



SPEAKERS' CORNER NEWSLETTER



January 2009

“Puppies or kittens?”

When the going gets tough, every business will review the way they do things.

If the competition is nipping at their heels, what can they offer that's new? If clients get difficult, do they say 'yes' to everything just in case they stop asking?



“If they don't like our proposal I'll show them the kittens. Everybody likes kittens.”

We've learnt from experience that we need to work even harder, to be more proactive and maintain our strong relationships.

We're putting in the hours and don't intend to turn against our principles but we do know that to survive we need to ask our clients what they want, even if it's not necessarily what we had in mind. We've already been given some food for thought and we're reviewing our offering.

Giving clients what they want isn't always a sign of weakness. But not trying hard enough certainly is.

Good luck in 2009.

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

“What matters is not what you say but what people hear.”

Why are some people so much better than others at talking their way into a job or out of trouble? What makes some advertising tag lines cut through the communication? What's behind winning campaign slogans and career-ending political blunders? It won't surprise you that the answer lies in the way words are used to influence and motivate, the way they connect thought and emotion.

If you'd like to learn how it's done, we'd recommend you read this book: “Words that Work. It's not what you say, it's what people hear.” ISBN 1-4013-0259-9. The author, Dr Frank Luntz, is a master wordsmith and a key advisor to world leaders, helping them to make their messages simpler and more memorable.

To give you a taster he says in his '10 rules' chapter: “context and relevance are the most important rule of effective communication.” You must provide context in order to establish a message's value.

So in writing your message you need to give your listener the 'why' before telling them the 'therefore' and the 'so what'. And unless the listener feels the message is relevant, they will not value it. In other words they won't be listening to you. To get their attention, they must see individual, personal meaning and value in your words.

So before you speak, ask yourself, are these the right words for this audience?

Luntz's chapter “The 10 rules of effective language” is one of the best we've read. .

“He who wishes to talk well must first think well.” Anon

“Oratory is dead. Long live oratory.”

If in 2007 you'd asked anyone under the age of 30 to name a great orator, they'd have struggled. Their parents might have said Martin Luther King. Ask the same question today and almost everyone would answer Barack Obama.

Oddly, great orators tend to be dead before they are truly recognised. However Obama bucks that trend. His words are entirely of this time and they involve his audience in a story that seems highly personal.

The sheer quality of his speeches, the mastery of his delivery and his ability to connect with his audience, makes him the 'man of the moment'.

In his final address to the press, George W Bush, amongst other things said of Barack Obama; “He speaks a lot better than me.” We can add nothing more!

“Fantastic things happen to the way we make other people feel. All this simply by using positive words.”

Prof. Leo Buscaglia

Speechless?

It's screen awards time again and already we've heard some appalling acceptance speeches from the most talented of actors, like Kate Winslet who had prepared one acceptance speech but then got caught out when she won a second one. Oddly, when she was put on the spot she became inarticulate and gauche and yet when given a script, she's pure magic.

Apparently they've proved that stars who perform badly on the night find themselves out of favour with casting agents for years to come. Scary?

Tom Hank's has some advice for nominees on how to deliver a good acceptance speech: “Keep them witty, short and entertaining.” That's a tall order if you have no warning. So if you can, do pre-prepare your speech.

However this is not always possible. We can all be called upon for our views with just a moment's notice. With this in mind, we'd like to give you some tips for using the 10 seconds or so you have to collect your thoughts before you need to speak.

- 1. Have a point of view** – read widely. Knowledge is power.
- 2. Organise your thoughts** – before you speak, think about your viewpoint and two or three reasons to support this view.
- 3. Structure your thoughts** – you need a beginning, middle and end.
- 4. Remain calm** - what you give out you get back, so look confident.

Why not put yourself on the spot and practice. We all need to be able to think on our feet. Remember what can happen to those talented actors when they let themselves down on the night – they get sidestepped. Don't let that happen to you.

“My advice to award winners is the 3 Gs – Be Gracious, Grateful, Get Off”
Paul Hogan

Would you read someone else's mail?

This is a true story. Some years ago a client engaged a consultant to help with a small postal mailing to the purchasing departments of blue chip organisations. The consultant sourced the list (which was provided on Excel) and drafted the letter. Thereafter the client was keen to take control of the project, ie. to run the mail-merge and stuff the envelopes.

The consultant discovered some weeks later that a junior member of the client's marketing department had sorted the list and changed the order of the organisations in the spreadsheet but had only sorted the company name column with the result that every letter (about 500) was wrongly addressed.

Interestingly the mailing produced a particularly high response. Apparently an unusually high percentage of letters were opened and read, due to the irresistible temptation of reading another company's mail.....

Moving Backwards

According to Phil, a gym trainer we know, “we spend our lives moving forward – inevitably getting round shoulders – when we should be moving backwards with belly button in and shoulders drawn back.” Benefits are not only that we stand correctly but that we look taller and slimmer and it helps our breathing and delivery. Who said you shouldn’t go backwards?

“Two days after the presentation, the audience will only remember one thing. You have to know what that is and make sure they don’t forget it.”

Vincent Neate, Partner KPMG

Training to invest?

We are all familiar with the argument made to marketers to hold brand investment through a recession because they’ll come out stronger the other side. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills made a similar point. **“Firms who stop training are 2.5 times more likely to fail”** (23.10.08) So in other words, companies who continue to train are more likely to succeed. As Claire Beale, Editor of Campaign said last autumn: **“continue investing in people because often it’s your best people that are your only standout.”** Certainly this is true in new business pitches and we’ve helped several clients recently win big pitches by helping their people stand out from the competition. If this is important to you, contact us now so you’re ahead of the game.

“If you train hard, you’ll not only be hard, you’ll be hard to beat.”

Herschel Walker

Luck or the 10,000 hours rule?

The most successful people are those who have ‘put the hours in’. Malcolm Gladwell in his latest book, “Outliers” ISBN 978.1.846.14121.8 talks about the 10,000 hours rule. He cites examples from musicians to sports people to internet entrepreneurs who have all put in the hours and reaped the benefit. But in addition to hard work, he says, they also

need some luck. Circumstances must also to be correct for success. These people were in the right place at the right time.

This was wonderfully illustrated by Captain Chesley ‘Sully’ Sullenberger III this month. Less than a minute after his Airbus A320 took off, Capt Sullenberger reported a “double bird strike” and asked to return to the ground. Incredibly, he managed to land the aircraft safely on water and all 150 passengers and crew were safe.



If the situation had to happen, he was the best man for the job with 40 years flying experience. He is head of his own security company, a former US airforce fighter pilot, he’s served as an instructor and as an Airline Pilots Association safety chairman and accident investigator. He has also taken part in several USAF and National Transportation Safety Board accident investigations and is a certified glider pilot. ‘Sully’ was certainly a ‘10,000 hourer’.

You look at his training, you look at his experience - it was the right pilot at the right time in charge of that plane that saved so many lives. Luck?

10,000 hours – that’s a lifetime you may say - but every hour you spend becoming a better presenter will pay dividends. We’d like to end with a favourite quote:

“Isn’t it funny, the more I practise the luckier I get.”

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

Speakers’ Corner

‘Helping people deliver their best’

28 Gloucester Road Richmond Surrey TW9 3BU

Tel: ++44 [0] 20 8 605 3782

e-mail: info@speakersco.co.uk

website: www.speakersco.co.uk

Copyright Speakers’ Corner 2009.

No material to be reproduced or published without acknowledgement.

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. One to one training

Key people value this extra coaching to help them maximise their impact in front of an audience – of one or 500. We work with individuals on specific needs, eg on a major industry presentation, helping to build greater self belief and much more.

6. Pitch Presentation training

We can run workshops with a group who regularly deliver new business pitches or work with a team on a specific pitch. We help them put together their strongest message and each member of the team to maximise their contribution so that on pitch day they're performing to their peak.

7. Train the Trainer - 2 day workshop

We train managers to deliver one of our training programmes showing them how to engage the delegate to maximise workshop outcomes.

8. Consultancy

We work with a group of managers for example on a new business pitch or a credentials presentation.