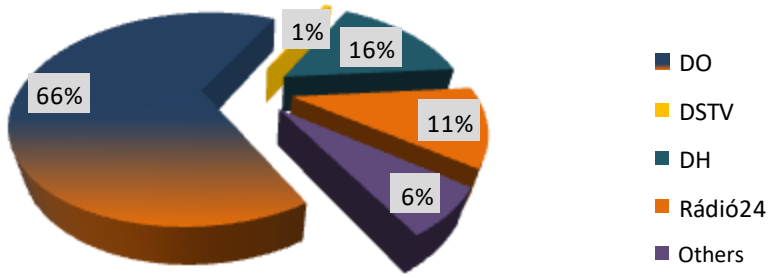
3. Suggestions for designing the text of Project Work presentations

1. It is recommended to structure the information on the slide page using 2-4 font sizes/types (e.g. underlined) that are easily distinguishable!
2. No font size smaller than 18!
3. Key messages, important statements or claims be expressed in grammatically complete sentences $\Rightarrow$ helps to protect the content, avoid ambiguity, inaccuracy

4. The mistake of useless visualisation

- **What is the mistake?**
  - The presenter is content to use diagrams and graphs, hoping to have implemented the principle "A picture is worth a thousand words".
  - However, the visualisation can be flat, misleading, careless and functionless.

Where do you first hear about newsworthy events and happenings in the region?



Data visualisation mistakes:

- The categories belonging to the slices of the pie chart cannot be identified, and the labels cannot be interpreted.
- Poor, meaningless choice of colour: the gradient colour makes it particularly difficult to assign individual slices to categories.

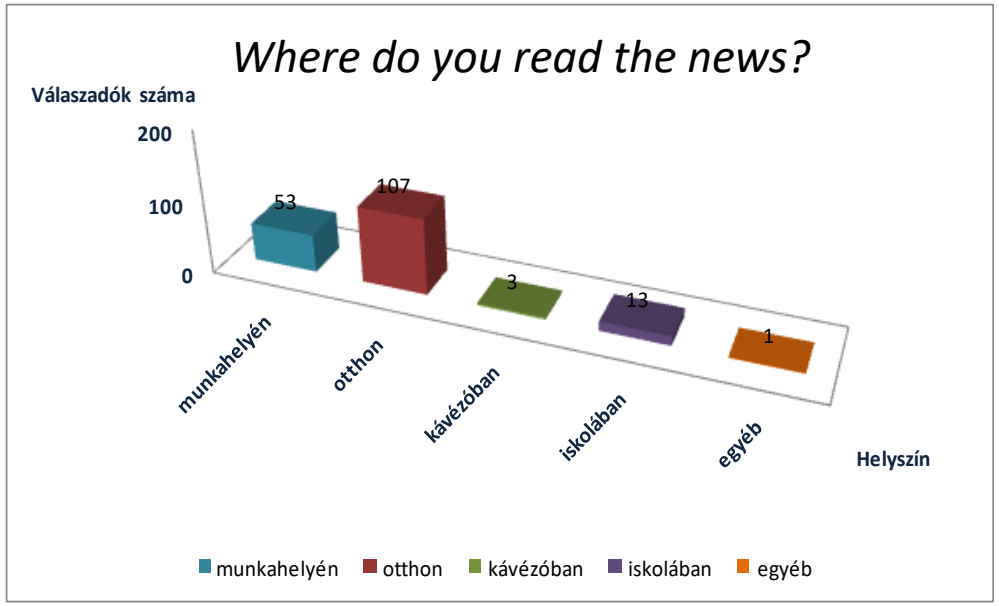
4. The mistake of useless visualisation

Data visualisation errors:

- The 3D representation is self-serving and does not help the perception of scale.
- The numbers in the columns are difficult to read.
- It would have been better to sort the categories by size, and then the graph would have been more informative in one way + the recipient would not have to do it in his/her head.

The visualisation also highlights research flaws:

- Home and workplace are not mutually exclusive, they are overlapping categories: 'home office'.
- What does reading the news while working from home (this is not a home office!) and taking it home from work count as?
- **The initial wrong, imprecise formulation of the research question is irremediable at the time of the presentation!**



5. Failure to rehearse and practice the presentation

- **The essence of failure: flying blind**
  - the lecturer does not rehearse or rehearse the oral presentation or the ppt slides.
- **Why is this a problem?**
  - It does not reveal the limitations, distractions and errors of the slide show and the computer.
  - It does not reveal whether the planned verbal content is enough or whether it fits into the time frame.

5. Failure to rehearse and practice the presentation

- **Do this!**
  - Rehearse the oral presentation at least three times, and only the fourth should be the live presentation!
- **Reasons to do it:**
  - Stress is your friend! The stress of performing improves the performance of rehearsed activities and worsens the performance of those performed for the first time!
  - As a result of rehearsals, you put the hostile stress at your service!
  - Márton Ostorházi (Kruz Bike Company) rehearsed his pitch 300 times in preparation for the Shark Tank business show ; why would 3 rehearsals be too many for you in a situation that is really important to you?

III. Lessons from the first years of teaching Project Works

1. First impression errors and their importance in persuasion
2. The challenges of online presentations
3. Functional visuality instead of using self-serving graphic elements

1. First impression errors and their importance in persuasion

What are the flaws of a first impression?

- By reviewing the slides and scrolling through the document, you can spot **any noticeable formal errors**:
  - alternation of left-aligned and centre-aligned text in the main text, random alternation of font, random alternation of font size, random alteration of line spacing.

Why are these so significant?

- Because they fall at the beginning (that is the top of) the attention curve: they grab the recipient, „she has to get over the mistake".
- Positive persuasion supports you; it makes you stand out from the crowd in a positive way.
  - Negative persuasion is also persuasion: anything that creates an obstacle, an uncertainty, to getting what you think is great content to its destination works against success!

2. The challenges of online presentations

- **The first basic challenge to launch a presentation: the technological challenge**
  - Technological tools, electronic devices: do things work together?
    - Are the cameras and microphones etc. fully switched on or off for a particular software or application?
  - Familiarity: is the interface familiar to you through actual use?
    - What are the buttons, where are they, which window to share, what will you see during the presentation, etc.
- **Why is this important?**
  - Because when you're in a chaotic, stressful situation, it's hard to get yourself together to get off to a good start!
- **Solution: make a test call with your teammates!**
  - Even if you have already used some similar platforms!
  - Even though I had known Zoom, Teams, Googlemeet, when I had a training in a new environment (Webex) in a company, I asked the organiser to do a test 3 days before!

3. Functional visuality instead of non-functional graphic elements

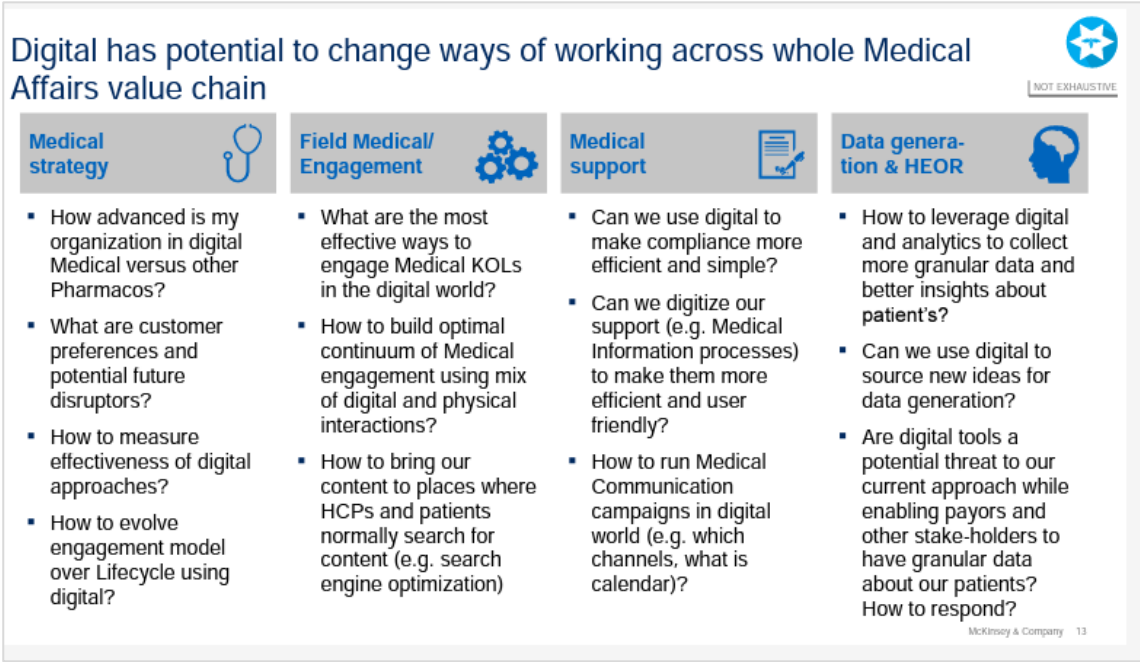
- **Visual elements really make your presentation more accessible, memorable, recallable and unique!**
  - But your goal is not to win the "Most beautiful or most personal slide show!" category!
  - Many times, the graphic elements of the template you choose take up a lot of space while you're struggling with the feeling of "not enough slides allowed".
  - **In business presentations, the purpose of visuals is to get the message and content across effectively!**

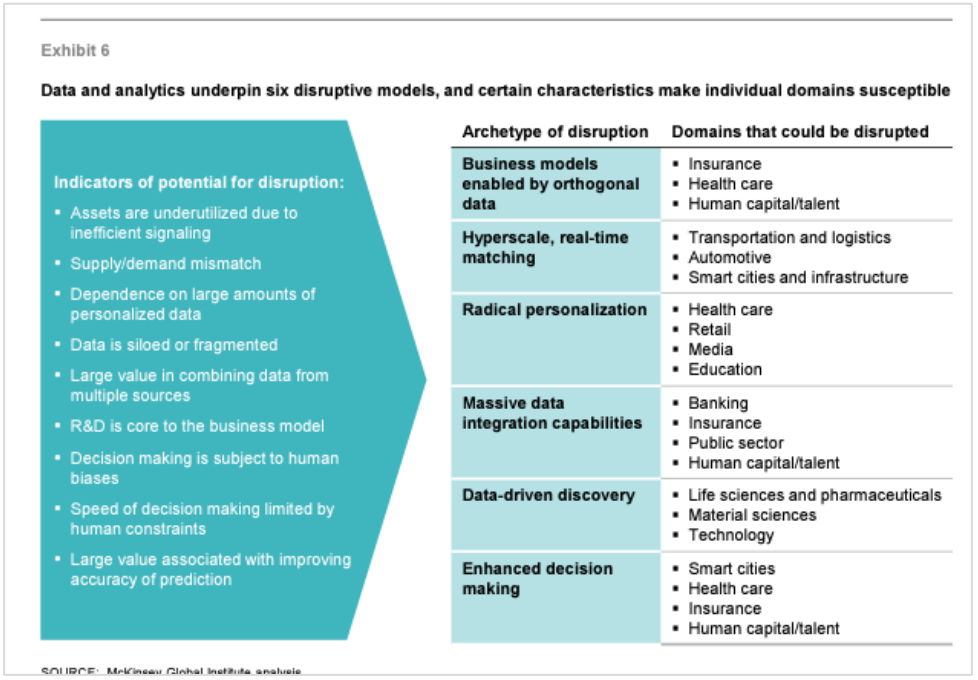
Tools:

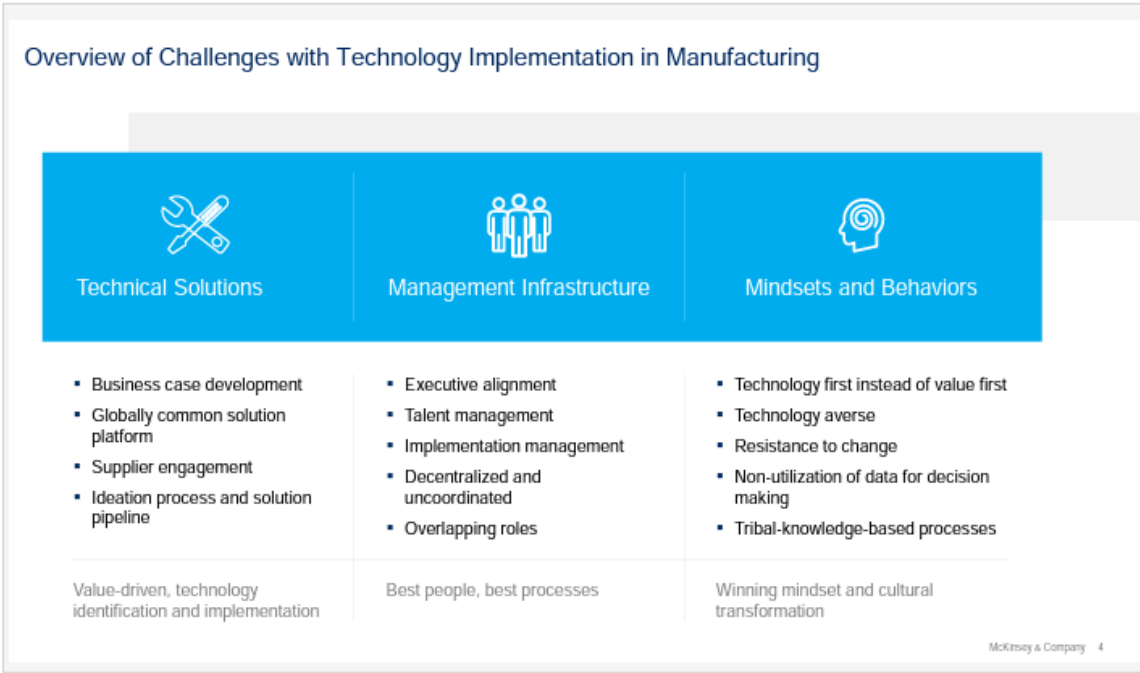
- A well-composed table, chart, figure, graph, diagram etc. (see previous slides)
- **Visual composition of textual content: make the text a visual element!**
- **Together they may make other decorative graphic elements unnecessary!**

WHAT TO NOTICE IN THE EXAMPLES SHOWN HERE AND ON SLIDE 22?

- There are also layers of presentation and reception of the slide.
- They are visually composed: they are very visual even without a graph, chart or decorative graphic element.
- Visual elements are used to highlight content: colours, shades, iconic images







Thanks for your attention!