



What's the Story?

FEBRUARY 2017

Can I have your attention please?

Recent Microsoft research shows our attention span is now down to 8 seconds – 1 second less than a goldfish! Poor concentration is a modern malaise

This fact should impact hugely on the way you start your presentations.

If you don't quickly grab your audience's attention, they'll be off thinking about something that does. And this will normally be something that emotionally impacts on them like their problems back at the office.

And this is reinforced by the fact that humans can only really concentrate on one thing at a time – it's called our "attention spotlight".

So open your presentations by stating your purpose and identifying the 'truth' of what is at the core of the issue being discussed. Show 'what's in it for them'.

Appeal to your audience by finding an emotional connection to your argument.

Oh yes, and also tell them how long you plan to speak for – hopefully for no more than 15 minutes.

If you follow these 3 rules you're likely to have your audiences' rapt attention every time.

And you'll have hit their "attention spotlight".

[If you'd like to get some training in how to do just this, take a look at our 2017 Portfolio www.speakersco.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Speakers-Corner-Training-Portfolio-2017.pdf]

Predictive texting

We can all suffer from this one. We sent a text recently to a contact called Honor. It came out "Hi Honey" - still no reply.

We liked the following one in The Times Diary

"Congratulations to Christine Armstrong, a churchwarden who seems to possess the only mobile phone that autocorrects messages to make them rude. She says that while her vicar was away he had a locum called Rex; after the service, Christine text the vicar to say that "Rex was great this morning". Alas, the R transposed itself to an S. The vicar gallantly replied that he was delighted by her exertions."

Are you sitting on your talent?

There was once a pianist who worked in a bar and played there every night.

One night a patron asked him to sing. The pianist said “I don’t sing”.

But the patron was persistent. He told the bar’s owner: “I come here almost every night, you know it. I’m tired of listening to the piano. Tell that guy to sing.”

The owner shouted across the room: “Hey Nat! Customers want you to sing. If you want to get paid tonight, sing a song.”

So he did. The pianist who had never sung in public sang a song for the very first time. That night the patrons of the bar heard the best ever version of the song “Mona Lisa” - the singer was Nat King Cole.

Because he had to sing, Nat discovered that he had a talent he was sitting on. He would have lived his life as a no-name piano player if somebody hadn’t made him sing.

Nat King Cole became one of the best known singers of the 20th century.

Are you sitting on a hidden talent?

European Speechwriters Conference – Oxford March 30 -31

As founder members of the Speechwriters’ Guild we like to promote their conferences – they are always informative and uplifting.

The UK Speechwriters’ Guild is organising its 14th conference at Magdalen College, Oxford from 29-31 March 2017. The event brings together professional communicators from across Europe.

Among the speakers this year will be Angela Merkel’s speechwriter, the former Editor-in-Chief of BP and the speechwriter from the Royal Society of Chemistry.

Readers of this newsletter can get a £50 discount by using the promotion code: SpeakersCorner. To register go to www.ukspeechwritersguild.co.uk

And for those romantics out there...

“Love means zero in tennis but everything in life.”

Happy Valentine’s Day

Good luck with your stories, presentations and pitches in 2017

Barry Graham & Sally Clare



28 Gloucester Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3BU T: ++44 (0)208 605 3782 M: ++44 (0)7976 919057 W: speakersco.co.uk