

Brave clients get what they deserve

By [Nick Warren](#), issued by [Mann Made](#)

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The great thing about a brave client is that they can scare you with their demands. I mean the clients that are driven by the commercial imperative to inform and inspire. The clients that want something that is both strategically smart and creatively unique. These are the clients that make my job so much harder, and my work that much better.



Telkom Business is a brave client. They have a huge story to tell to a blue chip audience of deeply interested businesses and organisations, all of who are very invested in the future growth and success of the telecommunications industry in SA. This is an audience that is hungry for growth and development, but at the same time looking for the kind of secure infrastructure and reliability that they can build their own telecommunications strategies upon.

So when it came to positioning their future offerings due to be released over the next twelve months to this select audience, Head of Communications, Mala Suriah and CEO Dr Brian Armstrong asked us to come up with a way to dramatise the presentation in a unique and memorable manner.

A real creative challenge with a clear communication objective - what a pleasure.

After you've mined and exhausted all of the comparisons, metaphors, endorsements, graphs, graphics, animations and anecdotes that festoon the liveliest PowerPoint, Keynote or Prezi you are often left with the feeling that you've missed something. All the elements of the story are there, the headlines are concise, the visuals are compelling, the graphics and animations are cool, the videos rock, and nothing is missing, except that certain... what is it?

I suggest that it is what we call 'Physical PowerPoint'. It's that moment in a presentation where some surprising, delightful, or even disturbing manifestation of the message comes to life and smashes its way past polite attentiveness and blasts its way into living memory.

Sometimes this can be as simple as the presenter stepping away from the podium, or interrupting his metronomic stride up and down the stage, or otherwise breaking the rhythm of a practised delivery, but most effective is when you break the convention and push through the comfort zone and invite a new level of participation beyond passive observation.



As a quick but relevant aside, one of my biggest regrets in life (there are many) is that I missed a PowerPoint presentation by lead singer of the Talking Heads, David Byrne, a few years ago in the Royal Albert Hall. To this day I don't know what he talked about, I don't know how many slides he used or what was on those slides, but I am sure that he had something so compelling to say that not even PowerPoint could stand in his way.

Unfortunately most people that make presentations are not rock stars like David Byrne, but in a time where housewife bloggers can become blockbuster novelists I do believe that there are ways to turn fifteen minutes of 'lame' into so many minutes of fabulous engagement for anyone with a good enough reason to climb onto a corporate stage.

The way we achieved this with Dr Brian's presentation was by suddenly supporting his presentation with modern dance. A group of eight dancers - each carrying an icon of communication media - literally and physically converged around the anchor point of fixed line telecommunications in perfect choreography with his oration.

This was not easy to achieve but it was delightful to experience. And this is the other - and perhaps the most important aspect of client bravery - the leap of faith that they take after the pitch of a potentially exciting but totally untested idea.

When a client gives you that kind of trust, you can only repay it with your best work.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Nick Warren is creative director at Mann Made Media.

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