



SPEAKERS' CORNER NEWSLETTER



January 2014

Jumping the Fences

We read a story by Alex Pratt in his book “Austerity Business” about Giraffes which made us stop and think. Starting life as a giraffe has its problems.

A giraffe gives birth standing up, so when its baby emerges into the world, it faces a six-foot drop on its head. At first, the experience doesn't seem to bother it – but it has a big impact later in life. Throughout their 20 odd year lifespan, giraffes don't jump. Ever!

That's why in zoos they don't need high fences to keep them away from the public – just low barriers which giraffes can jump over if they choose to, but they never do. That first bump on the head conditions them to believe they are better off with four feet placed firmly on the ground.

How much conditioning do we have stopping us?

Good luck with jumping more of your fences in 2014.

**“Learning is not compulsory but neither is survival.”
W. Edwards Deming**

“The best presenters are the best at what they do because.....”

We are often asked what makes a good presenter. Here are our top ten qualities which we set out in our “Maximising Business Presentations” workshop.

1. Show they care
2. Are passionate about their subject.
3. Speak confidently, clearly and purposefully.
4. Are credible and sincere.
5. Communicate a clear message which can be understood and remembered.
6. Are likeable, relaxed and make their audience feel comfortable.
7. Inspire their audience by coming out with new and original ideas.
8. Keep their presentation short, simple, entertaining.

9. Understand their audience's needs and answer them in their presentation.

10. Listen and watch.

You may be surprised that “Listen and watch” is our number 10. How does this aid your speaking ability? It helps you ‘be in the room’ with your audience and stops you ‘being in your head’. As a result you are more in tune and you can alter your message to fit any changing circumstances.

When you show your audience you're listening they can see you care, which neatly brings us back to our number 1 quality.

“The closest thing to being cared for is to care for someone else.” Carson McCullers

Put it in writing

Most of us know if we write an action list, we'll be more likely to take action. Personally, we've always done it at the end of the day because it has the additional benefit that it clears the mind so you sleep better.

Well one man who credits his success to writing it down is Jeff Bezos of Amazon. He was on his way from New York to Seattle in the mid '90s. He and his wife knew they wanted to start an on-line bookseller but Amazon hadn't yet been created.

So in the 2,400 miles across America Jeff wrote down all his ideas for the new venture. It became his 30 page business plan.

He says the discipline of writing forced him to think through issues more deeply, tossing out unworkable ideas and getting himself mentally prepared - imaging scenarios – for the cold dose of reality that he knew inevitably lay ahead.

Daydreaming is fine, but turning daydreams into plans can only be done by putting your ideas down – in black and white. His business plan helped create one of the most successful companies of the 21st century.

Have you written your personal plan for 2014 yet?

Storytelling Tip No 1

Use your own stories – they're more powerful, authentic and you can remember them more easily. When you tell your own stories, you 're-live' them again for your audience. As a result you will become more animated and you'll allow more of the real you to show. People buy people remember and to hear a personal story will help your audience to connect with you. Stories inspire. Slides don't. However imaginative you are with your images, charts or typeface, you'll never hear anyone telling a colleague about the 'amazing powerpoint presentation' they'd just seen. But you'll certainly hear people re-telling a story that inspired them. And they'll be recalling that story in years to come.

"If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a metaphor is worth a thousand pictures"
Lakoff & Johnson 'Metaphors to live by.'

How long should it take?

We've never heard a presentation which needed to be as long as it was. Ten years ago agencies regularly delivered 2 hour pitch presentations. More recently, we've seen those presentations come down to 45 minutes, 30 minutes, 20 minutes and sometimes less.

We believe the key message of any presentation can be given in a maximum of 3 minutes [Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg address in 2 minutes.] The rest of the time should be for questioning and in-depth discussion.

So how long should a presentation take?
How long can you hold people's attention for?
Certainly no longer than 10 minutes.

"The most effective way to improve a presentation is to get better content." Edward Tufte

Speaking Tips No 3

Our third speaking tip is the oldest tip you can find. It goes back to Ancient Greece, a time of great oratory where the spoken word influenced events.

The speaker was Demosthenes (384-322BC) who was reputedly the greatest orator of his day.

You may remember the story of Demosthenes. In order to improve his speaking ability, he went every day to the seashore outside Athens. He put pebbles in his mouth and spoke aloud so he could be heard above the waves crashing onto the beach.

Eventually, he became the best orator in Athens and a friend asked him for his advice on speaking well.

He said simply **"Delivery, Delivery, Delivery"**

It's a great tip to remember every time you speak.
You've got to be heard.
You've got to be understood.
You've got to be believed.
You've got to be remembered.

How you deliver your message will achieve all of these. Or none of these.

"Never give a presentation that doesn't matter"
Tony Carlisle

Are you going in the right direction?

A medieval knight, late one afternoon, was returning to his castle and he was a pitiful sight to see. His horse was limping and he was sitting askance in the saddle. His armour was dented, his lance was broken and the proud plume on his helmet was crumpled and hung over his face. The Lord of the castle saw him coming and rushed out to meet him.

"What terrible things have befallen you, Sir Percy?" he asked. "Oh sire" he said. "I have been labouring all day in your service, robbing and pillaging your enemies to the West."

"You've been doing what?" exclaimed the nobleman.

Thinking he was hard of hearing, the knight replied much louder, "I've been robbing and pillaging your enemies to the West."

But I haven't any enemies to the West." was the horrified reply. "Oh!" said the knight. And then: "Well I think you do now."

Enthusiasm is not enough, you have to be going in the right direction. (Thanks to the UK Speechwriters Guild for this story.)

Good luck with your presentations.

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

Speakers' Corner
Helping people deliver their best stories

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Summary of Training & Coaching 2013

The Power of Storytelling

Who will benefit?

The art of storytelling is an important weapon in anyone's communication arsenal so any managers who have made a number of presentations and are competent at delivering.

Workshop outcomes:

To understand the different ways to use stories in business presentations.

A step guide to crafting stories.

To develop the confidence to use stories to make more impact.

To release imaginations to communicate more creatively.

To observe themselves in action as a storyteller and receive feedback.

Maximising Business Presentations Advanced Business Presentations Conference Speaking

Who will benefit?

We offer a range of workshops which are tailored to the needs of the delegates from graduate through to MD. We design the workshop for each client's particular requirements and include learnings and exercises on the message, medium and messenger.

Workshop Outcomes:

A new approach to writing a memorable presentation.

Ways to make stronger connections with audiences.

Developing greater personal confidence to step outside the norm.

Seeing themselves in action and getting extensive feedback.

Understanding of their personal responsibility to improve the standard.

A Presentation Masterclass

Who will Benefit?

Managers with 5 plus years of experience who have to deliver presentations to all levels of clients and internal management. Maximum 6 delegates.

Workshop outcomes:

A best practice for writing presentations NOT a straightjacket of powerpoint.

How to produce an in-depth v a focused presentation.

Best practice for writing a send ahead/leave behind document.

Selling Creative Ideas

Who will Benefit?

Anyone who has to sell ideas – whether the original creator or account management. Typically, a prospective delegate may lack confidence or feel unable to put together a logical argument or find it difficult to bring an idea alive. They may have only just started in the business or have years of experience.

Workshop outcomes:

A better understanding of the 'client's viewpoint.'

What is the most 'persuasive case for buying'.

The skills to sell the logic behind the idea.

The confidence to bring an 'idea alive', helping the client get into the right 'mind frame' for creativity and the right 'visual frame' to understand.

A step-by-step plan of action for selling their ideas.

One-to-one Coaching

The areas we cover include:

1. Preparing for a major industry or company conference – speech writing and delivery.
2. Working on a particular aspect of delivery - voice, presence, body language, emotional connection.
3. Building greater self-belief and confidence in front of an audience.
4. Building greater connection and engagement through message and delivery.
5. Working on speaking fears/ being unable to rise to the presentation opportunity.
6. Working on assertiveness /building greater credibility /developing greater personal presence.
7. Helping prepare for MC'ing a major event.

All workshops are one day and normally run 09.30 and 17.30.

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