

Helping People deliver their Best Stories



The best stories and tips from Speakers' Corner

IN CELEBRATION OF 17 YEARS OF
HELPING PEOPLE DELIVER THEIR BEST STORIES

SPEAKERS' CORNER

Our primary purpose is to help individuals fully realise their untapped potential whether it's telling their most compelling stories, delivering their best presentations or selling their ideas.

It seemed to us that we should do something special for our 17th anniversary – April 2014 – so here's an e-book of our favourite stories and tips which we hope you can use to your advantage.

Good Luck

Barry Graham & Sally Clare

SPEAKERS' CORNER

Helping People deliver their Best Stories since 1997

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It's later than you think...

This poem was found by a friend of ours on the remote Percy Islands off the coast of Australia when he was delivering a boat.

He'd stopped at the islands for a rest day and discovered an A-frame building on the beach that had been erected by the island's recluse to offer shelter to passing sailors and the opportunity for the recluse to have some company.

Over the last 30 years it has been the custom for every visiting yacht to leave a memento of their visit. One that inspired our friend greatly was this poem:

“On an ancient wall in China
Where a brooding Buddha blinks
These words are deeply graven
It's later than you think.

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To say just when the hands will stop
Be it late or early hour.

Now is the time you own,
The past is a golden link,
Go cruising now my brother,
It's later than you think.”

So stop procrastinating – get on
with whatever it is you dream of.
Live life to the full and in the moment!

YOU ONLY HAVE TO BE BRAVE FOR 3 SECONDS

This was a piece of advice a father gave to his son about having the courage to ask a girl out. It was in the 2011 film 'We've bought a zoo'. It struck a chord with us and is a mantra we now repeat in moments of self-doubt. “I only have to be brave for 3 seconds.” Simple!

Three tests for a business story

Philip Larkin, arguably Britain's best 20th century poet had three tests for a novel.

“Do I believe it? Do I care? Will I go on caring?”

We think these hold good for business stories too.

A tale about Tiger Woods and Stevie Wonder

Tiger Woods had always wanted to meet Stevie Wonder and eventually the opportunity arose. Tiger began the conversation: “How’s the singing career going?” Stevie replied: “Not bad. How’s the golf?” “Not too bad, I’ve had some problems with my swing but I think I’ve got it worked out now” said Tiger. Stevie replied: “I find that when my swing goes wrong, I need to stop playing for a while and then the next time I play, it seems to be OK.”

Tiger with an element of surprise said: “You play golf? But you’re blind. How can you play golf if you can’t see?” Stevie responded: “I get my caddy to stand in the middle of the fairway ahead and call to me. I listen for the sound of his voice and hit the ball towards him. To putt, he leans down and calls to me with his head on the ground.” Tiger asked: “What’s your handicap?” “I’m a scratch golfer” Stevie proudly replied.

“We should have a round.” said Tiger. “Well people don’t take me seriously so I only play for money and never play for less than \$10,000 a hole.” said Stevie. Tiger with a smile said: “Sure, I’m game for that – when would you like to play?” Without hesitation Stevie replied: “Excellent - pick a night - any night.”

E + R = O

Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react. You choose to be in a good mood or bad mood and choose how people will affect your mood. Each time something bad happens, you can choose to be a victim or choose to learn from the experience. People with a more negative approach tend to get stuck in a rut and blame others. The formula $E + R = O$ is a powerful reminder that the choice is yours.

Events + Response = Outcome.

Passion beats logic – a story.

Here’s a simple, true story of the power of passion from an ex-adman, Roger Mavity from his book ‘Life’s a Pitch’. Roger had set up a successful ad business with the philosophy of working with large international companies.

However, this is a story about a pitch he was reluctantly involved in to the ‘Mauritius Tourist Board.’

After 4 weeks of pitch-work, they were due to present at 2pm that day but instead the client called to ask them to go over to their offices as they were running late. Roger was angry - being late, a change of venue – it was incompetence – and rude.

On arrival at the Mauritian Tourist Board’s offices with all their kit, the client assessed the situation and said: “It’s a hot day, we’re tired and we’ve seen seven presentations already. Don’t waste our time with the slides and strategy. Just show us the adverts so we can finish in ten minutes.”

Remember, Roger had not wanted to pitch in the first place, he was already in a bad mood and now the client was changing the rules to suit themselves. He snapped, but kept icily calm. Roger packed up their kit and handed his card to the client saying: “You clearly don’t have time to see our presentation today. When you’re next in London, call me and we’d be happy to show the work to you.” As they walked away the client offered half an hour instead of the original 10 minutes. Roger said: “We’ve worked on this - free – for a month and we show it on our terms or not at all.”

”OK, you can have an hour...” said the client. “You’re not listening. I’m not going to negotiate how long it takes to give you our advice. Goodbye.” And Roger’s team left. Just as they were getting into the taxi, one of the client team rushed out and said: “You can have as long as you want.” So they went back

THE POWER OF A SMILE

Research suggests that children smile some 400 times a day whereas adults smile no more than 40 times – is life that bad? What’s interesting is that there is more research available today which points to the benefits of smiling.

Smiling improves longevity – people who smile more, live longer. People who smile are not only seen as more likeable and courteous but also more competent. That means it actually pays to increase your complement of daily smiles! You may get curious looks at first but in the end you’ll stand out for all the right reasons. You’ll also find your audiences will be more attentive – what you give out you get back.

in and the next morning, the client arrived unannounced at their offices. “I came to tell you that you’ve won the business. We’re a small country and we can behave small-time on occasions. We need partners who will be strong with us.”

After you’ve eaten (for those who are lost for an opening story in a speech)

This story takes place in the time of Nero. It was common for Christians to be thrown to the lions in the Coliseum. One day a strange thing happened, the lions wouldn’t eat the Christians. Word got back to Nero and he rushed to the Coliseum. “What is happening?” he demanded to his guards. “We don’t know but one Christian walked up to the lions and whispered in their ears and after that they slunk away”. “Right” said Nero, “bring him to me”. The Christian was brought up and Nero demanded: “What have you done to my lions? What spell have you cast over them?” The Christian who was a modest man said: “My Emperor, I haven’t passed any spell. I’ve simply told them that after they’ve eaten, they’ve got to make a speech.”

The Great Zumbrati

Many years ago the Great Zumbrati had just completed a perilous tightrope walk over the Niagara Falls. It was a blustery day and he was very glad when he stepped safely onto the side. He was met by a crowd of well-wishers. One man holding a wheelbarrow said “That was wonderful! You are a master!” The Great Zumbrati thanked him and said the weather had made the crossing very difficult.

“Nonsense,” said the man. “I bet you could walk back across pushing this wheelbarrow.”

A DIET OF WORDS

The six most important words:

“I admit I made a mistake”.

The five most important words:

“You did a good job”.

The four most important words:

“What is your opinion”?

The three most important words:

“If you please”.

The two most important words:

“Thank you”.

The one least important word:

“I”.

“Conditions are too bad,” said Zumbrati . But the man wouldn’t stop pestering. “I am certain you can do it,” he insisted. “OK” said Zumbrati at last “Get in the wheelbarrow”

The first Elevator Pitch

When was the first “safe” elevator invented? In the mid 19th century by an American engineer Elisha Otis. Otis wanted to demonstrate his new safety invention to a sceptical US audience so he rented space in New York’s main exhibit hall. He constructed an open elevator platform and a shaft in which the platform could rise and fall. He got assistants to raise him to a height of 3 stories and with a crowd looking on, cut the main rope with an axe. The audience gasped. The platform fell but in seconds the safety brake engaged, the elevator stopped falling. Otis exclaimed “All safe, gentlemen, all safe”

It was a simple, dramatic and effective way to put a complex idea across in order to change minds. It was the world’s first elevator pitch. Otis went on to found the world famous Otis Elevator Company.

18 Camels

When the father passed away, his sons opened up the Will. The Will stated that the eldest son should get half of the 17 camels while the middle son should be given a third. The youngest son should be given one ninth of the 17 camels. As it is not possible to divide 17 in half or by 3 or by 9, the three sons started to fight with each other.

As they were unable to resolve the issue they went to a wise man. The wise man listened patiently about the Will and after giving some thought, brought one camel of his own and added it to 17. That increased the total to 18 camels. Now, he started reading the deceased father’s will again.

Half of 18 = 9. So he gave the eldest son 9 camels. One third of 18 = 6. So he gave the middle son 6 camels and one ninth of 18 = 2. So he gave the youngest son 2 camels. Now add this up: 9 plus 6 plus 2 is 17 and this leaves one camel, which the wise man took back.

Moral : The attitude of negotiation and problem solving is to find the 18th camel i.e. the common ground. Once a person is able to find this 18th camel or the common ground the issue is resolved. It is difficult at times. However, to reach a solution, the first step is to believe that there is a solution.

YOU'RE ONLY AS GOOD AS YOUR SECOND SERVE

The above headline came to us in an email from an Australian company who create websites.

It was certainly a grabbing headline and one they developed in their email. For example, if you're about to go into a meeting to sell your 'first serve', what do you have as a back-up if your first serve misses? When you go to a networking function, you might wow someone by talking to them for five minutes but what do you do afterwards?

You see how it works. First serves don't always work so make sure you have a second serve in business that makes your client appreciate your follow-through.

A story of two choices

Jerry was a restaurant manager who believed you had two choices in life. One day he was held up at gun point and while trying to open the safe the robbers panicked and shot him. Luckily, Jerry was found quickly and rushed to hospital. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Jerry was released from the hospital. When asked what had gone through his mind as the robbery took place, he said: "As I lay on the floor, I remembered that I had two choices – I could choose to live, or I could choose to die. I chose to live."

"The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the emergency room and I saw the expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read, 'He's a dead man.' I knew I needed to take action." "I was asked if I was allergic to anything and I nodded. The doctors and nurses stopped and waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, "Bullets! Over their

laughter I said, "I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead."

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.

Business is great

A landscape gardener ran a business that had been in the family for three generations. The staff were happy, the customers were happy. For as long as anyone could remember the current and all previous owners had been very positive people. People assumed it was because they had a successful business, as the owners had always worn a badge saying 'Business is Great.'

Like any business it actually had its ups and downs but they always wore the badge. New customers would frequently ask: "What's so great about the business?" Some would comment on how bad their own business was.

As a result the owner would enthuse about the positive aspects of his business – helping customers, interesting people, a relaxed and happy workplace and the work itself. The customers would leave feeling a lot happier and infected by his enthusiasm

If asked about the badge in a quiet moment, the owner would say: "The badge came first, the great business followed."

“The best way to sell an idea is to make the person to whom you are selling it feel that it is solving their problem not feeding your ego.”

SIR JOHN HEGARTY

YOU MUST SELL!

It's amazing how many people forget the old advertising rule "You're selling, not telling." The ex-worldwide Creative Director of Wundermans, Steve Harrison in his book "How to do better creative work", tells a story about one of their best account directors leaving the building with an art bag. Steve asked him: "Where are you off to?" "I'm off to show the work to the client." "That's very nice of you" said Steve "But when are you going off to sell it?"

As Steve says "the emphasis should always be on the selling" – and it takes a lot of focus and planning. And his advice on the best way to sell is "to win their respect. They will respect you most if they think you know more than they do."

SAIL – THE POWER OF A WORD

Paul Arden's (ex-Saatchi Creative Director) book. "Whatever you think, think the opposite" is a bargain at £7.99. We particularly liked his story about the Sydney Opera House. The city ran a design competition for the new building. One of the entrants, Jorn Utzon, sold them an outrageous and at the time, unbuildable design. How? He summed up his concept in one word, 'sail'. Once the committee had an image of 'sails on the waterfront', no other entrant stood a chance. Brilliant! Are you creating strong word pictures to help sell your ideas?

AN IDEA – NOW THERE'S A THOUGHT

Kate Muir, a UK journalist wrote an article some years back on the subject -'ideas are just not what they were'. We feel her thoughts

are as relevant today as they were 6 years ago.

Her point – in the past you knew something was a big idea because it hit you between the eyes. Nowadays, an idea creeps up on you. She believes we interact with information differently. The net's given us the extremes of global information sourcing and personal blogging. We have more choice than ever when it comes to TV, radio, press, books.

We as consumers don't read or watch the same things so we may well see the same idea differently and at different stages of its development and we can also impact on how the idea develops over time.

So what's the point we're making here?

Well whether you're selling creative work, a brand or media proposal – they're all ideas and as such will be received by a number of different people in a number of different ways. It may have been delivered to one audience, emailed to another, told by a third party to another one. But what is key is that as an 'idea', its principles are bought into by everyone who receives it and they work with it to make it an even better idea.

So when you go about beginning to sell your idea, instead of looking at your client as the people most likely to kill it, look instead at them as the people who can help to make your idea a truly great one.

Why listening pays

We did a lot of flying last month and found ourselves the recipients of some good and some very poor inflight service. It reminded us of a true story of an American airline which advertised for stewardesses.

The assembled aspiring attendants were each asked to come to the front to deliver an announcement and treat the group as though they were her passengers. They were told they would be filmed and played back. What they didn't know was that they would also be filmed by a hidden camera from the front to see who listened and was attentive. On reviewing the films, the airline

chose those girls who could both talk and listen. A stewardess' job requires a lot more listening and attention than talking. A good lesson for us all in meetings.

NO ONE CAN SELL YOU UNTIL YOU CAN

We like to hear other speakers who speak internationally and here are some good tips from a Canadian speaker, Warren Evans:

- 1.** Life is one long moment made up of smaller moments. What can you do in that moment? Be it, do it.
- 2.** What are your 3 strengths? Stop trying to improve your weaknesses.
- 3.** Your passion shows you your presence." "Your life is like a tapestry. What do you want your tapestry to say about you?"
- 4.** Get to stand for something or you'll fall for anything.
- 5.** You can't get all the money this year that's why they call it a career.
- 6.** To start a speech, throttle at 110% to get airborne then flatten out.

No one can sell YOU until you can.

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.....

The more you practise

I had a client when I was in the agency world who said to me “You present better than I do. How do you do it?”

Now I could have said I’ve been doing it for a long time and it’s in my interest to do it well. I didn’t feel that would help so I said the following.

“Tony, do you play any sport?”

“Yes, I play golf.

“How many times a week do you play?”

“I play 3 times a week”

“Why do you play 3 times a week?”

“To maintain my 18 handicap”

“How many weeks a year do you play?”

“Probably 50 weeks with two weeks off for holidays”

“Well Tony, by my reckoning you play golf 150 times a year. If you made the same number of presentations you would be better than me” We both laughed.

Six word stories

Twice in the last month we’ve heard speakers refer to “Six word stories” The first speaker mentioned the novelist Ernest Hemingway who was challenged for a \$10 bet to write a full story in six words. Legend has it that he responded: “For Sale: baby shoes, never worn” Hemingway thought it was one of his best stories.

The second speaker, the author William Fiennes, told us about his work in schools where they teach students the power of writing stories to release their voices so they can be heard. One exercise he uses is the six word story and William was particularly impressed by this humorous example: “Went to shops, won lottery, sorted”. Why not try to write your own six word story – about your life, your job, what you can offer somebody? It could be your most important story you’ll ever write.

HOW GOOD IS YOUR BOUNCE BACK FACTOR?

You're all familiar with IQ and EQ but have you heard of RQ? It's your level of resilience or your ability to bounce back from life's set-backs. Can you learn to boost your RQ? Yes you can! Luckily the distinguishing traits of the most resilient people are learnable.

Here are the top 3:

- 1.** Stop procrastinating! Cut your losses and take those difficult decisions and look to the future.
- 2.** Reframe the problem. Look at it in a different light. What have you learnt?
- 3.** Have a super-positive attitude to set-backs. What new opportunities face you now?

Professor Ian Robertson an organisational psychologist at Leeds University says: "Resilient people and organisations believe they can control what happens to them. So to improve your RQ you need to be in control of your destiny rather than at the mercy to it. You see it in car accidents, the driver will recover more quickly than the victim." Are you a victim?

Lost in translation

We always remember a speaker telling us about his experiences in China. He had a couple of funny stories which he explained the meaning to his translator so they could better tell the joke. Much to his amazement when he told his jokes the audience roared with laughter. Afterwards he thanked his translator particularly on telling his jokes. "How did you manage to tell the joke so well?" "It was easy" said the translator "I told them you were telling a joke so they should laugh".

We heard two more examples of similar stories from Sir Malcolm Rifkind an ex UK Foreign Secretary.

A British diplomat was addressing a Russian audience and used the expression "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". This was translated as "we have

plenty of vodka, but the meat is poor”.

A British high ranking civil servant – a Permanent Secretary – was addressing a Japanese audience and his hosts wanted to make his audience understand better what his job was so they introduced him as “an everlasting typist”.

These types of stories are great “warm-ups” in a presentation where you are talking to an international group. It’s even better if you can find examples from the advertising and marketing worlds or the industry you come from.

Good decisions come from good presentations...

The trick of being a good speaker is knowing what you want to say

We were pleased to read in The Times recently an editorial with our name in the title and a proposition we totally endorse.

In our experience it’s the most difficult part of the presentation game and it’s the one where you need to do the most work. Once you know what you want to say, what action you want your audience to take almost miraculously you become a better messenger. You are more relaxed, more excited, more passionate, more confident, you want to engage with your audience. So find and hone your message and you will become a better messenger. If you need any help download our “How to write a speech” PDF on the homepage of our website: www.speakersco.co.uk.

The Times editorial closed with what they felt was the most glorious rhetoric of modern times written on a banner about Northern Ireland’s greatest footballer. On the day of his funeral, the legend said:

“MARADONA GOOD. PELE BETTER. GEORGE BEST”

The Perfect Voice

Researchers say they have worked out a mathematical formula to find the perfect human voice. The study commissioned by Post Office Telecoms asked people to rate 50 voices and then analysed the results. They concluded the ideal voice should utter no more than 164 words per minute, pausing for 0.48 seconds between sentences. Intonation should fall rather than rise through a sentence.

A lower tone of voice gives a person more positive characteristic associations such as confidence and trust. Men found presenter Mariella Frostrup's voice "mesmerising" because it was deep, slow and confident. Actor Jeremy Irons came very close to the ideal voice model because his "deep gravelly tones" inspired trust in listeners. However, the formula showed that BBC's Jonathan Ross spoke too quickly, with very short pauses between sentences. His rising intonation was usually linked with someone weak or insecure.

So our voices should be deeper, richer and slower – and don't forget the 0.48 seconds between sentences. Now read this aloud in about a minute.

Attention!

10 years ago the BBC claimed that an audience's attention wandered after 12 minutes. Last month a new research study said that 5 minutes was now the limit. It's not surprising with the success of social media and the faster pace of things that unless we are really interested in what we are watching or listening to we switch off.

TED.com now has 6 minute video talks – worth watching and comparing them with the 18 minute versions. It's surprising how little you lose and how if the message is clear you remember more. We're sure that people's attention will continue to decline. So unless you can hook them in with stories, metaphors, analogies, similes, comparisons, humour – all supporting a compelling message – you probably won't succeed in holding their attention for one minute.

WHAT PEOPLE HATE

Microsoft says there are some 30 million powerpoint presentations given worldwide every working day. The 3 biggest hates are:

- 1. Presenters reading slides verbatim 67.4%**
- 2. Sentences used not bullet points. 45.6%**
- 3. Text too small so it's illegible. 45%**

The best presenters use graphic slides with single thoughts, creating images that impact on their audiences and bridge the mind gap

Burying the lead

News reporters are told to start their stories with the important information. So their first sentence, their lead, contains the most essential elements of the story. Afterwards, information is included in descending importance. In this way, whatever the reader's concentration or interest level, they can maximise the information they take away.

If news stories were written like mysteries, with a dramatic payoff at the end, readers who broke off mid-article would miss the point. This inverted pyramid approach also helps newspaper editors to steal space for a late story as they can cut paragraphs from the end.

The inverted pyramid approach is alleged to have begun during the 19th century when wartime reporters used military telegraphs to transmit their stories back home. As they could be cut off at any time and didn't know how much time they would get to send, they always sent the important information first. This approach makes a lot of sense for writing presentations. Remember, most people will listen to you at the beginning of your presentation – so give them the reason to listen. And if you're unexpectedly asked to cut your presentation time down by 50%, if you lead with your core message you'll always make your point.

WALKING THE TALK

A woman came to Gandhi and asked him to tell her overweight son to stop eating sugar. "Madam," he replied, "come back in three weeks' time." She returned with her son three weeks later. Gandhi looked at the boy and said, "Stop eating sugar."

When the boy had left the room, the mother turned to Gandhi and asked why he hadn't said this earlier. Gandhi replied, "Madam, three weeks ago I myself was eating sugar."

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.

Nothing is impossible

Two years ago, Philippe Croizon, a Frenchman decided he was going to swim the English Channel. He couldn't swim. During the past two years he devoted 35 hours a week to swimming and getting fit. Last month he swam the English Channel. He was expecting it to take 24 hours and he did it in 13.5 hours. At one point 3 dolphins swam with him. He swam at a constant 2 mph. So you're wondering, "What's the big deal?"

16 years ago Philippe was removing a television antenna from a roof when it hit a power line and jolted him with an incredible electric shock. As a result his legs and lower arms had to be amputated. Using a snorkel and prosthetic legs with built-in flippers, he set out to swim the English Channel. If you're determined enough, as Philippe proved, nothing is impossible. What challenge can you set yourself?

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 – imagining 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.

A STRATEGY FOR GENIUS

Thomas Edison took a long time to invent the first light bulb. Rumour has it that he made over 2000 to perfect it. At the press conference to launch his new invention, a pushy journalist said: "Say, Mr Edison, how did it feel to fail to make a light bulb two thousand times?" "Young man," said Edison, "I didn't fail to make a light bulb two thousand times, I merely found one thousand, nine hundred and ninety nine ways how NOT to make a light bulb."

His business plan helped create one of the most successful companies of the 21st century.

Have you written your personal plan yet?

In the blink of an eye

Steve Redgrave tells a story of how he and his team adopted another sportsman's system to help him win his 5th gold Olympic medal. Here's how it goes.

After the 1972 Olympics, an American swimmer, John Naber was disappointed he hadn't won a gold medal and was determined to win one for the 100 metres backstroke in 1976

at the Montreal games. He analysed past records and plotted a graph of the fastest times. He noticed there was a definite pattern.

The Olympics would set a new world best; the year after, the standard would stay the same, dropping a little a year after that and would be back up to the same level year 3. But just prior to the games the standard would rise again – reaching a new height. He predicted that the winning time would be 55.5 seconds – 4 seconds faster than his current speed and a huge margin to find in a 100 metres race.

Trying to look at his challenge in a more lateral way, he broke it down into manageable pieces. There were four years to the next Olympics, so he'd need to save one second a year. He trained 10 months per year, so he had to save a tenth of a second a month. Thirty days a month meant one-three-hundredth of a second to find per day. He trained for 4 hours a day, so he had to save one-twelve-hundredth of a second per hour's training. And this is where he really got his challenge into perspective. The blinking of an eye takes five twelve hundredths of a second – he was looking for one-fifth of an eye blink improvement every hour of training. That he could imagine and was possible.

John won the gold medal in 1976 with a time of 55.49 seconds. Steve applied the same philosophy to their training – and made the history books by winning his 5th gold medal. The moral of the story – break your goals into steps that you can imagine and believe you can achieve.

HOW TO IMPRESS IN A MEETING

In running training we've learnt a lot about the impact of people arriving for one of our sessions. The most impressive:

- 1.** Arrive early
- 2.** Introduce themselves, initiate the handshake & look interested in others.
- 3.** Have their mobiles in suitable mode.
- 4.** FREE their minds to concentrate.
- 5.** Make a contribution
- 6.** Listen with positive body language

How markets work

The chief of a Native American tribe was asked in the autumn by his people if the winter was going to be cold or mild. Being a 21st century chief he had no more idea than anyone else, but in order to look knowledgeable he said that it was going to be cold and told the people in his village to collect wood.

A few days later he rang the National Weather service. "Yes, it is going to be

cold” they told him, so he asked his people to collect more wood.

A week later he called again, “Is it going to be a cold winter?” he asked. “Yes very cold”. So he told his people to go back and collect every bit of wood they could.

Two weeks later he called again. “Yes” he was told, “it’s going to be one of the coldest winters ever”. “How can you be so sure?” the chief asked. The weatherman replied “The Native Americans are collecting wood like crazy”.

Spotting Stories

Last month was the 72nd anniversary of a young rookie reporter being sent to Poland by the Daily Telegraph in September, 1939. Her name was Clare Hollingsworth and this month she celebrated her 100th birthday. What did Clare do that made her name? She was the first foreign correspondent to tell the world that “Germany had invaded Poland”. It was her first story and she went on to be a highly successful newspaper woman.

Clare’s story gave us our lead in a recent workshop when we talked about: “Like journalists you need to be alert for a story”. Most of us will never be in Clare’s position of reporting on a world changing event, but we can be the first one to spot a story and use it to make our case. What story have you found today?

Visualising the end!

Florence Chadwick, an American was the first woman to swim the English Channel in both directions. Two years later in 1952 she attempted to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and the California coastline. As she began, she was flanked by small support boats. After about 15 hours a thick fog set in. Florence began to doubt her ability, and after swimming in fog for a further hour, asked to be pulled out. As she sat in the boat, she found out she had stopped swimming just half a mile away from her destination.

Two months later, Chadwick tried again. This time was different. The same thick fog set in, but she made it because she said that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind. She also broke the record by 2 hours for swimming the 26 miles.

10 TIPS FOR STORYTELLING

1. Re-live the experience – don't re-tell it

Storytelling is about getting in touch with your emotions. Your audience will feel your emotions when you re-feel the experience. By allowing your feelings to come through, your audience will re-live your story with you.

2. Walk your talk

Telling stories is about performance so to bring your story alive you need to rehearse it as you mean to tell it. Ideally standing up, moving about, using body language, vocal variety, facial expressions etc. You can start with a story idea written down but to perfect it in delivery and timing you need to walk your talk.

3. Stories should be short

In this way your audience will quickly absorb and remember them. However, they must be entertaining, punchy, worth listening to and have a strong message too. Think of stories lasting between 1-2 minutes – just right for most audience's attention span.

4. What's your point?

In telling a story you set out to change the attitudes, behaviour or awareness amongst your audience so your story needs to make a point which is insightful, persuasive and memorable. Always know what the point is you want to make before finding your story. Make sure the story conveys this single point clearly and with impact.

5. Show enthusiasm

The more enthusiastic you are in telling your story the more your audience enjoy it and connect with it.

Don't believe your story isn't good enough. If it's a story worth telling, your enthusiasm and excitement in telling it will make a strong impact.

6. Be conversational

“Once upon a time” is the traditional way to start telling a fairy story. It’s spoken in a slow, meaningful way so the audience relax and their expectations are lifted. Business stories should be given the same vocal treatment. Your voice should be slower, richer and more expressive. Pause after key thoughts and make it a conversation –albeit a one-sided one.

7. A story-a-day

Find a story every morning which will be your story for the day. Make sure you pass it on to colleagues, friends, family via phone, e-mail, text or face-to-face. You can find stories everywhere: media, internet, books, films, personal situations. If a story impacts on you it will almost certainly do the same with your audience.

8. Have characters

Most stories involve more than one person so make sure you paint the pictures of all the characters in your story – learn to notice and appreciate the wonderful quirks that everyone has. In speaking dialogue be “in” when you’re saying your lines so you’re speaking as you normally do and “out” when you’re saying another character’s lines. Being “out” means you have become the other character in voice as well as body.

9. Personal stories are best

If you need to choose between a personal story or a borrowed one, the personal story will always be the stronger. You’ll remember it better, you’ll express it more clearly and your audience will know it’s yours.

So the credibility will be greater.

10. Smile

You can hear a person smiling. When a person tells a story with a smile on their face, subtle intonations in voice change. If you are smiling you will choose different words. Remember storytelling is entertainment-it should be fun.

10 PRESENTATION TIPS

1. Edit your message until everyone understands it

A French mathematician once said: “A theory is not a theory until you can explain it to the first person you meet on the street.” Can you articulate your core message?

2. The presenter’s Highway Code

Stop [don’t rush in] Breathe [to diaphragm] Look [at audience] Listen [silence is power] Feel [smile].

3. 5 lessons for effective presentation writing

1. Begin strongly. 2. Have one theme. 3. Use simple language. 4. Create a ‘mind picture’. 5. End dramatically. **Think like an Economist journalist, write like a Sun journalist.** If your average character count per word is 6 or more, you’re using less easy to understand vocabulary and jargon. Use short words – an average of 5 characters - they’re more concrete and convey meaning quickly.

4. Smile more.

A smile opens doors – people think you’re someone worth spending time with. A smile will also help you feel more positive - things are going to be OK.

5 Pursue the relationship, not the deal

Don’t look on your audiences as the ‘opposition’ – find the common ground. Work out where you need to cross over, meet in the middle or walk away.

6. It’s all about the start

3 things to do at the start of any presentation: 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. “Give ‘em a show.” As Paul Arden said of a presentation: “In a song, we remember first the melody and then we learn the words.” So give your audiences a theme to help their memories.

7. Build personal credibility

Be authentic, be real, be reliable. Show care, show knowledge, show passion. Remember to maintain eye contact. Not only are you showing your audience you're interested in them, but you need to really look at them to see how you're coming across.

8. Language – it's more than words

Language is so much more than 'the what' and how you say it. Of course you need good vocal variety and a clear diction but good physical and emotional body language too.

9. Power of the pause

Pause every 8 words or so. Barack Obama does and he's recognised as one of the best speakers of our time. It also allows your audience to reflect on what you say.

10. Tell a story - don't deliver a reading lesson

If you overload your powerpoint with copy and data your audience [and you] may end up reading it all. They won't be listening to you. So drop the weighty slides and tell them the story. "10 minute rule". John Medina author of "Brain Rules" says audiences check out after 10 minutes. You can keep grabbing them back by telling stories, creating events rich in emotion.

10 TIPS TO HELP YOU SELL YOUR IDEAS

1. Does your idea meet the brief?

Obvious but often overlooked!

2. Why should they buy it?

Don't rush to show the client your idea. Instead spend time explaining the idea.

3. Look at your ideas from your clients' viewpoint

Why should they buy it? Will it help them achieve their goals?

4. Bridge the mind gap

As Sir John Hegarty says: "The only space worth buying is the space inside someone's head." Help them see the idea in their mind's eye – help them imagine.

5. Give them the means to sell-on the work to their colleagues and decision-makers

Give them the logic behind the idea and the language to bring it alive – craft the story of the idea.

6. Communicate creatively

Let your audience see it, hear it, feel it, touch it and smell it. The more of those you can do the more you will sell your idea.

7. There must be a logical structure to your sale

It should have a strong beginning, a middle containing your logic and reasoning and a powerful end.

8. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

9. It's not your idea – it's our idea

The best chance of successfully selling your ideas is for the client to feel they are involved in the creative process – allow them 'a say'

10. Show your belief and enthusiasm for the idea

If you don't, neither will your client.

Summary of Training & Coaching 2014

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.

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.

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