

# Magento Community Speaker Training

Welcome to the Magento Community Speaker Training!

## Introduce Facilitator(s)

I want to introduce the folks who are facilitating or helping out today.

First, my name is Jill Binder and I'm the main facilitator. A couple of years ago, I moved from Vancouver, BC, Canada to a small town a few hours away, Vernon, BC. I have been doing this workshop in WordPress since 2014. Starting in Vancouver, we helped people from underrepresented groups in tech in our community bust through their Impostor Syndrome to want to start speaking at our monthly Meetups and yearly WordPress conference. We increased our representation of speakers at our conference from 14 to 50% in just one year! And it was a Developer Edition of our conference! Now I lead a team in WordPress that helps cities all over the world run this workshop.

I started as a freelance WordPress web developer, and after having such great success with this and discovering that it was my passion and talent, now I do this work full-time. I have a 50% sponsorship from Automattic to keep leading our team in WordPress, and I now take this work to other tech communities, conferences, and companies.

I am thrilled that Sherrie asked me to bring this workshop to the Magento Community. This is our third time running this workshop. The first time was in July 2019 when we ran it for the whole Community in general. In January 2020, we ran a closed workshop for people from underrepresented groups. This time we are opening it up again to everyone.

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We have on the call with us today Sherrie Rohde from Adobe who is bringing this workshop to you. Sherrie would you like to say a few words?

We also have Allie Nimmons, who is a new member of my team at Diverse In Tech, but not new to diversity. She is already an expert in the field and we have worked on a few projects together over the last couple of years. Allie, would you like to say a few words?

We also ran another workshop last Spring: A training session to teach anyone in the community how to facilitate it so that the Magento community can keep doing it for years to come. We will be doing it again this year on Thursday, September 9th, and we invite you to attend!

## Poll

Please take a moment now to answer this poll question.

## Beginner's Mind

Before we begin the material, I'd like to make a note about the level of this class. Some of you have done public speaking before. This class is mostly at a beginner level, with a sprinkling of advanced content throughout. To get the most out of everything, I recommend you choose to have a Beginner's Mind. What this means: With an Advanced Mind, you'd probably say frequently, "I already know that," and stop listening. With a Beginner's Mind, you pretend you don't know any of it and you listen with fresh ears as though you're hearing it for the first time. This way you will be more open to hear the things you haven't heard before, or hear a new perspective on something that you know that will make all the difference for you.

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## Agenda

The agenda that we are going to cover in these two sessions is:

1. Ice Breaker and Foundation concepts
2. Finding a Topic
3. Writing the Pitch
4. Creating Your Talk
5. Becoming a Better Speaker
6. Creating Great Slides

## 1. Ice Breaker and Foundation concepts

### In this section

- Introductions
- Ice Breaker
- What we are looking for
- Dispelling the myths of being a public speaker
- Why do you want to speak?



Let's all introduce ourselves. In a moment I am going to split you into breakout rooms of 4-5 each. I'd like each person in the room to say:

- Your name
- Pronouns: What pronouns would you like us to use for you today, if you're comfortable sharing them. Example: She/Her, They/Them
- Your Magento experience
- What is your speaking experience, if any?

Know that you can always opt out of this or any of the other exercises in our workshop. At your turn, say, "Pass."

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We are pasting these questions into the chat now. Please copy them, as you won't have access to the questions in the breakout rooms! You can also get them from the slides on slide 14.

We are looking for short answers. You will each have about a minute.

Here is an example: [Jill gives example]

In the room, please go in alphabetical order of your first name.

Any questions before we begin?

We are going to hit the button to put you into the breakout rooms now!

## What We Are Looking For

What are we looking for? Well, the same folks speak frequently at Magento events. We like them, they are great and we want them to keep speaking, but we also want to add new voices, have folks of different backgrounds, and add new perspectives. The whole community will benefit from hearing from more kinds of people. We'll get into why this matters more in the next section.

## Dispelling The Myths (What We Think A Speaker Is vs What They Actually Are)

Everyone has their own reasons for not speaking in public, especially at tech events, but most of those reasons are based on myths that we can dispel or concerns that we can address:

### **Myth 1: I'm not an expert!**

That's okay, you don't have to be an expert! Everyone has a different idea of what "expert" means.

No one knows everything, and everyone has something to learn. You can think about a topic where you might know more than what many people in your audience know. You can find a topic where you have knowledge that most of your audience may not.

There are things you do with Magento all the time that other people don't – that makes you an expert in their eyes. Even if your audience has knowledge about the same topic, they will not frame that knowledge the same way – they will still have something to learn from you. It's also possible that you feel you only know a little bit about a topic, but it's still more than many people in the audience who are happy to learn what you know.

You are probably more of an expert than you think you are. A lot of us suffer from Imposter Syndrome. This psychological phenomenon where you feel like you are an imposter, you think you don't really have the knowledge or skills to be here, but you have managed to fool everyone and soon they'll find out. Imposter syndrome is really common – you aren't alone.

Many communities have surveyed their members to ask what kind of information they want to learn at meetups and conferences, and most people request beginner topics. Remember that there are people out there who know nothing about any of this stuff, and they want to know more! If you have used Magento before, you have knowledge that other people want you to share.

One area where you are always an expert is your own experience. Case studies make great talks – talk about how you did something, how you learned something, how you overcame an obstacle, the process you went through to create something or to solve a problem.

These kinds of talks are great because they are unique – not just the same information that anyone can find in an online tutorial. These topics help everyone overcome the "I'm not an expert" problem – you're a normal person sharing a normal experience, and that's valuable, so people will come to value their own experience and expertise.

Even if you are giving a talk that the audience knows all about already, you have a different perspective and they are likely to learn something new.

So you might not feel like an expert, but you are! If you care about your topic, that will shine through and that's what's important.

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**Myth 2: People will ask questions I can't answer, and I'll look like a fool.**

Yes, people very well might ask questions you can't answer, but that's okay. Your audience understands that not everyone knows everything, and it can be hard to think on your feet – the audience is sympathetic. If you don't know the answer, there are several things you can do:

- You can ask if anyone in the audience has the answer.
- You can tell them you will look up the answer and get back to them. Tell them you'll post the answer on your blog – then you get more visitors to your website!
- Sometimes people ask questions that are off topic – feel free to tell them their question is off-topic and you would be happy to discuss it with them later.
- Also, remember that it's okay to say, "I don't know" – people will think more highly of you if you admit you don't know than if you try to make up an answer.

We're going to be going into all of these in much more detail in Section 5: Becoming a Better Speaker, in the Tricky Questions section later.

**Myth 3: I'm too nervous to speak!**

Your audience gets that too – after all, most of them didn't have the bravery to speak.

First of all, practice practice practice! The more you practice - in front of pets, family, friends, the mirror, small audiences - the less nervous you will be.

But if you are still nervous, that's okay! Everyone gets nervous in front of audiences, and that's just a part of being human. Keep in mind that your audience is on your side – they want to see you succeed. In fact, it's okay to admit that you are nervous – people will be sympathetic. I'm nervous right now, too, but I'm up here speaking in front of you and I haven't died yet! Making a little joke at the beginning about being nervous (like I just did) will dispel the nervous energy in the room.

If you're really nervous, don't start by speaking at an event where you will have a big audience. Start at a smaller meetup, or even start just in front of the mirror, pets, friends and family, etc. We'll talk more about this in the Better Speaker section later.

**Myth 4: I have failed if everyone in the audience isn't totally engaged.**

Sometimes when you're speaking, you will look out at the audience and it will look like everyone is bored. That's okay.

First of all, most of them probably aren't as bored as they look. Audiences generally sit with neutral faces, so if they aren't smiling and nodding and cheering, that doesn't mean they aren't engaged.

If they are using their phone/tablet/laptop/another device, that doesn't mean they're ignoring you - in fact, it might mean they are writing down your every word, or they might be live tweeting your talk.

And no matter how good a speaker you are, you will not connect with everyone in the audience. That's okay - no speaker can connect with everyone. Expect that, don't take it personally, and be happy with the people who do connect with you.

**Myth 5: A talk followed by a Q&A is the only format I can use to share my knowledge.**

No, there are plenty of other ways to share your expertise at Magento events. You could lead a group discussion, lead a workshop, or put together a panel. Some events offer the opportunity for lightning talks, which are usually about 10 minutes. This is a great format if you're nervous because it's okay to talk fast and it's over quickly.

**Questions for the group:** What do you think? What are things you're worried about? Why haven't you talked at a meetup or Magento conference? If you've only talked once, why did you not do it again?

## Why Do You Want To Speak?

Those are reasons people don't want to speak. What about the reasons that people do want to speak. Here is another discussion question for you: Why do you want to speak?

Here are some of the common reasons:

1. Be seen as an authority in your field
2. Share your knowledge with others

3. Build your confidence
4. Give back to the community
5. Meet people - be part of the community
6. Travel
7. Learn at conferences - speaking teaches you more
8. It's fun!
9. Rewarding, feeling of accomplishment
10. Career building
11. If you identify as being from a marginalized or underrepresented group, you might want to be on stage to be a role model to encourage others to step up as well

## 2. Finding a Topic

### In this section

- Talk Formats
- Big Brainstorm
- Narrowing Your Topic Selection
- Refining Your Chosen Topic
- Present Your Topic (optional)

### Talk Formats

Now that we've talked about why we are holding this workshop for folks from underrepresented groups, myths about what it takes to be a speaker, and why you want to speak, let's start talking about the actual talks.

A lot of talks are big "how to" brain dump sessions. "How to make an extension" might be someone walking through how to make it, maybe even live coding, and then at the end, there are questions.

We have found that this isn't necessarily a good way to impart information. People often walk away feeling overwhelmed and not remembering anything that they learned.

There are other talk formats that promote story-based learning. Talking about how you learned something, for example, means other people can also learn how to learn.

Here are some of the various formats:



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- **How To:** The standard way that tech talks happen
  - **Discussion:** You are the facilitator on a topic and the audience discusses it together
  - **Panel:** Multiple people answer questions on the same topic
  - **Story-based:** This could be how you learned something, mistakes you made, or any other narrative format
  - **Case Study:** The story of how you created one thing, in particular
  - **Workshop:** A hands-on learning experience where people bring their laptops and create a thing as you go

A talk can also be more than one person. Talks with 2 or 3 people can be really engaging.



## Brainstorm

We are going into our first written exercise now. First we are going to help you answer the question, "I don't know what to talk about," "I don't know enough about anything to give a talk," "I'm not an expert in anything," or if you've given talks and you're just stuck for what your next talk could be, we'll be answering that as well.

We are going to do a brainstorming exercise. Brainstorm as many topic ideas as you can in this exercise. We're not looking for "perfect" or even "good" ideas. The idea is just to get them out, good, bad, or ugly. See if you can get 20 or 30 ideas. Seriously, anything that comes to mind.

You can write, draw, do mind-maps, list, any format you like. While you're summoning inspiration or getting writers' block, or anywhere in between, I'll be prompting you with questions to generate more topics.

Remember, it's always great to talk about what excites YOU - not what you think you should talk about.

Also if you are new to Magento and don't have answers to these yet, that's ok. You can use the prompts to imagine what your answers might be in a year.

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I'll give you a moment to start writing any ideas that are coming to mind already before we start the prompts, and in a moment I'll start the first prompt. Go ahead and start writing now.

Out of curiosity, how many topics did you write down? Put your number in the chat.

Good work everyone. You've done well. Even just writing down one is great.



### Topic Selection

Okay, now you've got some good, bad and ugly ideas, we are going to do an exercise to narrow down your list. We are going to do this in a structured way: you will be picking two topics from your list that you think best fits the following questions. You might also find that you come up with new answers that weren't in your list. If so, go ahead and write those down! If for some of these you don't come up with any answers, that is ok. Just skip that prompt.

1. For a story-based talk: Pick 2 topics that you don't know a lot about, but have had some success with. (e.g. I don't know much about making extensions but I've made one for custom post types).
2. For moderating a panel: Pick 2 topics you may not know much about but that you would have good questions for.
3. For a how-to-presentation: Pick 2 topics that you are confident about and could lead a how-to presentation.
4. For a case study: Pick 2 topics that you've successfully worked on that you feel you could do a case study about.
5. For a workshop: Pick 2 topics that you think you could teach to others in a hands-on manner. This could be for running a workshop.

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6. For any type: Pick 2 subjects in the topic list that are your favorite.

## Pick a topic

Now we are going to do exercises to pick a topic.

Go ahead and pick the topic you're most excited about and you think you'd like to develop further in our workshop today and next week?

For anyone who would like to discuss it with each other in your breakout rooms of 4-5 people, I'll give you 2 minutes each. I'll give you a moment to think it through on your own first. This time go in alphabetical order of your last names.

Wherever you're at for now, it's ok. Just pick one that you'll use for the exercises for the rest of the workshop. You can always use your topic today as practise and do a different topic later. We'd love to hear what topic you are choosing. Please put it in the chat!



Let's hear from a few of you who are having a hard time choosing between a couple of topics. The group and the mentors can help you pick which one we'd be most interested in hearing. Everyone else, see if you can use the coaching for your own topics.



## Refining Topic

To further refine your topic, apply "Who, What, Why, How, When, Where" to your topic. For example: If you have a favorite extension, you can try asking who is this extension for? What does this extension do? Why was this extension created? How does it work? When would you use it? Where would you use it?

1. Who
2. What

- 
3. Why
  4. How
  5. When
  6. Where

I will give you 5 minutes to answer these questions.

However far along you are with that is fine. Just use what you have.

From this list, can you refine your topic? Is there something more specific on which you'd like to give the talk? I will give you 2 minutes to polish your topic.



We are going to give everyone the chance to share their refined topic with a partner. I will put you into pairs and give you two minutes each. Please go in alphabetical order of your first names.

We are going to share our topics. Please everyone write yours in the chat, if you have one, or write where you're at with it. (Wherever you're at is ok!)

Who would like to share their topic with the whole group out loud, or has a question about their topic? Let's hear from a few of you.

There is some info that I am imparting after both sessions, and most of it is the same. It is worth repeating! This week I want to plant the seeds of ideas in your heads, and next week hopefully take some action on some parts. Plus both weeks there are post-session questionnaires.

## What's Next

1. I'd like to collect some feedback from you so that I know if there is anything I need to adjust before next week. Please fill out this mid-workshop questionnaire:  
<https://forms.gle/usJY8fqucCtg9nQU8>

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2. If you love this work, are you interested in learning how to keep this workshop going in Magento? Would you like to run it in your local area? Would you like to give back to the community and make a difference? Learn how to hold your own Magento Speaker Diversity Workshop on Thursday, September 9 @ 5-8pm UTC. You can let us know that you're interested in the mid-session questionnaire.

3. We want to make sure that you continue getting support after this workshop. The speaker directory is in place to put you in touch with community members who are willing to mentor. You'll also find out there about future speaking opportunities.

We'd also love to hear your success stories there! Did you speak? Did it go well? Did something come out of it -- did you start organizing or leading something? Did you get a job? Did you start getting more involved with the community? Were you asked to speak again? Etc.

Letting us know that you spoke and what happened afterwards helps us with continuing to do this impactful work. We are collecting the stats to tell the story of how it went, how many start speaking after this, how many conferences and how many cities and countries were impacted, and collecting the stories so that we can share with others what happens when you start getting on stage.

[bit.ly/MagentoSpeakerDirectory](https://bit.ly/MagentoSpeakerDirectory)

You are also welcome to share your follow-up results and stories with Sherrie or myself privately.

Also, if you'd like a sounding board for your ideas between our two sessions, the Magento Speaker Directory is the place to do it.

## Workshop Material

If anyone would like a copy of the workshop content and slides, go to <https://diversein.tech/magentoworkshop2021>

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## Stay in touch

Please stay in touch!

## Next week

I'm looking forward to next week's session where we are going to finish/be writing pitches, create an outline for your talk, go over tips on becoming a better speaker, even give you scripts for difficult questions in the Q&A period!, and notes on creating great slides. You won't want to miss it!

## Session 2

### 3. Writing the Pitch

#### In this section

- The Proposal aka "Pitch"
- Coming Up With a Great Title
- Writing Exercise
- Writing Your Bio
- Present Titles and Pitches (optional)

#### Writing The Proposal aka "Pitch"

Whatever your motivations for speaking, you first need to get selected to speak, and for that you need to create a proposal or "pitch" (we will use the terms interchangeably) that gets your talk selected. Also, since your proposal defines the scope of your talk, it can be a good early step in the overall process of developing your talk.

- What makes a great one? Here is an example of a good one:
  - Responsify All The Things – In our new web multiverse, it's more important than ever to make your valuable content available to all users, regardless of how they access your site. In this talk, we'll cover how Responsive Web Design came about, the latest RWD news and trends, and

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some basic (and not so basic) techniques you can use to make your next Magento theme a *responsive* one. Intended for developers and designers who aren't afraid to get their hands dirty with a little code.

- This is a good length, tells you what talk will cover, and who it's aimed at.
- In some cases you might also want to say what people will walk away with from this talk.
- Beware of too-clever titles. The title should stand on its own without a blurb.
  - **Example of a bad one:** CSS Dreams and Elephants

Generally, your talk proposal and the introduction of your outline will be quite similar. A good introduction should have all the things a good pitch would have. However, in a pitch you might want to spice it up a bit. Ultimately, both the introduction and pitch should contain similar content.

For a pitch, you want to tailor the tone of your writing and vocabulary to the specific audience and event that you are applying to. This is very important!

Some ideas for how you may tailor your pitch for specific audiences and events:

- The tone may be different. A business crowd may be formal. A meetup may be more casual. So customize the tone of your pitch to your specific audience.
- At Magento events tend to be pretty casual.
- You might want to use different vocabulary depending on the audience.
- You may want to stress different "hooks" or "points of interest" depending on the audience or event.

**There are also 6 important points to take note of when writing both your outline and your pitch**

(Source:

[http://weareallaweso.me/for\\_speakers/how-to-write-a-compelling-proposal.html](http://weareallaweso.me/for_speakers/how-to-write-a-compelling-proposal.html))

1. **Direct the proposal to the attendees, not the curators.** Many conferences use your talk proposal as the description of the talk in their programme. With that in mind, your target reader is the conference attendee who is reading the programme. Tell the reader why your talk will interest them, and what they will learn. The curators want to put

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together a great conference with compelling talks for their attendees. Your talk will be part of the package they offer, so sell it! Make sure you research the event. Are there different tracks? Who is the audience? Lots of devs? Mostly for users? Design-heavy? Different conferences have different personalities. Are they short on really technical presentations? Light on talks for beginners? Try to fill a need (such as podcasting).

2. **Be specific about the focus your talk will have.** Generally speaking, a shallow introduction to many things is not as interesting as an in-depth introduction to one thing. If you discuss the broader topic, do so only to set the context for what you will focus on.
3. **One strategy: Pose the question your talk will answer.** Often, talks answer questions that start with “how”, “why”, “when” and so on. An easy trick is to directly ask these questions in your proposal, leaving the reader wondering the answer.
4. **Make your point as succinctly as you can.** If your first draft requires more than two paragraphs to get to the point of your topic, edit to slim things down. Take out any words that can be removed without changing the meaning. You may have a lot of competition, so try to make a good impression quickly. If your proposal is too much work to read or understand, it might get skipped during the selection process.
5. **Use proper grammar, spelling, and punctuation.** If you submit a sloppily written proposal, you appear careless and as if you are not taking the opportunity seriously. You risk being rejected on those grounds outright. Speaking requires a lot of thoughtful preparation, and curators can only assume you will be as careless when preparing the talk itself.
6. **Have your proposal reviewed by someone with experience.** Just as you might ask a friend to critique a draft of your CV, an essay, or the talk itself, ask someone (ideally a writer, speaker, or curator) to review your talk proposal. They will catch typos, as well as verify whether your proposal explains the scope of your talk, and explains its benefit to your audience.



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## Coming Up With a Great Title

All great talks have a great title!

Good talk titles generally follow these guidelines:

- Try to think of something catchy but explanatory
- Beware of too-clever titles
- Create a title that can stand on its own without a blurb (for example don't use something like "CSS and Elephants"). You want something that people will understand when they scan the conference talk titles. Even in meetups, many people read the title and choose attending based on that alone, without reading the blurb.

## Writing Your Bio

When you submit a proposal/pitch to an event, you will most often be asked to include a short bio. Bios are often the hardest to write well. But here are some pointers to follow:

- Should be written in third-person
- Be succinct but descriptive (should be only a short paragraph)
- Go for economy of words (try to say the most you possibly can with the fewest possible words)
- Mention what your position or job is and any credentials that might be relevant.
- Mention how many years you've been in this field or if it hasn't been that many, tell a short story about how you've ended up in your new field.
- Look at past examples for the conference you're submitting to. Why are you the right person to give this talk?
- Tailor your bio so your topic makes sense, tweak it differently for events.
- Be human. Magento events are usually not too formal.
- Feel free to add something about your non-professional interests at the end, but don't make it your entire bio.



## Writing Exercise

Everyone will have 15 minutes now to try drafting a talk proposal for the idea you brainstormed earlier, the title, and your bio. There will be a chance to read the title and pitch to the group after, if you wish.

*Do writing exercise*



## Present Titles and Pitches

Now anyone who wishes will have the opportunity to share their title and pitch with their breakout groups of 4.

You will have 3 minutes each for your mini presentation and getting feedback. There are no expectations. This is not a chance to practice being great; this is just an opportunity to practice being in front of people. You may request receiving feedback if you wish.

Ask if someone wants feedback before you offer it. Be sure to say something you liked about it before suggesting an improvement.

I will give you 12 minutes for this, 3 minutes each.

## Present to Big Group

Let's hear a few of the titles and pitches in the big group. You will have 2 minutes or less for your mini presentation. There are no expectations. This is not a chance to practice being great; this is just an opportunity to practice being in front of people. You may request receiving feedback if you wish. There will be time for 1 minute of the feedback. If the person does want feedback, be sure to say something you liked about it before suggesting an improvement.

- "What did everyone think was good about this proposal?"
- "What would make this proposal even better?"



## If time: Present Bios

Let's hear bios from anyone who had the time and who wants to share theirs.

## 4. Creating Your Talk

### In this section

- Writing the outline
- Coming up with a great title
- Present title and outline (optional)

### Writing The Outline

You've done the Who What Why How When Where questions about your topic. With these ideas in mind, create an outline for your talk. Don't worry, we'll talk you through the outline.

As a basic structure, a talk should have 3 parts: an introduction, body, and conclusion. Let's start with the introduction.

#### **Introduction**

What makes a great introduction?

- Clearly state what your talk is about
- What are you going to cover?
- Why does it matter?
- Pique interest! – What is your hook? Open with impact!
- Who is it aimed at?
- Be Succinct! – Use economy of words

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Tips for your introduction:

- **Don't apologize or insult yourself.** Apologizing in your opening calls attention to any flaws you may be concerned about and reduces the positive engagement of your audience.
- **Don't spend 10 minutes talking about your resume.** Many new speakers begin by talking about their hobbies, family, or work history. The trouble is, before you've begun talking about your content, audiences aren't emotionally invested in you yet. Spending excessive amounts of time convincing them why they should pay attention to you is far less effective than opening with the engaging content they're here to see.
- **Start with a relevant story.** Talk about *why* you're giving this talk today. For example, tell a story about a problem you encountered, to lead into a talk about how to solve similar problems.
- **Summarize what you'll cover** or what attendees will walk away with. This gives a high-level context of where each part of your talk falls into the larger topic.
- **Ask a friend to introduce you.** Better than introducing yourself is asking someone close to you to introduce you, to give you praise and assign credibility.

## Body

Now we are going to create an outline of your talk.

Write down some main topics or story headings you'd like to cover. What is the main point you want to get across? What are some examples, or supporting points that go to illustrate your main point? What would be a logical flow?

You can use the "Who, What, Why, How, When, Where" questions to refine your topic to create your talk sections.

Another tip is people think in 3s, so if you can break your talk down to 3 supporting points that could be helpful.

## Conclusion

For the conclusion, you will want to:

- Summarize what has been discussed.
- Review the main takeaway points.
- The "So What?" question - why does your topic matter?

- Give further resources that may be useful to attendees.
- Be sure to give the audience your contact information. An email and/or Twitter handle is good.

## Refining Your Title

Once you've worked on your body outline in a moment, you also have the chance to refine the title for your talk to be more specific!

As a reminder, you still want to:

- Try to think of something catchy but explanatory
- Beware of too-clever titles
- Create a title that can stand on its own without a blurb (for example don't use something like "CSS and Elephants")



### Exercise: Body and Title

Spend 10 minutes quickly making a few main bullet points for the body of your talk and writing down some possible talk titles refinements. Don't overthink this. Just write quickly off the top of your head.

If you have extra time you can work on introduction and conclusion as well, but the most important thing right now is the body. The rest will come from that.

Now we are going to get together in groups of 4 to share your title and outline, and this is going to be different: If we were working in person, I would be resetting the room now to an audience style so that you could get the practise speaking in front of a wall of faces. The best way that we can simulate this online today is, if you can where you are, set yourself so that you can be standing and still be visible on the screen. This might mean pointing the camera up or standing further back. You will have up to 4 minutes each for your presentation and feedback.

This time go in alphabetical order of your first names again. I am going to put you into the breakout rooms now.



## Present Outline

Now anyone who wishes will have the opportunity to share their title and outline with the main group and practice as though you're presenting in front of an online audience. Some of you will choose to do so sitting down, but some people may actually want to present standing up. If you wish to try this, go ahead and set up your space for it now.

You will have two minutes or less for your mini presentation. There are no expectations. This is not a chance to practice being great; this is just an opportunity to practice being in front of people. You may request receiving feedback if you wish. Put up your hand if you wish to share with the group.

- *Ask them if they wish for feedback.*
- *They may watch their time on the large device (such as iPad).*

*Each student will get up and talk. Time them and make them stop when the time is up. If they wanted feedback, turn to the room and ask:*

- "What did everyone think was good about this outline?"
- "What would make this outline even better?"

## 5. Becoming a Better Speaker

### In This Section

- Practising Speaking
- Do's and Don'ts
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- Handling Q&A
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### Practising Speaking

The most important thing you can do to become a better speaker is to practise! The more you speak - in front of a mirror, in front of friends, or in front of a room full of people - the more comfortable and the better you will become. You can even give your talk to a friend online.

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You can also video record yourself. Take notes on behaviors you exhibit while speaking, then practice reducing them.

When you practice, time yourself. You might be surprised by how long or short your talk is when you are speaking out loud, and it is important to know how long your talk is going to take.

If you're looking for opportunities to practice speaking, you might see if there is a Toastmasters in your area. They will provide you with many opportunities to speak in front of a supportive group of people, and give you tips and tools for improvement.

You can also practise at smaller meetups. Magento meetups are good for practising for Magento conferences. You can go to [meetup.com/pro/magento](https://www.meetup.com/pro/magento) to find a Magento meetup near you.

If you want to practise for Magento meetups, you could find smaller related meetups who would be interested in hearing about your Magento topic.

## Becoming a Better Speaker Do's and Don'ts

No matter how much public speaking experience you have, there is always room for improvement. Here are some do's and don'ts to help you improve.

### Do:

- **Speak slowly.** Many speakers speak too fast, but audiences almost never complain that someone went too slowly. Take pauses in between sentences. It may feel strange to you, but will seem very natural to the audience.
- **Have water available and drink it.** Most events will provide water for the speaker, but make sure you have water on hand just in case. When you find yourself going too fast, taking a drink of water is a great way to slow yourself down. It might feel like it takes forever to take a drink, but the audience doesn't mind.
- **Vary your voice.** This gets easier with practice. You don't want to speak in a monotone, so make sure you have some inflection in your tone.
- **Look into your camera.** It will make people feel like you are making eye contact with them!
- **If you're standing, keep your hands above your waist.** If you do this, you will find yourself gesturing naturally.
- **Remember to breathe.**

- **Practice without notes.** Even if you'd like to have your notes with you to make you less nervous, practicing your talk without notes helps you map your content to your thought process. You already know your subject matter, so avoid trying to memorize your notes and script verbatim. This will help your talk sound more natural and for you to feel better about deviating from your script.

#### Don't:

- **Don't drink too much coffee.** You're already jittery from nerves, so you don't need a coffee buzz on top of it!
- **Don't turn away from the audience.** Both in person and online, if you need to turn around for any reason -- like if your slides are projected behind you and you want to point something out, make sure that you keep your face pointed toward the audience as you point.
- **Don't use filler words like "um."** You might not even notice you are doing this so ask a friend to point it out in rehearsal or record yourself and take notes. To help yourself break the filler words habit, take a small breath or a sip of water instead.
- **Don't read your slides or notes directly.** If you must, make sure you look up from your notes, and ad lib at least a little bit.

## Handling Nerves

Everyone gets nervous about public speaking. It is a part of being human. In fact, it's hard-wired: for our cavemen ancestors, any time more than 5 pairs of eyes were looking at them at once, that meant that in all likelihood they were about to die. We still react that way when we get up in front of a group of people and see them all watching us.

Keep in mind that your audience is on your side – they want to see you succeed, and all of them would be nervous if they were in your shoes. In fact, it's okay to admit that you are nervous – people will be sympathetic.

Here are some things you can do to help soothe your nerves:

- **Practice!** It really does get easier with practice. The more you practice the better you will know your material and the more confident you will be.
- **Sleep.** If you are well-rested, you will do a better job. Resist the urge to network or socialize too much the night before.
- **Exercise.** The best way to get rid of nervous energy is to burn it off. Physiologically, the reason you get nervous is so that you will have the energy and adrenaline to fight or flee from your predator. Running or getting some other



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form of exercise is a great way to burn off that nervous energy and convince your body that the danger is over.

- **Breathe.** When we get nervous, we tend to take shallow breaths into our chest. This is a part of the body's preparation for fight or flight, and it actually deprives the brain of some of its important oxygen. Take long slow breaths into your belly, and this will help calm you and clear your mind. Be sure to take breaths:
  1. Before getting on stage
  2. When you're on stage before you start talking, and
  3. Every so often during the talk
- **Dress comfortably.** Being body-conscious never helps, so make sure you are comfortable in whatever you are wearing.
- **Take time for yourself before you speak.** This helps you compose yourself and get mentally prepared. You could go for a walk, listen to some favorite music, go over your notes, or just take some really deep breaths.
- **Know the stage.** If you're in person, try to find a time before you give your talk to see the room where you will be speaking. If you're online, do a full tech rehearsal – lights on, microphone on, and try to use the same software that you'll be presenting on, like Zoom or Blue Jeans.
- **Use your own devices.** If you have your own laptop, clicker, etc., you will be more comfortable with your equipment. If you won't be using your own devices, come early to ensure you're able to get your notes onto the system and that you can use the system with ease.
- **Adopt a persona.** This doesn't mean don't be yourself, it just means be the Speaker version of yourself. For instance, if you tend to talk with your hands when you are nervous, embrace that and make it a part of your speaker persona. You will behave differently when you are in front of a big group of people: go with that and don't fight it.
- **Be excited.** Nervousness could actually be excitement. There's no chemical difference between feeling excited and anxious, it's the same physical state, so if you think you're nervous, turn it around and remind yourself that you're just excited.

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## Handling Q&A

Many talks have an audience questions-and-answer session at the end.

### Timing

Ask the organizers in advance what the expectations are. Try timing your talk when you rehearse it and make sure you've left room for an adequate amount of Q&A time, if that's something you'll be expected to do.

How much time should you allow for Q&A? If the organizers haven't specified this for you, it usually depends on the length of your whole session. In general, 10-20 minutes is adequate. For example, if your whole presentation takes up a 45-minute slot you might want to allow 35 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for questions.

### Interspersing Q&A

Some people prefer to take questions throughout their talk rather than holding them until the end. Let your audience know up front what you prefer, bearing in mind that if your audience will be using a microphone due to the size of the room or the fact that your talk is being recorded, you'll need to give the room technician a heads-up about your Q&A plans so they're ready with the audience microphone as needed.

### Don't Forget to Ask for Questions!

If you're saving the Q&A until the end, don't forget to do it once you finish your talk! To remind yourself, you can add a slide at the end of your talk saying thanks and asking for questions.

### Repeat the Question Back to the Audience

Unless the audience is mic'd, repeat each question before answering. Your audience and anyone later watching the video (if your talk is being recorded) will thank you.

Even if the audience and recording can hear the questions, sometimes it's nice to repeat the question for everyone to hear it again, or to phrase the question more clearly.

Some people are especially nervous about the Q&A because difficult situations could arise. Here are some tips to make it easier.

### **Tricky Questions**

Often speakers who are brand new to public speaking, and even ones that aren't, are nervous about getting asked a question that they feel they don't know the answer to or that has a tricky answer.

There are a few ways to handle that situation:

- Remember to repeat the question back to the audience. This buys you a little bit of time to think about how to handle the question.
- Don't be afraid to admit that you don't know. The audience will have far more respect for you for admitting that you don't know than if you try to fudge it and fail.
- You can say something like: "That's a good question. I'm not sure about the answer, but let me look into that for you – could you send me a tweet or email after the session and we'll stay in touch?"
- You can throw it to the audience with something like: "Good question! I'm actually not sure, does anyone here have any ideas?"
- Throw the question to a friend or colleague in the audience: "Good question! My colleague Jane actually knows a lot about that – hey Jane, do you have any ideas on this one?" You can also talk to your colleagues/friends beforehand and make sure they're OK with being put on the spot like this.

### **The Smarty-Pants**

Handling the “smarty-pants” in the audience who thinks they know better than you and goes on and on and on is a big fear. It doesn't happen often, but if it does, one thing to keep in mind is that in these sorts of situations, other people in the audience are thinking about how much of an idiot the know-it-all is, not about how you're handling it. Don't be afraid to cut someone off if they're monopolizing the Q&A or derailing it. It's possible to do this politely but firmly: "I think we're going to have to move on now because time is running out and I really want to get a few more questions in."

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## Unrelated Questions

Sometimes people will ask questions that have little or nothing to do with your talk and answering the question will derail the conversation. One way of handling this is to say, "That's a good question, but it's outside of the scope of what we're talking about. I'd be happy to answer it for you privately after."

## Silence

What if you finish your talk, throw open the floor to the audience and there are no questions? That's totally OK! There aren't always questions.

- You can have one or two people you know in the audience ready to ask a question, or even chime in with a different angle. For example, if you're a developer, have a designer ready with an observation on your topic from that point of view.
- You can also ask and answer your own questions. For example: "Something I didn't go into in depth in the talk, but that you might be wondering about, is..." or "A question I've had come up before is..."
- You can ask the audience a question. For example: "Something I didn't go into in depth in the talk, but that you might be wondering about, is..." or "A question I've had come up before is..."

## Errors

Don't be afraid to correct errors after your talk. If someone points out an error – either during the Q&A or later – go ahead and update your presentation online and include the correction if you give the same talk again. Be sure to verify that the "correction" is actually accurate before doing this!

## Contact & Slides

Once the Q&A is over, let people know how to connect with you once you're done and where to find your slides. Give out your Twitter handle and/or email. You can also include this information on your final slide so that it's up on the screen behind you while you take questions.

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## Getting post-talk feedback

We often forget this part of the process, but getting feedback after your talk is really important if you ever want to get better at public speaking.

You want to get feedback about both your content and your speaking style. You want feedback about whether your content was interesting, well organized, easy to follow, etc. This is true whether you plan to ever give this same talk again or not because a lot of the knowledge gained can be generalized. You also want to know about your speaking technique: How was the pace, volume, approachability, etc.

Where can you get feedback? Ask conference organizers if they send out a survey, and whether you can see your own feedback. Ask people you know who were there for feedback. The more specific your questions the better the feedback you will get. (Don't ask "What did you think," ask "Was there something you thought could have been better? Could you hear me? Did I speak too quickly or too slowly?" etc).

Keep in mind that asking people for feedback directly will be different from asking organizers for the feedback that was sent to them. People tend to be softer and kinder when speaking to you, as opposed to when they think that their feedback is only going to organizers.

## 6. Creating Great Slides

### In This Section

- Good slide decks
- More tips

### Good Slide Decks

Let's first start with a Public Service Announcement. You do **not** need slides with every talk. Some talks can stand on their own.

Slides can be your friend and your enemy – so, don't rely on them completely.

Something to ask yourself: if the slide projector were to break down, could you give your talk without it?

That said, when used correctly, slides are amazing and can bring a lot to your talk.

Used in the right way, slides emphasize and help you get your points across.

Let's look at some tips for creating good slide decks.

Give your slides a theme. It could be that you illustrate all your points with lolcats, or that they all use the same background and typography. Whatever it is, having a visually unified deck makes all the difference.

Many speakers end up with a look to their slides that they stick with from presentation to presentation. This is great and makes their talks stand out and feel part of a cohesive set. It may not be the route you want to go, but it's something to consider.

Don't use a default slideshow theme, like the templates that come with Keynote or Powerpoint. We've all seen them a thousand times, and they look generic and boring.

Don't write out what you are going to be saying. This can be a flexible rule for useful, important quotes but nobody likes someone reading lines from a slide.

Make your text size readable. Think of the person sitting at the back of the room. Try to use 24 point font and larger when you can.

Use code sparingly. Nobody likes pages and pages of code on a screen.

Include a slide at the end of your deck to thank your audience. You can also use a closing slide to remind you to do your Q&A.

Enhance the mood of your talk with slides. Use them to add humor and to help get your point across.

Check the copyright on your images. If you're using a Creative Commons graphic, remember to give proper attribution to its creator.

Consider sketching something original, creating your own images, or using your own photography. Make it personal and unique.

Slides don't need images. You can just have words.

Check your contrast on a range of screens to make sure it'll be legible.

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Also consider your choice of color. You can check color contrast using an online tool to be sure it'll be easily readable - you just plug in your background and foreground color codes and the tool will tell you if it's in the acceptable range.

Take care when selecting fonts. Don't use a fancy font that's cute but unreadable – and don't use too many different fonts together.

Make sure you're creating your slides for the right screen size. Try to find out in advance what aspect ratio the projector will have. Stay away from edges of the screen to be safe, keeping key information out of those areas.

Now let's look at a few examples from real slide decks.

This is a good example of a slide that sets the mood of the whole presentation. The deck supports the presentation and acts not just as useful information, but as a backdrop, to help create a cohesive talk.

This is a deck that stands on its own, either with or without the verbal part of the presentation. It carries a theme throughout the slides and delivers the message with clarity. It also demonstrates a strong personality, something you shouldn't shy away from with your deck.

This deck has a strong sense of design. It clearly delivers the message of an expansive subject area. Slides are used to break down this complexity, and it's all done with a clear vision and a deck that stands on its own, apart from the talk. You'll find a collection of more tips on creating great slides - and other resources - at <http://getspeak.in>. There are links to contrast calculators and examples of inspirational slide decks that you can explore at your leisure.

## More Tips

Practice going through your deck using an external monitor, using a presentation mode which lets you see your notes. Think about bringing your notes printed out on paper in case the presentation setup doesn't end up allowing you to see your internal notes.

Bring a backup of your slides with you on a thumb drive, including any special fonts you've used. Save the presentation in a few different formats, including PDF. If for some

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reason there's any issue with your computer, you'll be able to easily borrow someone else's and ensure that your type looks as you intended.

Upload your slides before your talk if possible, and include a link to them at the end of your slides. Slideshare and SpeakerDeck are two good services where you can upload slides. Remember to tweet out the link afterwards and send it to the event organizers so they can post it.

If you start to do more speaking, invest in a presentation clicker to advance your slides without having to use a keyboard or mouse. It'll let you stand away from your laptop and keep your hands in a more natural position while you speak.

### **Live Demos**

It can be very tempting to do a live demo and hop back and forth between your demo and the slides. This can be hard to watch, especially if something goes wrong during the demo, as it often does. Consider recording these bits instead and embedding the videos within your presentation.

## **Poll**

Please take a moment now to answer this poll question.

## **Workshop Material**

If anyone would like a copy of the workshop content and slides, go to <http://diversein.tech/magentoworkshop2021>

## **What's Next**

1. You've now seen first-hand that this workshop is the real deal. It really does help with impostor syndrome. Many of you really will walk away feeling motivated and ready to start speaking, in small or even big ways. (And also, side note, it's totally



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ok if you're not feeling ready yet. Everyone is on their own journey.) You can see why it is transforming WordPress, why their conferences are going from 10% to 50% or more diverse speaker rosters after doing this work. It is an effective tool that yields tangible results.

I want to see the same happen for Magento. I want to see the landscape of who is speaking up change, which will result in a change of who is organizing things, who is making decisions, what ideas are being put forward, so that the community and the products that you all create in Magento are more inclusive and have fresh ideas that benefit everyone. All because a mix of different kinds of people, all with different perspectives, got up on that stage to speak.

If you agree and you can see the potential, if you love this work, are you interested in becoming a trainer of this workshop to keep it going in Magento? Would you like to run it in your local area to see changes start happening at home, and to see folks who you train go on to the global stages? Would you like to give back to the community and make a difference? If you're ready or just curious, you can learn how to hold your own Speaker Diversity Workshop on Thursday, September 9 at 5-8pm UTC. You can let us know that you're interested in the feedback form.

2. We want to make sure that you continue getting support after this workshop. The speaker directory is in place to put you in touch with community members who are willing to mentor. You'll also find out there about future speaking opportunities.
3. We'd also love to hear your success stories there! Did you speak? Did it go well? Did something come out of it -- did you start organizing or leading something? Did you get a job? Did you start getting more involved with the community? Were you asked to speak again? Etc.

Letting us know that you spoke and what happened afterwards helps us with continuing to do this impactful work. We are collecting the stats to tell the story of how it went, how many start speaking after this, how many conferences and how many cities and countries were impacted, and collecting the stories so that we can share with others what happens when you start getting on stage.

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[bit.ly/MagentoSpeakerDirectory](https://bit.ly/MagentoSpeakerDirectory)

You are also welcome to share your follow-up results and stories with Sherrie or myself privately.

## Please fill out survey

Speaking of collecting data and stories, this is going to start right now with our post-workshop questionnaire. Please open it up now to start filling it out while I finish talking.

*Click to show form*

<https://forms.gle/5wGa7Qq1Su74rjSR8>

We'd like feedback on the workshop itself.

We'd like to know if you are planning on applying to speak at events, camps, and cons, and if so, which ones.

A question about becoming a trainer of this work.

We may send out a follow-up questionnaire in 6 months to check in on how things are progressing for you, as well. If you wind up speaking sooner, let us know and we'll send the questionnaire to you sooner.

## Thank you

I want to give a big thank you to Sherrie who invited me to give these workshops and has been the main driving force behind them.

And thank you to Allie who has been helping me behind the scenes and is such a fantastic co-trainer!

## Stay in touch

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Please stay in touch with us!