

Speakers' Corner

October 2006 newsletter

Find your topic

A tip all aspiring speakers are given is – 'Find your topic'. To make it yours so people associate you with it, believe and trust in what you say.

Quite a big order.

Well Al Gore has found his.

In his new film 'An Inconvenient Truth' he presents for 90 minutes a compelling and convincing case for tackling global warming now.

He opens with a quip: "I used to be 'the next President of the United States'."

His loss is our gain. You see an Al Gore you never saw when he stood for President. He is relaxed, personable, authoritative and passionate.

His call to action is simple:

"This is a task for all of us. We can all do our bit for energy reduction and conservation."

If you want to see a film that will make you think – this is it.

It may inspire you to find your topic.

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

'All my life I've wanted to be somebody. But I see now I should have been more specific.'
Jane Wagner

'If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet – teach it to dance.'
George Bernard Shaw

Big ideas – simply explained

We heard Edward de Bono - of Lateral Thinking fame – talk recently.

What engaged us was his ability to come up with big ideas and present them in a unique way.

To present he used a 21st century over-head projector – on the surface it looked highly modern but in reality it was a revamped overhead projector.

It used a continuous roll of paper – on which he wrote and drew quickly.

He kept his ideas simple and direct [one idea projected at a time] and held the audience's attention.

He scored because he was spontaneous, appearing to make it up as he went along, just like a good story teller.

'Is creativity some obscure esoteric art form? Not on your life. It's the most practical thing a businessman can employ.'
Bill Bernbach

'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.

'Chance favours those in motion.'
James H Austin

Dragon's Den – A TV show

For those of you who have never seen it on TV, inventors pitch to 5 successful entrepreneurs asking them to invest in their ideas.

You can be certain that the entrepreneurs will sniff out a good idea very quickly.

What always surprises us is how unprepared the inventors are.

They have little supporting data to show why their invention is a good commercial idea. Sales data is hazy and projected forecasts questionable.

Their passion is missing.

Peter Jones – one of the dragons – believes the show offers valuable lessons on how to pitch an idea.

"You have to learn to describe quickly and be concise.

You learn what to say, how to say it, how to look and how to present."

Pity this advice isn't given to the contestants beforehand.

'Don't be afraid to take a big step when one is indicated. You can't cross a chasm in two small steps.'
David Lloyd George

It must be true – it comes from research

US researchers found that audiences drinking coffee or a caffeine based drink before a presentation were more receptive to a presenter's message.

However, research also showed that caffeinated drinks made audiences smarter as well.

They were more persuaded by high-quality arguments but also less persuaded by low-quality ones.

'Don't think of the fear in front of you instead think of the power behind you.' Anon

How to win friends

'How to win friends and influence people' – the self help business book written by Dale Carnegie has just celebrated its 70th birthday. It's sold millions of copies.

It's been re-written over the years by numerous management gurus to give it more 'psychological weight', but the truth is, his original and simple advice is as relevant today as it was back in 1936.

So what does he advise?

1. Show interest in the person.
2. Smile.
3. Use their name.
4. Get them to talk about themselves.
5. Ask them questions about what interests them and listen to their answers.
6. Make them feel important.

As the Guardian newspaper journalist Guy Browning says:

'It's all about putting them first – and moving away from today's culture of me, me, me'.

Many of us can say we follow some of his 6 pieces of advice – but you can be certain, the person who's flying high will be following all 6.

Don't join an easy crowd, you can't grow. Go where the expectations and the demands to perform are high. Jim Rohn

'Recruit for attitude and train for skills.'

In a recent article by a leading management trainer Paul Bridle, he wrote: "We are living at a time when skill shortages are becoming a problem in most places in the world."

All this is happening against a backdrop of an emerging attitude from the new generation who have a different approach to work and to their careers. The average university student is likely to have 3 to 5 careers in their working life and change jobs every 2 to 5 years.

Over recent years we have heard the expression, 'recruit for attitude and train for skills'. Yet most organisations do not take this approach.

However, the more progressive organisations are so clear about the attitude they need that they are working with recruitment agencies, universities and even schools to help develop people that are 'employable' in the future.

As trainers, working across Europe and the Middle East, we can see the impact of a person's attitude on their performance.

People with enthusiasm for the business, a belief in their agency's and their client's future success – the people who are driven to succeed, all have an attitude. We can't teach them that.

We find that 'delegates with attitude' are like sponges. They soak up knowledge, insights and advice constantly looking to self-improve.

Training creates a renewed vigour and a questioning approach to 'how things are being done'.

So we support the experts' advice - 'recruit for attitude - train for skills.'

**"Never stop learning." Antony Hill
account director JWT & IPA
Excellence Diploma delegate 2006**

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

Speakers' Corner **'Helping people deliver their best'**

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