



What's the Story?

APRIL 2018

What have we learnt?

April is a month we celebrate since we launched in April 1997 – that makes us 21 – very grown up.

As we reflect on our 21 years, here's the 5 pieces of advice we regularly pass on:

People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. This was a lesson we learnt early in our training lives. The audience is more important than you.

Simple things go into the brain quicker and stay longer. We first came across this saying in the reception of M&C Saatchi. If you want people to remember your message, keep it short and simple.

"Open with a bang" was the advice the composer Richard Strauss gave to his pupils. It's equally true for the opening of your presentation. Surprise your audience, intrigue or worry them but engage them from the moment you start.

You're a storyteller, not a newsreader. When you tell a story, your audience trusts you more, is more understanding and open to your ideas. Remember 63% of audiences remember stories used in a presentation, but only 5% remember a fact.

"Delivery, delivery, delivery" were the words used by the Greek orator Demosthenes to explain his speaking success. We suspect that he spoke with a slower, deeper, richer voice and used pauses to engage and emphasise his messages. (164 words a minute is an ideal speaking rate).

For more tips and stories go to "How to write a speech" and "Our best tips and Stories"

How to Argue with a Cat

We went to hear a talented writer/speaker last month – Jay Heinrichs.

Jay had come over from New York to London to launch his new book "How to argue with a Cat." (His previous book "Thank you for Arguing" was a New York Times bestseller.)

It's a great book title, which Jay fully demonstrated with words and illustrations, on how you can persuade a cat (and the rest of us) to listen to an argument and accept it.

There are lots of insights and entertainment in the book, some you may never have considered before.

Here are a couple:

Learn the art of the pounce – perfect your timing.

Always offer a comfy lap – think about what your opponent wants.

If you're in the persuasion business – aren't we all - you should consider getting it - it's only £7.99

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/How-Argue-Cat-Humans-Persuasion/dp/1846149576>

Shorter is better

At the last Academy Awards, the host Jimmy Kimmel introduced a prize (a jet ski worth \$36,000) for the shortest acceptance speech. It was an astute move since winners typically have not known when to stop speaking.

It was won by Mark Bridges (Best Costume Design) speaking for just 30 seconds. It was all the time he needed; it was all the time anyone should need.

When you think of shorter speeches which have lasted the test of time Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg is a winner. 272 words long containing one of the most powerful thoughts ever expressed "that Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth".

Why not try to a 2 minute speech – you'll be pleasantly surprised at how well it's received.

The music is within us

This is one of our favourite stories – which happens to be true. It's a story all speakers can learn from and be encouraged by.

"In the 1800s Paganini was an emerging violinist and composer. His dream was to play to a packed opera house in which the audience would jump to their feet after he played and applaud him.

Then the evening came. It was time for his solo. But as he started to play he realised he had brought the wrong violin, a far inferior one.

He was terrified. But then deep inside himself he heard "Play with what you've got".

So he drew back his bow and began to play. The more he played the more he realised the music he was creating was reaching and affecting his audience.

At the end the audience rose to give him ovation after ovation.

Paganini said "Before tonight, I always thought the music came from my violin. Tonight I realised the music came for me."

Remember – the music is within us.

Barry Graham & Sally Clare



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