SAMPLE REPORT · KEYNOTE REVIEW

A real Room Review report. *Keynote edition.*

This is the kind of report you get after a 40-minute Room Review. It is a real report from a real session, shared with the client's permission. Their name, organisation, role, event and date have been removed.

COACH	SESSION	LENGTH	TALK
Richard Ford	Room Review	40 minutes	18-minute conference keynote

THE SCENARIO

Delivering an 18-minute conference keynote about leading innovation under pressure.

The client is preparing an 18-minute keynote for a major leadership and innovation conference, followed by a short chair-led conversation. The session is designed to raise their profile, sharpen their core message and generate post-event conversations with organisers, leaders and potential clients.

The audience will include senior leaders, founders and change-makers from a range of industries, all interested in practical approaches to innovation in challenging times.

Overall assessment

Story

Clear expertise, with an opportunity to sharpen the central narrative.

Presence

Strong authority and connection, with excellent platform confidence.

Impact

High potential, with clearer calls to action needed to increase memorability.

Scores are Richard's own judgement of this talk on a 100-point scale. They are not a standard test.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The keynote has authority and relevance, but the central through-line needs to arrive earlier and land more clearly.

The speaker is credible and engaging, with a strong command of the subject and a natural connection with the audience. However, the talk currently delays the audience problem, introduces too many parallel ideas, and ends with a softer-than-needed call to action, which reduces overall impact.

AT-A-GLANCE RECOMMENDATION

PRIORITY	WHY IT MATTERS	EXPECTED SHIFT
1 **Sharpen the through-line**	Helps the audience grasp the core problem and message earlier, increasing clarity and engagement.	Stronger early attention and better message retention.
2 **Increase contrast and emphasis**	Reduces complexity and helps the most important ideas stand out, making the talk easier to follow and remember.	Clearer structure and higher impact for key points.
3 **End with a firmer takeaway**	Turns insight into action, giving the audience a clear next step and a stronger reason to act.	More actionable outcomes and a more memorable close.

What is already strong

The keynote has several clear strengths that create a solid foundation for even greater impact.

Clear expertise.

The speaker's deep knowledge and lived experience establish strong authority and credibility.

Good stage confidence.

Calm, assured delivery with natural energy and presence.

Useful case example.

Real-world example effectively illustrates the ideas and makes them tangible.

Strong audience rapport.

Genuine connection with the audience, with good interaction and engagement throughout.

What is weakening the result

There are a few key areas that currently limit the overall impact and make the message harder to retain.

Opening takes too long to define the tension.

The audience problem and stakes arrive later than ideal, reducing early urgency and attention.

Too many ideas.

Several parallel themes are introduced, which compete for attention and dilute the central message.

Close is thoughtful but not memorable enough.

The ending lands well but lacks a strong, clear call to action.

Practical takeaway is under-emphasised.

The audience could do more with a clearer, simpler next step.

What to prioritise next

Focusing on a few high-leverage improvements will make the keynote clearer, more memorable and more actionable.

Sharpen the through-line.

Bring the central audience problem and core message earlier, and keep a tighter line throughout.

Increase contrast and emphasis.

Make the key ideas stand out more clearly, with less parallel content and stronger signposting.

End with a firmer takeaway.

Close with a clear, memorable call to action that gives the audience a concrete next step.

ROOM CONTEXT AND SUCCESS CRITERIA

This keynote needs to raise profile, make one practical idea memorable, and create high-quality conversations after the talk.

THE ROOM

- A major leadership and innovation conference bringing together senior leaders, founders and change-makers from a range of industries.
- The keynote is 18 minutes, followed by a short chair-led conversation with the event host.
- The audience includes senior leaders, founders and change-makers who are interested in practical approaches to innovation in challenging times.

THE AUDIENCE JOURNEY

Interested
Curious about the speaker and topic.

Engaged
Focused and connecting with the key message.

Persuaded
Convinced of the value and relevance.

Remembering
One clear idea sticks and can be retold.

Talking
Generates high-quality conversations after the event.

Why this matters

Keynote success is not only about applause in the room. It is about what people remember, what they do with the ideas, and the quality of conversations it creates afterwards. A keynote that raises profile, makes one practical idea memorable and sparks follow-up conversations delivers greater long-term value for the speaker and the organisation.

AUDIENCE PROFILE

AUDIENCE GROUP	WHAT THEY CARE ABOUT	WHAT WILL LOSE THEM
Senior leaders	Strategic insight and big picture. Practical ways to drive impact. Relevance to current challenges. Confidence in the speaker's expertise.	Overly theoretical or academic. Lack of business relevance. Weak evidence or examples.
Founders	Fresh perspectives and ideas. Practical tools and approaches. Real-world examples and lessons. Energy and optimism.	Generic or surface-level content. Too much focus on large corporates. Lack of actionable takeaways. Low energy or cautious messaging.
Change-makers	Practical ideas to take back and use. Inspiration and motivation. Examples of successful change. Connection to a wider community.	Vague or abstract messages. No clear actions or next steps. Limited relevance to their context. A keynote that feels purely promotional.

WHAT IS ALREADY WORKING

The speaker already brings credibility, calm authority and moments of genuine audience connection.

The keynote shows a number of clear strengths that create a solid foundation. These elements build trust with the audience, keep attention and help the core message land. Preserving and amplifying these strengths will increase the overall impact of future keynotes.

1 Strong platform confidence

OBSERVED EVIDENCE

Comfortable posture and natural movement on stage.

Steady, well-paced delivery.

Shows ease and confidence throughout.

WHY IT MATTERS

Creates immediate credibility and trust.

Helps the audience relax and stay engaged.

Allows the message to land more clearly.

2 Credible expertise

OBSERVED EVIDENCE

Clearly knows the field and current challenges.

Uses relevant and up-to-date examples.

Answers questions with authority and practical insight.

WHY IT MATTERS

Builds trust and legitimacy with a senior audience.

Positions the speaker as a credible peer and thought leader.

Increases openness to new ideas.

3 Good audience warmth

OBSERVED EVIDENCE

Regular eye contact across the room.

Uses appropriate humour and personal asides.

Conversational tone that feels authentic and human.

WHY IT MATTERS

Builds a positive emotional connection.

Keeps energy levels high.

Makes complex topics more accessible and memorable.

4 Useful real-world example

OBSERVED EVIDENCE

One strong case study from a real project.

Describes the context, challenge, approach and outcome.

Links the example clearly to the central message.

WHY IT MATTERS

Grounds the message in reality.

Helps the audience see practical application.

Increases believability and recall.

Innovation becomes useful when people can act on it under pressure.

Keynote script excerpt, in context. This line captures a key theme in a clear and memorable way. It links innovation to real-world action, reflects the practical tone of the session and resonates with the audience's current challenges.

EXHIBIT 1. STRENGTHS THAT SHOULD BE PRESERVED

KEEP	WHY	USE MORE DELIBERATELY
Platform confidence	Creates credibility and keeps the audience engaged.	Continue to open and close with the same calm authority and presence.
Domain expertise	Builds trust and positions the speaker as a thought leader.	Weave in more current examples and data points.
Audience warmth	Strengthens connection and makes the content memorable.	Use humour and personal stories at key transition points.
Real-world example	Shows practical application and increases believability.	Include more case studies to illustrate different use cases.

WHAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY

The keynote currently asks the audience to track too many ideas before the main point becomes unmistakable.

The talk is intelligent and well-intentioned, with a strong message and valuable insights. However, the current sequence introduces multiple themes before sufficient tension is created, which dilutes the impact and makes the central point harder to

retain.

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1 The opening sets context before it creates tension.

OBSERVED WORDING

"Today I want to share a bit about the changing landscape, some of the trends we're seeing, and a few lessons from my work with clients …"

RECOMMENDATION

Open with a sharper hook that shows why this matters now, using a real-world scenario, surprising fact or clear contrast to create early tension.

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2 Several good ideas compete for attention.

OBSERVED WORDING

"We need to think differently about technology, leadership, culture and the way we work together …"

RECOMMENDATION

Focus on a smaller number of core ideas, with one clear through-line that everything else supports.

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3 Some transitions reduce momentum.

OBSERVED WORDING

"And that leads me to the next point, which is a little different, but related …"

RECOMMENDATION

Use more purposeful bridges that show how each section builds the argument and increases the sense of progress.

4 The close lands softly rather than decisively.

OBSERVED WORDING

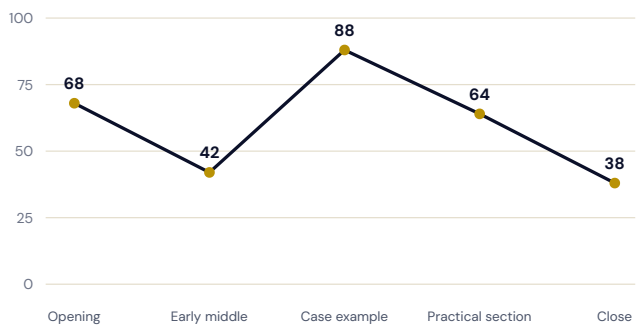
"So, those are a few thoughts to leave you with, and I'm excited to see what you do with these ideas …"

RECOMMENDATION

End with a clear, memorable call to action that reinforces the central message and gives the audience a specific next step.

Where attention drops

RELATIVE ATTENTION LEVEL, AN ESTIMATE AND NOT A MEASUREMENT



Key takeaway. Engagement peaks during the real-world case example, where the message becomes concrete and relatable. Attention is lower in the early middle section, where multiple ideas are introduced, and again towards the close, where the landing is less decisive.

Commercial risk

If the audience cannot quickly summarise the central idea afterwards, visibility and post-event opportunity are reduced.

When the main message is not immediately clear, people are less likely to repeat it, share it with others or explore further engagement, which can limit the longer-term value of the keynote for the client.

STORY REVIEW

The content becomes more memorable when the keynote is built around one clear sentence and a cleaner three-part arc.

Current structure

A strong range of content, but the narrative can feel diffuse, with multiple shifts in focus.

01 **Context**
Sets the scene and market background.

02 **Trends**
Shares key trends and data points.

03 **Examples**
Several examples from different sectors.

04 **Reflection**
Personal reflections and lessons learned.

05 **Close**
Ends with a forward-looking message.

Recommended structure

A clearer, more memorable flow built around one sentence and three supporting moves.

01 **Tension and stake**
Open with a real-world tension and why it matters now.

02 **Core idea**
Introduce the one key sentence that frames the talk.

03 **Three supporting moves**
Make the case through a clear, simple three-part arc.

04 **Case example**
Bring the idea to life with a focused, high-relevance example.

05 **Practical takeaway**
Translate the insight into concrete actions.

06 **Memorable close**
End with a strong, human and future-focused close.

One-sentence through-line

A clear, memorable sentence anchors the keynote and guides every section.

> *Innovation matters most when people can turn uncertainty into a practical next move.*

Rewritten opening

A sharper opening sets up the tension, stake and core idea in a more compelling way.

> *Right now, every leader in this room is facing the same paradox. The pace of change has never been higher, yet the path forward has never felt more uncertain. In this session, I want to share a simple idea, and a practical way to turn that uncertainty into real progress.*

Three-part framework

A simple, actionable arc that makes the message easier to follow and remember.

1. Notice clearly

See what is changing, separate signal from noise and focus on what matters.

2. Decide faster

Make better decisions with the information you have, not perfect information.

3. Move together

Turn ideas into action by aligning people and building momentum across the organisation.

Why this works

A simpler structure and clearer through-line increase audience understanding, engagement and recall. It leads with a real tension, gives the audience a clear mental model, and moves from insight to example to action. This creates a more coherent journey and makes the core message significantly more memorable.

PRESENCE REVIEW

Presence is a clear strength, and a few deliberate adjustments would make the delivery feel even more purposeful.

Your natural authority, calmness and connection create a strong foundation for the message. With a few targeted refinements, you can increase emphasis at key moments and make the delivery feel even more intentional and memorable.

Delivery note. Confidence is already high. The opportunity is to increase emphasis and intention at key moments, rather than to add more energy.

DELIVERY ASSESSMENT

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT	OBSERVED EVIDENCE	RECOMMENDATION
Voice	**82**/ 100 STRONG	Clear and well-projected throughout. Warm and credible tone. Limited vocal contrast at some key turning points.	Use more vocal contrast (volume, pace and tone) at key turning points to add emphasis and make transitions more impactful.

CATEGORY	ASSESSMENT	OBSERVED EVIDENCE	RECOMMENDATION
Pace	**74**/ 100 GOOD	Overall pace is well judged and easy to follow. Tends to speed up slightly during complex explanations. Could use more deliberate pauses before key messages.	Introduce a clear pause before the central sentence in each section to increase impact and give the audience time to absorb the message.
Body language	**76**/ 100 STRONG	Confident and open posture. Natural and purposeful movement. Occasional movement during complex explanations can be a distraction.	Anchor physically at the opening and key transitions. Reduce movement during complex explanations to maintain focus.
Audience connection	**85**/ 100 STRONG	Builds rapport quickly and maintains good eye contact. Uses inclusive language and relevant examples. Could involve the audience even more at key moments.	Use a targeted question or invitation for reflection early in the session to deepen engagement and create an even stronger sense of shared purpose.
Slides and visual support	**71**/ 100 MODERATE OPPORTUNITY	Clean, professional and on brand. Visuals support the message well. Some key slides change a little too quickly for full impact.	Allow key slides to breathe longer, particularly data or framework slides, so the audience has time to absorb and reflect.

DELIVERY MOMENTS TO REHEARSE

1

Opening line

Anchor physically, use a deliberate pause after the opening line.

2

First key point

Use vocal contrast to underline the importance and set up the section.

3

Case example pivot

Slow down slightly and signal the transition clearly to bring the audience with you.

4

Final close

Hold the key message with a pause, look across the room and finish with conviction.

IMPACT REVIEW

The talk leaves the audience thoughtful, but it can do more to make the final message repeatable and actionable.

The keynote creates a strong positive impression, stimulating reflection and respect among the audience. With a more defined final takeaway and clearer audience action, it can achieve greater memorability and long-term impact.

CURRENT AUDIENCE EFFECT

Stimulates reflection and respect.

The keynote stimulates deep reflection on the topic. It positions the speaker as a credible and trusted voice, resulting in strong respect and a positive overall impression.

WHAT IS MISSING

A clearer takeaway and audience action.

While the content is compelling, the final message could be more defined and easier to remember. A clearer, simpler takeaway and a specific audience action would help the message stick, increase memorability and make it easier for the audience to translate inspiration into real-world next steps.

RECOMMENDED CLOSE

A sharper close with a clear next move.

A rewritten closing paragraph that reinforces the core message, connects to the audience's reality and ends with a clear call to action.

"The challenges we face are real, but so is the opportunity. Every one of us has the power to turn today's insights into a next step, no matter how small. When we choose to act, we not only create progress for ourselves, we inspire those around us to do the same."

In uncertain times, the leaders people remember are the ones who turn insight into a next move.

IMPACT LADDER: FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION

Understanding

The audience clearly grasps the key ideas and themes.

STRONG

Relevance

The message feels relevant to their context and challenges.

STRONG

Retention

The core message is remembered after the event.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Retelling

The audience repeats the message in their own conversations.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Action

The message leads to concrete next steps and behaviour.

FUTURE POTENTIAL

POST-TALK OPPORTUNITY

Strong impact generates:

Conversations. Audience members discuss the ideas with colleagues.

Introductions. New connections and opportunities are created.

Invitations. The speaker is invited to future events or initiatives.

Remembered phrasing. Key lines are repeated and shared long after the event.

CHAIR-LED QUESTIONS AND POST-TALK MOMENTS

The keynote will create more opportunity if the speaker is prepared for the conversation that starts after the applause.

A clear, confident response to common questions helps the speaker extend the impact of the keynote, build stronger connections and create follow-up opportunities with key stakeholders.

LIKELY QUESTIONS AND SUGGESTED ANSWERS

QUESTION	SUGGESTED ANSWER
1 **How do you drive innovation when the pressure is so high?**	Pressure can focus the mind. Start with a clear problem, empower a small team and create space for rapid iteration. Progress builds momentum, even in difficult conditions.
2 **How do we get our teams to move from ideas to action?**	Make it real, relevant and time-bound. Set a specific outcome, remove unnecessary friction and celebrate visible progress. People move when they see the impact and feel supported.
3 **How do you deal with resistance to change?**	Listen first. Understand the concerns, involve key voices early and show what stays the same as well as what changes. People are more open when they feel respected and part of the process.
4 **How do you balance speed with risk?**	Be clear about which risks matter most. Use a staged approach, test and learn quickly, and put simple guardrails in place. Speed and discipline can work together.
5 **What's the most effective way to communicate as a leader in uncertain times?**	Be honest, clear and consistent. Share what you know, what you don't know, and how you're thinking about it. Frequent, human communication builds trust and keeps people aligned.

QUESTION	SUGGESTED ANSWER
6 **If we want to start making progress now, what's the first practical step?**	Choose one high-value opportunity, agree a small, cross-functional team, set a 30–60 day goal and get started. Early progress creates energy and opens the door to bigger change.

NETWORKING AND FOLLOW-UP MOMENTS

LIKELY CONVERSATION	SUGGESTED OPENING RESPONSE
A senior leader wants to discuss a current challenge they are facing.	*"I'd be very interested to hear more about what you're working on. Perhaps we could explore how some of the ideas today might apply in your context."*
An attendee is keen to explore ideas for their team or function.	*"That's a great area to focus on. What would make the biggest difference for your team over the next 3–6 months?"*
A potential client is interested in future working together.	*"I'd love to continue the conversation. Shall we set up a time to explore your objectives and see how we can support your journey?"*

Bridge back to the core message

Use these short bridging lines to connect post-talk conversations back to the central message of innovation under pressure.

> *"At the heart of this is turning pressure into a catalyst for progress."*

> *"What we've discussed today is really about people, focus and the courage to act."*

> *"The same principles apply here. Start small, build momentum and create the conditions for lasting impact."*

14-DAY ACTION PLAN AND NEXT STEP

A sharper through-line, more deliberate emphasis and a stronger close should

materially improve the keynote within two focused rehearsal weeks.

This 14-day plan translates the key recommendations from the review into a clear, practical sequence of actions. It focuses on sharpening the message, strengthening delivery and pressure-testing the close so the keynote lands with greater clarity, energy and impact.

Week 1: foundation and structure

DAY 1–2

Clarify the one-sentence message

Define the central idea, the audience benefit and the proof points that support it.

DAY 3–4

Restructure the keynote

Refine the flow, tighten transitions and ensure a clear through-line from tension to takeaway.

DAY 5–7

Rewrite the opening and close

Craft a stronger, more attention-grabbing opening and a more memorable, actionable close.

DAY 8

First timed rehearsal

Run a full 18-minute rehearsal, capture video and identify key areas for improvement.

Week 2: delivery and polish

DAY 9–10

Emphasis and pause work

Refine vocal variety, key emphasis points and strategic pauses to increase impact.

DAY 11

Slide refinement

Simplify slides, strengthen visual flow and ensure each slide reinforces the message.

DAY 12

Chair-led Q&A practice

Run a realistic, challenging Q&A with a trusted chair or advisor to build confidence and sharp responses.

DAY 13

Full run-through

Deliver a complete, timed rehearsal with slides, Q&A and realistic conditions.

DAY 14

Final polish

Make final refinements to content, delivery, slides and logistics, ready for the live event.

THREE HIGHEST-VALUE MOVES

1

Put the tension first

Open with the real challenge to create immediate relevance and a stronger reason to keep listening.

2

Trim to one memorable line per section

Distil each section to a single, clear message that is easy to follow, remember and share.

3

End with a repeatable takeaway

Close with a clear, actionable takeaway that leaders can repeat, apply and discuss after the event.

With a clear through-line, deliberate emphasis and a confident close, this keynote can do more than inform. It can inspire action.

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