n Los Angeles, dog and cat overpopulation tends to be heaviest in lowincome neighborhoods. Campaigns featuring Betty White holding a kitten or with clever slogans such

as "Desex and the City"
just aren't going to
fly with the
mostly African
American and
Latino pet
owners in
these communities. So in

Campaigns We Love

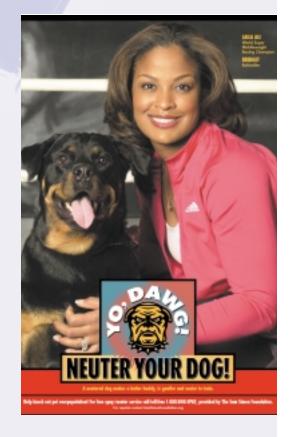
appearing in bus shelters and on billboards in targeted neighborhoods), and according to Rachel Paap, director of community programs, the mobile clinic is consistently booked a

solid month in advance.
That's a good indicator of success, as well as a reminder that when it comes to public campaigns, the truly clever slogan is the one your audience responds to.

nities. So in
May 2004, the
Sam Simon
Foundation launched
the "Yo, Dawg! Neuter
Your Dog!" campaign to speak
loudly and clearly to this critically
important audience.

Known best for his work on *Cheers*, *It's Garry Shandling's Show*, and *The Simpsons*, Simon started his foundation in 2003 with the mission of "saving the lives of dogs to enrich the lives of people." Simon is also the manager of WBO Heavyweight Champion Lamon Brewster, so it was a short leap to engaging Brewster and other boxing stars (such as Laila Ali, pictured at right) in the "Yo, Dawg!" campaign.

The foundation operates a mobile spay/neuter clinic to service communities that respond to the ads (which are



"I didn't know much about using film," Atkinson recalls, "I didn't even have a digital camera."

free-range thinking

# Once\_upon\_a\_time.ppt

How can PowerPoint, which usually turns presentations into a deadly spray of bullets, help you tell compelling stories?

Cliff Atkinson has found a way.

ike so many other bright and hopeful thirtysomethings living in California at the turn of the millennium, Cliff Atkinson rode the Internet rollercoaster

through many exhilarating highs and stomachchurning lows. When he finally stepped off in 2001. he was filled with emotionsdisgust at the wretched excess he had seen, fear of an uncertain futureas well as a strong desire to share his story. So he decided to produce a music video.

But he did have PowerPoint, and Atkinson felt this was the perfect medium for combining images, words,

and music into a personal statement about his experiences. While his finished product never found a wide audience, the process of creation ultimately set Atkinson on a path that now puts him in front of large audiences around the U.S.

"I've always looked at PowerPoint from a completely different perspective," says Atkinson, and his new book, Beyond Bullet

Points, was written to help others see what he sees. Most notably, Atkinson views PowerPoint as a tool for telling stories, and his book features a Story Template that can help you create more engaging presentations without, believe it or not, a single bullet. ►



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Newsletter edited by Carolyn Ramsay.

► "No one needs special training or technology to understand a story," writes Atkinson in Beyond Bullet Points, "because it's the way humans have been communicating with one another throughout history." Consequently, a presentation that follows the basic architecture of storytelling should be inherently easier to understand than the usual bullet-laden data dump.

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	18 Minute Column

With this in mind, Atkinson designed the "Beyond Bullet Points Story Template" (pictured above), incorporating the threeact structure that has ably served storytellers since Aristotle. By filling in the blanks, presenters can systematically build an outline for their own story-driven presentations. And even though the challenge of translating that outline into visually interesting slides still remains, presenters can rest assured that they are building on a solid foundation.

Thorough instructions on how to use the template would require more space than is available here (Atkinson devotes over fifty pages of his book to this subject), so the following is intended to help you decide if this tool is right for you. If so, you can download a free copy of the template at Atkinson's web site (www.sociablemedia. com), and Beyond Bullet Points is available on-line or at most book stores.

### Act I: Set up the story

When an audience assembles for a presentation, even though they have implicitly expressed interest simply by showing up, they still want to be convinced they have come to the right place. "Act I must answer the emotional questions 'What's in it for me?' and 'Why should I pay attention in the first place?" Atkinson says.

To help presenters address these questions, Atkinson's template divides Act I into five scene-setting components:

- · The setting: where and when does this story take place?
- The protagonist: who is driving the action?
- · The imbalance: what has changed that necessitates a response?
- The balance: what do you want to see happen?
- · The solution: how are you going to bring about this change?

By answering these questions at the outset, the presenter ensures that the audience knows where they are and where they will be going over the course of the presentation. And that's critically important: without this knowledge, audience members can easily get lost or confused, and from there it can be a short step to checking out entirely.

#### Act II: Develop the action

"Act II," writes Atkinson, "is where the intellectual rubber meets the road and you deliver the reasons why people should accept the solution you proposed at the end of Act I." If you only have five minutes for your talk, column one of this section asks you to identify the three most important points for your audience to remember. If you have fifteen minutes, you can use column two to add the supporting evidence that underscores each of your three main points. And if you have 45 minutes (or more), the third column lets you develop an even more comprehensive argument.

Storytelling considerations aside, the discipline of completing this section can be particularly useful to presenters who find themselves on panels. "If you've got a 45 minute presentation planned and suddenly you've only got five minutes," Atkinson says, "this still prepares you to talk about your top level ideas without losing the integrity of your story."

#### Act III: Frame the resolution

Having set up the problem and made the case for a solution in the first two acts, the presenter can then use the third act to close the deal. Atkinson's template divides this act into four elements: crisis, solution, climax, and resolution. By completing this final section, presenters ensure that their talk will culminate with a sense of urgency, let the audience see their role in the proposed solution, and send them off ready to act. "It's also about connecting back to Act I and refreshing the emotional connection with the audience," Atkinson adds.

## About Cliff Atkinson

After working for StockPower.com and zBox.com. Atkinson founded Sociable Media in 2001 to help clients use media in more

engaging ways. His proficiency with PowerPoint led Microsoft to invite him to write Beyond Bullet Points (which the company published under its own banner). Atkinson has been invited to speak at the Wharton School of Business



Since the book's release in February, Atkinson has invited readers to post completed Story Templates on his web site, and he's already seen it used for a wide variety of subjects, from investor presentations to HR trainings to software demonstrations. One public interest organization used it recently to convince Florida voters to adopt a ballot initiative that would stop the gerrymandering of Congressional districts.

One warning to prospective users, though: once your presentations start telling stories, there may be no going back. "One of the most consistent reactions I get when people go through this process," says Atkinson, "is that they look at their old presentations and say, 'Oh my God! I can't believe what I was doing." While the Story Template may not be the antidote for every ailing presentation, it's hard to argue with the logic behind it. After all, if you want to bring a presentation back to life, taking away the bullets is an excellent way to begin.

