



SPEAKERS' CORNER NEWSLETTER



July 2012

Stories for Jobs

Barry went back to his old school to work with year 12 students to help them prepare for their UCAS examinations and interviews

They had all been trained in university entrance exam techniques and being interviewed but much to Barry's surprise none had prepared a story of what they had achieved at school, why they wanted to go to that particular college or what they wanted to do in the future.

It took time to warm them up, get them in the right frame of mind to find their stories to support their applications. At the end of the 40 minutes allocated a third of each group told their stories.

Each story made a single point, was memorable and brought the candidate alive.

When you meet someone new do you have a "Who I am" story to tell? It could be worth a new job or a new client.

Barry Graham & Sally Clare

For storytelling workshops or coaching e-mail info@speakersco.co.uk or call 0208 605 3782

"To hell with facts! We need stories." Ken Kesey, author of 'One flew over the cuckoo's nest'

Message versus Messenger

We're always interested to follow this debate and read what the latest theories are. As the line goes "If you don't like the messenger, you won't like the message". It's also equally true "If you don't have a message, the best messenger in the world can't help".

We were pleased to read in The Times recently an editorial with our name in the title and a proposition we totally endorse **"Speakers Corner - The trick of being a good speaker is knowing what you want to say"**

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 most important persuasion tool you have in your entire arsenal is integrity."

Zig Ziglar, author and motivational speaker.

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.

“All things being equal, people will do business with and refer business to, those people they know like and trust.” Bob Burg, author and speaker.

What’s your attention like?

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.

“Rapt attention is the highest compliment you can pay anyone.” Sir John Hegarty, Worldwide Creative Director of Bartle, Bogle, Hegarty.

Let your hands do the talking

Over the years we’ve had many delegates tell us that they feel they use too many gestures. They think it’s distracting and audiences don’t like it. Often what surprises them is that we tell them to use more.

If you look at the way people talk ordinarily they invariably use gestures. We loved being on holiday in Italy one year and watching large groups of friends

conversing with their hands, bodies and voices. We couldn’t take our eyes off them and we felt involved.

Our hands and our bodies create natural energy and enthusiasm. Our gestures reinforce our points and help our audience to remember more.

As Shakespeare said - “fit the action to the words and the words to the action” – excellent advice.

The problem for many people is that when they present they’re in their heads, when they should be in their body allowing a free flow of expression. So when you need to loosen up before a presentation, go for a walk and talk your message aloud emphasising your points with your hands and face. You’ll be surprised how much more your audience will listen to you.

**“Look your best. Who said love is blind?”
Mae West, film actress.**

Are slides the problem or the solution?

We run one-to-one coaching sessions and find that we can spend as much time on working with a delegate on their slides as we do on their performance.

“Less is more” is always the golden rule. Slides are like billboards – one thought at a time. We know from research that people can’t listen to a presenter and read slides at the same time.

As a presenter you need to lead your presentation and introduce each thought as it comes up. Your audience needs to get it in seconds. If they don’t you’ve lost them

Here are 3 things to do on every slide so your audience takes in your message and stays with you.

1. Have a headline stating your key point so if your audience doesn’t take anything else in, they know what your slide is saying.
2. Highlight the part you want to focus on through colour, emphasis, graphics and good design.
3. Use builds so your audience can follow you step-by-step.

If you follow the above rules your slides will be your solution for an effective presentation

**“Slides – keep them lean and full of meaning.”
Tom Peters, Business guru.**

Book Review

Philip Collins a former speechwriter to Tony Blair and a Times columnist has written a new book: "The Art of Speeches and Presentations." (ISBN 978-0-470-71184-2. His front page sub-head made us want to dive in "The secrets of making people remember what you say." The secret according to Philip is content. It's a thorough book for those serious about writing good speeches.

Some stories '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.

A Lawyer's Question

A small town prosecuting lawyer called his first witness, a grandmotherly, elderly woman. He asked her: 'Do you know me Mrs Jones?' She responded,

'Why yes. I've known you since you were a little boy and quite frankly you've been a big disappointment to me. You lie, cheat on your wife, manipulate people and talk behind their backs. Yes I know you' The lawyer was stunned. Not knowing what else to do, he pointed across the room and asked: 'Mrs Williams do you know the defence lawyer?' She again replied: 'Why yes I do. I've known Mr Bradley since he was a youngster too and he too has been a real disappointment to me. He's lazy, bigoted and had a drinking problem. Yes I know him.' At this point the judge called both counselors to the bench. In a very quiet voice he said with menace: 'If either of you asks her if she knows me, you'll be in jail for contempt within 5 minutes!'

The moral of the story – are you asking the right questions to gain the right knowledge?

America v Russia

The Americans and Russians at the height of the arms race realised that if they continued in the usual manner they'd blow up the whole world! So one day they agreed to settle the matter with a dog fight. They'd have 5 years to breed the strongest of all dogs and whoever won the fight would dominate the world. The loser would lay down their arms.

The Russians sought out the biggest, meanest Doberman and Rottweiler and bred them with the biggest and meanest Siberian wolves. Selecting only the biggest and strongest puppies, using steroids and trainers, after 5 years they believed they had bred the biggest meanest fighting dog ever seen.

When the day came for the fight, the Americans showed up with a strange animal. It was a 9 feet long Dachshund. Everyone felt certain it would not last 10 seconds with the Russian dog. When the cages were opened, the Dachshund wrapped itself around the outside of the ring and completely surrounded the Russian dog. As the Russian dog leaned to bite the Dachshund's neck, the Dachshund opened his jaw and consumed the Russian dog in one bite.

The Russians came up to the Americans in total disbelief and asked how this could have happened after they'd spent 5 years breeding the "biggest, meanest dog"? The Americans replied; "We had our best plastic surgeons working for 5 years to make an alligator look like a Dachshund."

The moral of the story – there's often more than one way to win.

Summary of Training & Coaching 2012

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

Who will benefit?

Anyone who is making or going to be making business presentations.

Workshop outcomes:

- What makes a good presentation and how this impacts on their ability to close business.
- How to write a focused message that meets their audience's needs and showcases their talent.
- Confidence to bring their message alive by delivering a memorable presentation story.
- A framework for creating slides which support the presenter, not smother them.
- Personal insights of how to develop their presentation style to make stronger connections with feedback.

Advanced Business Presentations

Who will benefit?

For managers who make regular presentations to clients and would like to review their current methods and improve their effectiveness.

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.

Conference Speaking

Who will benefit?

Anyone who is already or will be delivering conference speeches.

Workshop outcomes:

- A desire to 'deliver' for their conference provider, their audience, their company and themselves.
- A new approach to writing a memorable speech/presentation.
- An understanding of what they need to do to improve their performance and memorability.
- Seeing themselves in action and getting extensive feedback.

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.

Speakers' Corner

Helping people deliver their best stories

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