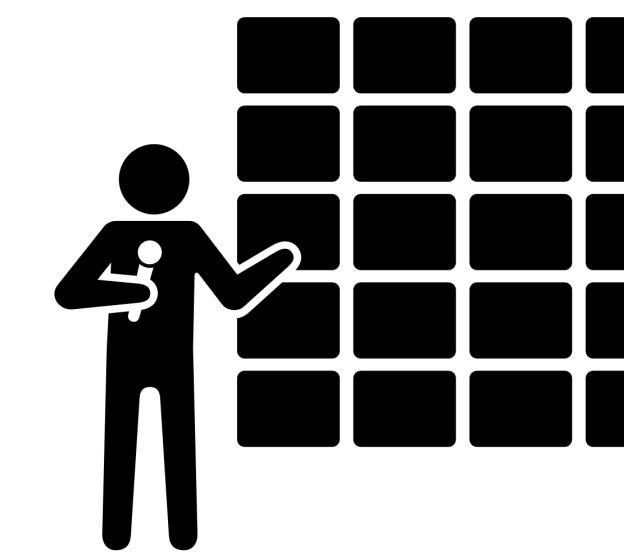
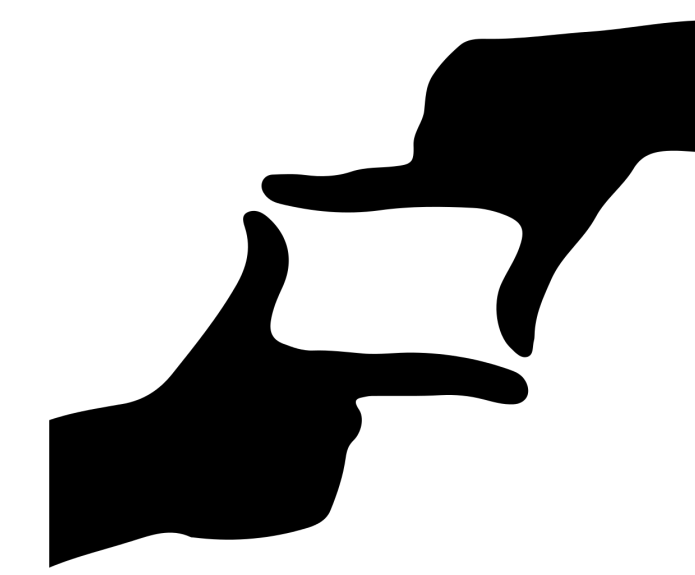
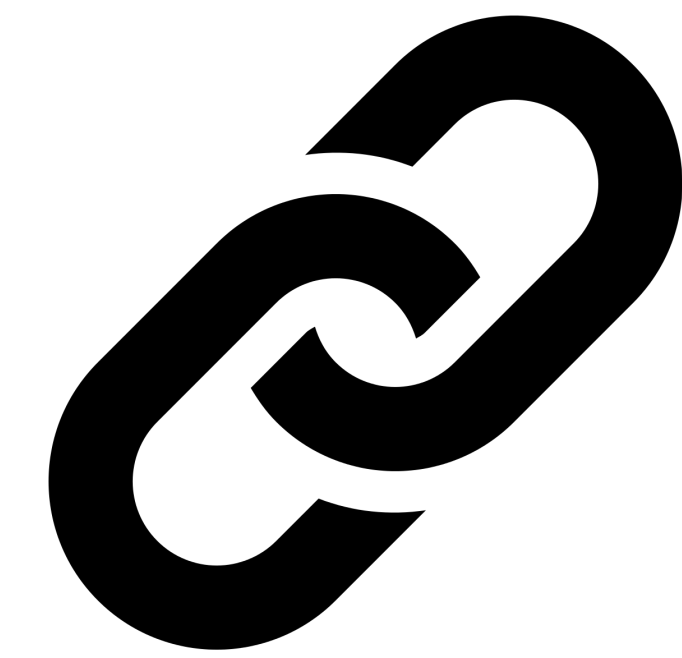


Presenting for Impact

A Guide to Presenting Information Architecture to Stakeholders

by Gail Swanson



SET THE CONTEXT

Your audience hasn't been swimming in the details of your work like you have. Get everyone warmed up and focused by sharing how the information architecture contributes to business goals and ties to other efforts.

- Use provisional goals if none have been defined
- Connect using familiar language
- Confirm where you are in the process
- Indicate what input you need from stakeholders this time

FOCUS ON IDEAS

To create a common understanding of the information space you've designed, begin building a mental model for stakeholders. Help everyone understand the sum of all the parts.

- Provide simplified models
- Describe the experience and *then* the information architecture that generates it
- Share your process and explorations
- Use design rationale to tell the story rather than as defense of an idea

GUIDE ATTENTION

Explain the right details, not every detail. Direct your stakeholder's attention to areas that drive decisions and build understanding. Let them know what you need them to react to and the level of granularity they should focus on.

- Paint the big picture before focusing in on an area of detail
- Break the discussion into chunks to prevent information overload
- If now isn't the time to comment on details, let them know when they will have that opportunity.

BRING IT TO LIFE

Deliverables are the artifacts, not the story. Use simplified diagrams or models to build common understanding. Avoid narrating your sitemaps and userflows, leaving your audience to interpret their meaning.

- Create a presentation deck for the discussion and provide deliverables later for reference
- Use simplified diagrams or models as powerful tools
- Show examples of similar techniques in the wild

ENGAGE

Stakeholder presentations significantly impact projects. Set yourself up for success by using public speaking techniques to command the room. Physical cues such as standing up and confident body language give your work gravitas.

- Stand up or position yourself at the head of the room
- Focus on the conversation. Have someone else take notes
- Be an active listener. Probe for understanding before reacting
- Facilitate the conversation



PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

1. Architect the conversation
2. Prepare for logistic failures
3. Designate a note taker and other team roles
4. Set the meeting goal and communicate expectations
5. Practice your talking points
6. Present clearly, with authenticity
7. Listen to the audience
8. Probe for understanding
9. Summarize decisions and action items