

How to Make An Action Guide

Prepared by: Christopher Davenport

Date: Today

Introduction

In this guide, you will learn a super simple formula for creating an action guide. Your written action guide will be a short summary of your presentation. It's a document that includes the strategies, tactics, mindsets, and tools from your conference presentation.

Let's dive in and look at the key points to remember as you write your action guide.

Key Points

Year after year, conference attendees tell us how excited they are to implement what they learned from conference presenters. But, when they get back to their office, they are frequently met with resistance from team members and leadership. An action guide gives attendees a tool they can use to help convince colleagues and leadership to try a new approach.

Remember why your presentation exists.

The person who walks into your session room to hear your presentation does so because they have a problem. They read your session title and description and think your presentation can help solve their problem. So, as you're writing your action guide, be thinking about the problem your presentation solves for your audience.

Your action guide has 2 main purposes:

1. To help your audience implement what they learned faster.
2. To help your audience members get buy-in from key staff members and leadership.

Your action guide will help your audience quickly and easily find the information they need to solve their problem. They won't have to rely on their memory of your presentation. They also won't have to look through their hastily scribbled notes and try to piece together what they learned from you.

Key Points continued...

A good action guide is prescriptive.

A good action guide quickly walks people through the steps to solve the problem they had when they first came into your session. This doesn't mean you have to write a thick manual on how to overcome the problem. Your presentation will have done the work to solve their problem. Your action guide is there to reiterate the steps, strategies, tactics, and tools in a quick and easy to read format.

Your action guide doesn't have to be long and fancy.

Your action guide can be 1-5 pages in length. If you need it to be longer, make it longer. Don't be worried about the length. Your action guide should be as long as it needs to be in order to get the information across that will solve the reader's problem.

You don't need any fancy graphics program or designer. You can make your action guide in MS Word, or in some other writing program.

You have already written most of your action guide.

Because the action guide is based on your presentation, you've probably already written 80% or more of your action guide. You did this when you wrote your presentation.

There are only four main sections to an action guide.

As you'll see in the included "Action Guide Template", your action guide only needs to have four main sections. The four sections are:

1. Introduction
2. Key Points
3. Sequence of Actions
4. Resources and Tools

Now that you better understand why your action guide is needed and what will be in it, I'm going to show you how to create the content for your action guide.

Sequence of Actions

1. Fill in the Title section

Here is where you write in the title of your action guide along with your name and date. Your action guide title should reference the title of your conference presentation.

As an example, let's say your presentation title was "How to Find New Donors".

Your action guide title could be something like: "Your Action Guide to Finding New Donors".

Or it might be something as simple as: "How to Find New Donors - Action Guide".

2. Write the Introduction section.

This is where you tell people what this action guide will do for them. It is a short summary of the benefit of your presentation. Put another way, the introduction should promise the solution to the problem your audience faces.

Feel free to steal the first line in the introduction section of this action guide. Start yours with "In this guide, you are going to learn..."

Here's are some questions to ask yourself. These will help you figure out what to write in the Introduction section.

- Who is my audience for this action guide? (fundraisers, executive directors, communications specialists, major gifts officers, etc.)...
- What is the main problem my presentation solves?
- When this problem is solved, what will my audience members will be able to do?

3. Write the Key Points section.

Here's where you tell people what the most important things to remember are. These are typically the bolded headlines in your power point presentation. If you have different sections in your presentation, the section titles may be your key points.

What are the key messages you want your audience to remember? List these key points and expand upon them in the Key Points section of your action guide.

4. Write the Sequence of Actions section.

Here is where you list the exact steps needed to solve the problem your audience member faces. This will be the longest section of your action guide.

Ask yourself what specific actions your audience needs to take in order to solve their problem. Then make a list of those action steps and arrange them in the order in which they need to be performed.

You've probably already written these action steps in your presentation. If so, copy and paste them into the Sequence of Actions section of your action guide. Then flesh them out if they need more explanation.

5. Write the Resource and Tools section.

Here is where you list the resources, templates, graphics, and other tools your audience may need. Don't forget to list yourself as a resource if you want them to contact you.

6. Proof Read your Action Guide.

Read your action guide out loud to make sure it flows. Then have a friend read it to see if they can easily follow the steps you outline.

7. Convert your Action Guide to a PDF.

8. Upload your completed Action Guide at:

<https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com/action-guides>

9. Sit back and enjoy your success (and the success of your audience members).

Additional Resources and Tools

You can download a template for creating your own action guide at:

<https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com/action-guides>

You can submit/upload your action guide at:

<https://nonprofitstorytellingconference.com/action-guides>

If you have any questions, please reach out to me.

Christopher Davenport

Email me at: chris@nonprofitstorytelling.com

Your Session Title

Prepared by: Your Name

Date: Date of Your Presentation

Introduction

This is where you tell people what this action guide will do for them.

Key Points

Here's where you tell people what the most important things to remember are.

Sequence of Actions

Here is where you list the exact steps needed to solve the problem your audience member faces.

Additional Resources and Tools

Here is where you list the resources, templates, graphics, and other tools they may need.