



S P E A K E R S ' C O R N E R N E W S L E T T E R



July 2009

Shoot for the Moon

“When President Kennedy challenged America to put a man on the moon within a decade and return him safely to earth, questions were raised because the technology did not exist at the time.

However the decision to set a goal spurred the whole scientific community into action. Scientists inspired by their President’s vision changed their attitudes from “it can’t be done,” to, “how can I make it happen?”

Similarly, it isn’t essential when we set a goal to have all the resources and know-how. All that’s required is enthusiasm, determination and to at least have a go.

As Leo Burnett said: “When you reach for the stars you may not quite get one, but you won’t come up with a handful of mud.”

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

“The most successful people are those who are good at Plan B.” James Yorke

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.”

“Do it now. You become successful the moment you start moving toward a worthwhile goal.” Samuel Johnson

The only way is UP!

We were in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia this month training Publicis Graphics. The agency has been operating there since 1979. What was a pleasant change was to be in a market with a planned growth in its GDP. Attitudes were totally different – they were buoyant, confident and competitive.

During our stay, Federer won his 6th Wimbledon title, his 15th Grand Slam (a new record) and regained his World No 1 slot. We had included a picture of Federer and Nadal in a “winning mindset” sequence in our “Pitch Presentation” workshop we ran.

Back in January after Federer had lost to Nadal in the Australian Open, the media had written him off. But Federer said: “I’m only 27 and I’m going to win more Grand Slams.” His strength of character, talent and determination carried him through. As we say: “You train to win, not come second”

**“There are two important points in tennis – the first one and the last one”
Ivan Lendl**

You can never know everything!

Even if you set the challenge of learning something new every day, because there are six billion others doing the same, by the time you go to bed, you’ll know less of all there is to be known than when you awoke!

“As a general rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.” Benjamin Disraeli

“Innovation is the central issue in economic prosperity” Michael Porter

Time to think

“Companies that generate 80% of their revenue from new products typically double their market capitalisation over a five year period,” says Penny de Valk CEO, Institute of Leadership & Management. But to innovate requires many ideas to fail and fail fast. And as she says, “That’s a real challenge in a risk-averse culture.”

To allow for creativity, people need to be put into ‘light-bulb moments’ and finding the time for these is very hard. So successful companies allow for 20% of their employees’ time to be spent on innovation so that there are always plenty of ideas for consideration.

Successful companies also launch their ideas early, before the competition has thought about it. Foolishly, some companies delay introducing a new idea because they’re worried it will impact on an existing offering and then they find themselves the ‘me too’ rather than the ‘me first’.

“He’s a serial entrepreneur. Somebody stop him before he makes another killing.” Carl Zetie

There are two languages – Body and English

One of the most difficult lessons for an aspiring presenter to learn is that his eye contact and body language are more important than what he says. More communication is conveyed through the eyes than any other part of the body.

93% of our communication is non-verbal.

Barry had a client who always wanted to see his commercial without the sound to ensure that you got the message without a heavy voice-over. Try it on one of your favourite TV shows. You’ll be surprised how the good entertainers use animated eyes and body language to connect with their audiences – and when you hear their voices they support their body language.

“Smile, for everyone lacks self-confidence and more than any other one thing, a smile reassures them.”

Andre Maurois

If we could bottle it

The one “take out” from our training whether we’re in London, Moscow or Milan is “Confidence”. All delegates want more even though just how nervous they feel inside rarely shows as we prove when we play back the videos of them presenting.

Speaking in Public is still the No 1 fear of business people even ahead of dying.

The one big factor in controlling confidence is preparation. There is no substitute for this. It involves hard work and there are no short cuts. But what else is important? Getting the right mindset - because confidence is all about “self-belief”. Here are two tips for you.

The first is “visualise success.” We’re going to see Usain Bolt, the triple Olympic Gold medal sprinter at Crystal Palace on July 25th. He certainly gets “in the zone” before the start of a race and visualises winning. Churchill used to imagine his audience sitting in their underwear so he had a psychological advantage. We know audiences want you to succeed. So visualise them smiling, looking at you with interest and applauding at the end – it certainly creates positive adrenalin.

Our second tip is about “Anchoring”. Think of an event or experience which gave you huge enjoyment and pleasure - where you were relaxed and confident. Focus on that experience and when you’re reliving it at its emotional peak you ‘anchor’ the feeling. To do this, press your thumb and index finger together or pinch your arm saying at that moment: “cool, calm and confident.” You need to practise so when you want a boost of confidence just pinch your arm and say: “cool, calm and confident”. You’ll be in the moment, ready to give the presentation of your life.

“The thing that keeps business ahead of competition is excellence in execution.”
Tom Peters

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.

Summer reading

When stories are strategically and correctly crafted, the lesson of the story has a profound effect on the listener and causes them to think or act differently. The point of the story is the lesson learned, whether moral, philosophical or a practical lesson.

What criteria should you use for choosing your stories? An event that has special meaning, a turning point or a life lesson from someone or from something that happened. Stories can form the theme of your presentation or can be used tactically to make the point. Storytelling is an important part of all the training courses we run.

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. Here are 4 to read now.

Gershwin story – [be yourself]

George Gershwin the famous jazz pianist, composer and songwriter, had ambitions as a classical musician, so he approached Maurice Ravel, composer of the famous Bolero for instruction in orchestral scoring. After several lessons, Ravel was exasperated. His student appeared unable to grasp even the basics. "If I were you" he advised, "I would be happier to be a first rate Gershwin than a second rate Ravel".

Gandhi story [generosity without strings]

Gandhi was boarding a train one day with a number of companions and followers, when his shoe fell from his foot and disappeared in the gap between the train and platform.

Unable to retrieve it, he took off his other shoe and threw it down by the first. Responding to the puzzlement of his fellow travellers, Gandhi explained that a poor person who finds a single shoe is no better off - what's really helpful is finding a pair.

No exit story (different perspectives)

A man checked into a hotel for the first time in his life and went up to his room. Five minutes later he called the reception desk and said: "You've given me a room with no exit. How do I leave?" The desk clerk said, "Sir, that's absurd. Have you looked for the door?" The man said, "Well, there's one door that leads to the bathroom. There's a second that goes into the wardrobe and a third I haven't tried, but has a 'do not disturb' sign.

Fish baking story (need for questioning)

A little girl was watching her mother prepare a fish for dinner. Her mother cut the head and tail off the fish and then placed it into a baking pan. The little girl asked her mother why she did that. Her mother thought for a while and then said, "I've always done it that way - that's how grandma did it." Not satisfied with the answer, the little girl went to visit her grandma to find out why she cut the head and tail off the fish before baking it. Grandma thought for a while and replied, "I don't know. My mother always did it that way." So the little girl and the grandma went to visit great grandma to ask if she knew the answer. Great grandma thought for a while and said: "Because my baking pan was too small to fit in the whole fish."

Good luck!

Barry Graham and Sally Clare

Stop Press:

Storytelling with Confidence Workshop

see back page or call us for more info: 020 8605 3782

NABS Seminar for Graduates.

End of August. For more info call: 020 7462 3150

Speakers' Corner

'Helping people deliver their best'

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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. Writing presentations – 1/2 day workshop

This programme shows the delegates how to write a presentation message that's worth hearing and what's involved in producing a document that's worth reading

6. Storytelling with Confidence 1 day workshop

This programme helps the delegates to develop the art of storytelling and gives tips on building greater personal performance confidence.

7. Pitch Presentations 1 day workshop

This programme works on writing and delivering winning pitch presentations.

8. Helping Business Win Business

We put the kind of thinking and creativity into your presentations that you put into developing your business.

9. One to one training

We work on specific needs, eg on a major industry presentation, helping to build greater self belief and much more.

10. Consultancy

We work with a group of managers acting as facilitators and trainers to help them resolve issues – such as an agreed new business approach, best practice for working with clients, best face to put forward to the wider business audience or the media and much more.