



By: Colonel Michael Lawhorn

I have delivered, and I have been on the receiving end of less than stellar briefings that usually involve a lot of tedious Power Point slides.

Now there is plenty of advice out there both on personal briefing techniques and how to make better slides. In fact, on my short professional reading list, is Garr Reynolds's [Presentation Zen](#), which is both a book and a blog dedicated to helping people create and deliver better briefings.

Another way to help you create quality presentations can be by using a helpful technique called the “Wall Walk”. This technique is something I learned while serving on the Joint

Staff’s Deployable Training Team.

Our team would deploy around the world to major military exercises, and after the exercise was complete, we would conduct a Wall Walk to create post-exercise (or After Action Review) briefings to the four-star commanding generals and their staffs.

Put simply, we would develop the briefing concept and the slides, and we would hang them on the wall with tape. Then, by just walking along the wall, we could look at the entire briefing at one time and get a sense of how the thing flowed—or didn’t—and make changes as needed.

Sure, you can zoom out on the computer and look at 10 or 12 slides at once, and try to do the same thing, but I think posting full-sized slides on the wall gives you a much better appreciation of the flow of the entire briefing. It’s like the difference between reading a proposed speech out loud versus reading it quietly to yourself—there’s just an added value there that you can’t replicate by taking a shortcut. Plus, putting the slides on the wall lends itself to better collaboration because you can get more of your team members involved in the creative process.

You can also use this technique before you’ve made a single slide, right as you’re starting to think about the briefing. You can take Post-It notes and lay them out on your desk with a single word or concept on each one, moving them around, adding or deleting as you see fit.



*Spc. Federico Arce offers a post-it note listing key information needed during a classroom practical exercise to refine a simulated process. The use of white boards and butcher paper can also be helpful when “Wall Walking” Photo by Bob Harrison, FORSCOM Public Affairs.*

Wall Walking can also help you to review papers—it’s not just for slide decks. I’ve taped written communication strategies to the wall to ensure the entire thing flows and sometimes found I could make a strategy more useful by rearranging the order of certain sections.

We all know that after working on and reading the same paper numerous times, it’s easy to miss things. Doing a “Wall Walk” lets you look at your draft in a new way, and allows you to catch other things you may have missed.

Our videographers and PA broadcast specialists can even use this to layout a concept for video production, much like creating a story board, where you’re putting shot concepts on notes and then putting them on the wall to get a feel for the overall story.

Wall Walking can help you throughout the creative process, whether constructing the briefing at the very beginning or making sure that a completed product flows. It’s equally useful for slide presentations, written products, video presentations, and it increases your team’s ability to collaborate effectively. It’s a proven technique, and one that I hope helps you a great deal.

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