



SPEAKERS' CORNER

NEWSLETTER



October 2008

“Being on the receiving end”

A friend has been on “the receiving end” recently. He’s launching a new company and asked a number of PR agencies to pitch for his business. He’s spent years in advertising and was taken aback by his experiences of being on “the other side”.

It shocked him to see how ‘carelessly’ he was handled by some and how superficial and shallow much of the thinking was.

By contrast, he was struck by the respect given by one particular agency to him and his partner as people and to their business proposition. The agency invested their time and went the extra mile. They listened and then delivered a strong recommendation in a very classy manner. As a result our friend felt good about choosing them.

In our training we always ask our delegates to think about their audience first and foremost and to pretend they’re on the receiving end of their presentation – worryingly this is a new concept to many.

It’s about common courtesy - showing you care about them more than yourself. A warm welcome needs to be backed up with serious substance and then packaged well so the receiver not only feels valued but also values you and your message highly.

Would you like to be on the receiving end of one of your presentations?

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

“We’ll make them think it’s their idea. That’s how all great leaders fool people.” Laura Preble

**“Champions aren’t made in the gym , they’re made in the heart”
Mohammed Ali**

Train Together

It seems a long time ago now when the GB Team came 4th in the Beijing Olympics medal tables with 19 gold medals - their best result for a hundred years!

The most successful event team was the UK cyclists with 12 medals, including 7 gold ones. Why were they so successful?

They all trained together for the previous four years in one location - in their stadium. And when it came to ‘race day’ they were all together again supporting each other.

Interestingly, the athletes had a poor showing and one of the contributing factors is thought to be their lack of team spirit and general interest in each other’s fortunes.

The best teams in any sport or business are those who know, respect, help and enjoy each other’s company.

And this is what a client expects to see. Would your agency pass the team test?

“Players win games, teams win championships.” Bill Taylor

Some good advice

A senior media agency client told us how he was taught to use powerpoint by his then boss.

1. Never look back at the screen - look at your audience.
2. Know all the information on the slides so you can give the presentation without powerpoint.

It seemed hard at the time but his boss often made him do the presentation without slides. As a result he has the ability and the confidence to use powerpoint to enhance rather than drown his message.

**“I insist on 2 weeks of rehearsal which I do for free on every film I do.”
Paul Newman**

Use pauses more.

In our July newsletter we passed on the results of some research by Post Office Telecoms on “The Perfect Voice” which said you should pause after each sentence for about half a second.

Advice in The Times newspaper last month to Gordon Brown suggested that he needed to pause more often – his past average was every 15 words whereas great speakers – Churchill, Thatcher, Clinton - paused every 5 words. The Prime Minister must have been listening because in his Conference Speech he paused every 5 words. Result: his speech was seen as one of his best and Labour opinion poll ratings jumped.

Now there is undoubtedly a difference between a political speech and a business presentation.

The politicians often pause for applause. But in a presentation you need to pause to let your audience in, because if you don't let them in, they won't listen

“It's not enough that we do our best, sometimes we have to do what is required.” Sir Winston Churchill

“Pursue the relationship not the sale”

The above quote is a great piece of advice from Andy Lopata, a networking strategist.

We listened to a speech he made recently which was full of sound common sense and insights into how we should build and foster relationships. As he said, “People and Companies with the best relationships are going to come out the winners.”

He went on to say: “Know what your goals are. Find the common ground and then know when to cross the ground and when not to. Try to recognise what's professional and what's just personal.”

He finished with this strong thought. “Don't look up to people, look into them”

“The skill of writing is to create a context in which other people can think” Edwin Schlossberg

First Things First

Where do most presentations fall down? Both at the beginning and at the end, but unless you get the beginning right, your audience won't be listening by the end!

So to open well you have to start like a newspaper front page, with a captivating bold headline or a TV ad with a story line which involves and intrigues the audience.

It's no different in presentations. Audiences want to be surprised, entertained, aroused and informed. They need to quickly know the benefit of listening and get a preview of what's to come.

So here are 3 things to do at the beginning:

1. Be different – open with a bang.
2. Be a great host – make them feel comfortable and get to know you.
3. Start with you - not a slide – use a story which highlights your core message.

It may sound daunting, but it really shouldn't take you more than 30 or 40 minutes. But it will be time well spent and could be the difference between success and failure. And can you afford to fail?

“Not every story has explosions and car chases. Some have nudity and espionage.” Bill Barnes & Gene Ambaum

Beating the blues (or recession)

A new book by a Professor Jane Plant – one of the government's chief medical advisers - argues that there are a number

of scientifically established ways of beating the blues without using expensive prescription drugs. Instead try smiling, get a new hairstyle, spend more time with your friends, and eat a kipper for breakfast!

Smiling is “a way of tricking your brain into thinking everything’s OK even if it’s not”. If you do your best to show the world a happy face, it will improve people’s reaction to you.

There’s no doubt improving your appearance makes you feel better and more confident. It’s interesting to see that Moss Bros, the clothing retailer, expects to have a good autumn as more city folks buy new suits and clothes to lift their spirits and impress a potential employer.

A new haircut and clothes will give you a flying start to any presentation but remember a smile is the quickest way to another person’s heart and importantly, in these times of economic hardship, is free!

“Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine.” Lord Byron

Coming second can be a winner

All speakers know that a good act is hard to follow and a new piece of US research suggests that the same thing is true for anything designed to persuade – be it a speech, TV ad or information campaign.

So logically, a message can seem ‘better’ because it has been preceded by something ‘less good’.

Now we’re not suggesting you try to sabotage the preceding presentation but it’s certainly a warning for us to watch where we place various parts of our own presentation to ensure it builds to a natural conclusion and climax.

So there are two challenges here. Firstly, to ensure that every section of your presentation is a ‘good act’ and secondly, that you put them together in the correct order to maximise their impact.

Follow that!

“To avoid criticism do nothing, say nothing, be nothing.” Elbert Hubbard

And more advice from top experts.....

With so many leaders across the globe having to ‘present their case’ we’d like to summarise the key advice currently being handed out by some of the top experts in speaker coaching and speech writing.

1. **Be bold** – work out what people want to hear and make sure you tell it to them in a way that really makes an impact.
2. **Write a great speech** – less is more and don’t overload it with details. Also try to surprise them by saying the unexpected.
3. **Start with your strongest idea** and give them time to take it on board – so...
4. Don’t forget the **power of the pause** – aim to pause every 5 words.
5. **Look the part** even if you don’t feel it. Stand tall, ‘fill the stage’ and remember the power of the smile.

The coming months....

It will be tough out there for everyone and a time to be ‘the best you can’.

But this does not mean just looking after Number 1.

In the words of the late, great Paul Newman – not only an outstanding actor, but an outstanding, generous and humble man: “Those who are lucky should hold their hands out to those who aren’t.”

Good luck and keep smiling!

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

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Speakers' Corner - Summary of principal workshops and coaching on offer



1. Maximising Business Presentations – 1 day workshop

This programme shows the delegates the difference between 'simply having the confidence to stand up and talk' and 'communicating to convince and influence'.

2. Advanced Presentation Skills – 1 day workshop

This programme shows the delegates that as with any skill, it's good to have some presentation skills coaching from time to time so you're always at your best.

3. Conference Speaking – 1 day workshop

This programme asks the delegates: "Don't think what you have to do for the conference but rather what the conference can for you?"

4. Selling Creative Work / Your Ideas – 1 day workshop

This programme shows the delegates how to help others 'to see and believe in' their ideas.

5. Writing presentations – 1/2 day workshop

This programme shows the delegates how to write a presentation message that's worth hearing and what's involved in producing a document that's worth reading.

6. Helping Business Win Business

We put the kind of thinking and creativity into your presentations that you put into developing your business.

7. One to one training

We work on specific needs, eg on a major industry presentation, helping to build greater self belief and much more.

8. Consultancy

We work with a group of managers acting as facilitators and trainers to help them resolve issues – such as an agreed new business approach, best practice for working with clients, best face to put forward to the wider business audience or the media and much more.