

SPEAKERS' CORNER

What's the Story?



What's the best way to get your message across?

Knowing your audience is the key to a great presentation, so how do international public figures ensure they deliver their message globally?



BBC Radio Woman's Hour recently evaluated Michelle Obama speaking at the 2016 Democratic Convention and compared this to the performance of Angela Merkel speaking to the Houses of Parliament in 2014.

Both women have very different personalities so how do they connect effectively?

Sounding more like a presidential candidate herself, [Obama](#) spoke passionately and convincingly, whilst Angela Merkel, [\(5 minutes into this video\)](#) opened in English and spoke in a soft, engaging and personal way.

Power versus emotion?

Despite their differing styles, both women employed emotion to reach out to their respective audiences.

Merkel remembered her first visit to Speakers' Corner in London relishing in the free speech she had not enjoyed whilst growing up in East Germany: Whilst Obama talked passionately about her children growing up as proud Black Americans in the White House.

The verdict?

The commentators thought Michelle was the stronger speaker because she was more powerful, forthright and oratorical.

However given their contrasting audiences, we believe that both achieved their objectives. It would have been out-of-character and over-the-top if Angela had spoken in the style of Michelle in the more intimate setting of the Houses of Parliament and equally for Michelle to speak softly at the Democratic Convention.

Your audience is your sole judge. Is your presentation right for them? Are you addressing their needs?

And above all, will they leave with the message you want them to take away.

Your past never defines your future...

South African Wayde van Niekerk is an incredible young man. He is the only athlete in history to have run the 100m in under 10secs, the 200m in under 20 and the 400m in under 44 seconds. Even Usain Bolt has not achieved this feat.

At the Rio Olympics, Wayde was the only male athlete to break a track world record, completing [the 400 metres](#) in just 43.03 seconds, shaving 0.15 seconds off Michael Johnson's 17 year old record time.

Amazingly, Wayde was a premature baby weighing no more than a kilo at birth and given only 24 hours to live. Like so many premature babies his experience gave him the strength and determination to live and succeed in life.

You can't change your past, but you can learn from it and change your future.

As Mohammed Ali once said: "Champions aren't made in the gym, they're made in the heart."

Wayde is in that mould.

One messagefirst time

When we're asked for advice on slides we always use the analogy of: "slides are like a good poster – one message that hits right between the eyes."

You can't guarantee your audience is always giving you their full attention so your slide needs to deliver your key point - clearly.

Keep it visual

Visually impactful slides, like posters, will connect with your audience more effectively. Visuals convey so much more than text. They convey mood, feelings, emotions. They're more memorable and inspirational.

Do your slides pass the poster test?

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2016.

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