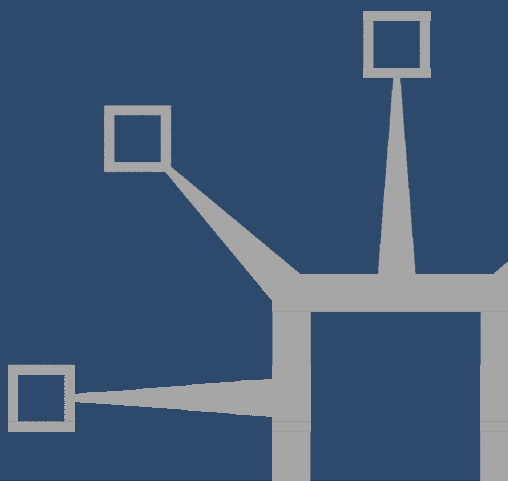


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Rainmaking Presentations

How to Grow Your Business by Leveraging
Your Expertise

Joseph Sommerville

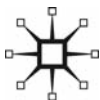


RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS

HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS
BY LEVERAGING YOUR EXPERTISE

Joseph Sommerville

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS

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FOREWORD

If you're not already convinced that presentations are one of the most effective marketing tools available for professionals, begin with Chapter 1. It lays out the case for business development through speaking. You'll read the case studies of professionals who have substantially increased their business. You'll also find some of the most frequently asked questions about this system. Chapters 2 through 8 explain the step-by-step process to design, develop and deliver Rainmaking Presentations. In these chapters, you'll find a proven system to increase your visibility and credibility as you develop more business. Chapter 9 explores different presentation formats, including those that allow you to leverage your expertise through technology. In Chapter 10, you'll learn how to find and create your own rainmaking opportunities. Chapter 11 explains ways to publicize and market your expertise to attract rainmaking opportunities.

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CHAPTER 1

LEVERAGING EXPERTISE

GROW YOUR BUSINESS BY
LEVERAGING YOUR EXPERTISE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATION PRINCIPLE 1— WE COMMUNICATE MORE THAN INFORMATION

At the beginning of my Rainmaking Presentations Seminars, I ask participants to list some of the things they communicate. Inevitably, their responses include things such as changes in the tax code, different investment products, how to choose a business structure, why disability insurance is necessary to protect income, new compliance rules and regulatory changes. I then point out that all the things they've listed have something in common—they're examples of information. But we communicate much more than simply information. We also communicate either congruency or contradiction; we communicate either an attitude of service or drugery; we communicate either professionalism or its absence.

We communicate congruency between what we say and what people see. I recall attending a networking function where I met a woman attempting to drum up business for her professional services firm. After we were introduced, I asked her what she did. She proceeded to tell me about her business, about how she founded her business, about her business marketing strategy and about her great communication skills. She stopped only because the featured speaker was about to begin. He started his presentation by asking: "Do you know what the single most important thing in networking is?" The woman who'd been talking to me raised her hand and

responded: “Listening!” She lacked congruency between her actions and her words. We also lack congruency when we say a concept is easy to understand, but have a difficult time explaining it or say a policy is straightforward but list several exceptions.

We communicate an attitude. On a trip back to Houston from Singapore I had a stopover in Tokyo. Shortly after takeoff, I noticed the man sitting next to me periodically taking a scented letter out of his jacket and holding it to his nose. When he wasn’t busy enjoying the olfactory experience, he was reading the Bible and drinking miniature bottles of Jack Daniels. I hypothesized that the three events were somehow related, but I didn’t know if he was consoling himself over the separation from a significant other or was afraid of flying and couldn’t decide whether love, prayer or inebriation would produce the best results. After we reached cruising altitude, the flight attendant assigned to our section came to take drink orders. Of course the man sitting next to me ordered Jack Daniels. “No,” was her reply. “I don’t have any liquor on this cart. You’ll have to wait until I can get to one that does.” She was certainly conveying information, but it was the attitude she conveyed that spoke loudest. What attitude comes through when you present?

We communicate professionalism. Part of being professional involves keeping your cool under taxing conditions. Another part involves how people see us treat others. In my search for a new health insurance policy, I phoned some area agents to see what they had to offer. At one office, the agent picked up the phone after the fifth ring, asked how he could help, listened to my brief reply, then said; “Let me put you on hold while I get rid of this guy on the other line.” Even though his policy was competitive, I didn’t give him my business because I thought eventually, I would simply become the “guy on the other line.”

I’m sure no one reading this book would ever commit a communication sin as egregious as those above, but it never hurts to be mindful of the fact that we indeed communicate more than pure information. That’s why experts can benefit the most from this

book. Its purpose is to show you how to go beyond just giving information when you're trying to grow your business. It's designed to show you how to leverage your expertise by applying the principles of effective communication and persuasion.

Most professional services firms view marketing as a necessary evil. Those who practice in the firm sometimes feel the wrong approach will damage their credibility. Solo practitioners and smaller practices may think they don't have the budget or the resources to conduct an effective marketing campaign. Others may feel their time is better spent practicing their expertise. But in today's climate of marketing professional services, expertise alone doesn't provide any competitive advantage. It's simply the price of admission.

Savvy professionals have learned to leverage their expertise with a well-kept secret in business development. It's a marketing tool that positions you not as a salesperson, but as an advisor. The same tool works in any economic climate and with any size budget. It's the tool that most often puts you in front of the economic buyer. It levels the playing field between large firms and solo practitioners who compete for business. It's been tested and proven to be effective.

Whatever you call it—a speech, talk, address, lunch and learn, presentation—the scenario is the same. You have somewhere between 15 minutes and an hour to deliver your message to an audience. If you're not currently taking advantage of this marketing tool, you're missing out on one of the most effective ways for service firms to market themselves professionally, competitively, ethically, and successfully.

This book shows you how to leverage your expertise to grow your business through presentations. As proof, you'll read the success stories of others. You'll learn a proven seven-step process that shows you how to take your ideas from concept to platform in the shortest time possible. You'll discover how the impact of technology has redefined the contexts of presentations in today's business environment. You'll also acquire the tools and techniques that show you how to discover and create your own rainmaking opportunities, as well as how to maximize the result from each one. I know the system works because I used it successfully to grow my own business. I can trace 80 percent of my new business to presentations. The professionals I interviewed for this book tell much the same story.

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

CPA Francis Bologna volunteered several years ago to give a presentation to a national meeting of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). He was asked to show lay people how to understand financial statements. After his presentation, he was approached by two audience members from a Fortune 100 firm. They wanted him to present the same information to others throughout their organization. That initial speech was the leverage Bologna has used to generate over \$1,000,000 in billings from that same client over the years.

His formula for success is to find the top two or three issues his audience is seeking answers for. "When you can isolate these issues and speak to them in knowledgeable terms with workable solutions, immediately two things happen: First, they understand you're different from everyone else. Second, you get the opportunity to talk more with them about how your expertise can best serve them."

Contexts of Presentations

As I use the term "presentation" throughout this book, I want to emphasize that presentations take many forms. Beyond the traditional context in which a speaker stands in front of an audience and delivers a message, many opportunities exist with both more informal settings and the virtual contexts technology enables. I discuss these different contexts in more detail in Chapter 9. Most of the principles and strategies you'll learn apply equally to presentations in any context. Your success in different contexts lies simply in finding the correct application. For example, sitting down one on one with a prospect or in a small group meeting or holding a webinar all require the same attention to goals, audience needs and proof that are hallmarks of the traditional presentation.

Whether speaking one on one or to large groups, presentations give you several advantages.

Marketing Advantages of Presentations

1. **Presentations cast you in a different role.** Instead of being seen as a salesperson or a marketer, you're seen as an expert and an advisor. For example, many financial planners

report their greatest challenge lies in educating prospects about some basic financial decisions and informing them about the different financial products that will best serve the client's goals. Presentations provide an especially effective way to make an audience aware of needs they might not even realize they have. With the right presentation, you immediately establish your professional reputation and credibility. The well-executed presentation provides an excellent start to building the relationships crucial to success in professional selling. Just as writing a book or article lends credibility to the author, speaking helps you build your status as an expert. There is a viral replicating effect at work—the more presentations you give, the more people see your name. The more people see your name, the more positioned as an expert you become. The more positioned as expert you become, the more you speak and so on. Presentations also provide a key point of differentiation. The person who can clearly express her ideas is seen as more intelligent and more self-confident than the person who stumbles through a disorganized presentation. When you're competing for business, a well-crafted presentation can give you the advantage because better presenters are more persuasive. An architect once reported in one of my seminars that he was sure his firm was more successful in getting business because the people they chose to pitch for the business were highly trained in presentation skills.

2. **Presentations allow you to customize your material.** Unlike a print run of brochures or postcards, you can customize your talk for each specific audience you address. You can take advantage of a system of marketing that highlights the most effective approach for particular audiences. You can choose when to use examples, case studies or testimonials that will appeal to very specific audiences. Further, based on the feedback you receive, you can make on-the-spot adjustments to create the most effective message.
3. **Presentations create opportunities for audience interaction.** The interactive nature of presentations works to your advantage. In a face-to-face setting, you can engage all

three channels of communication—the verbal, the visual and the vocal. When these three channels reinforce one another, you'll be even more effective in making your message heard. The feedback you receive allows you to adjust your material and tackle objections as they arise. Presentation audiences are not passive sponges soaking up your message. They are participants involved in the communication process. Because they already want to be there, you can focus on moving them further along the sales process. Imagine having 30 minutes to educate your prospects about your services with no interruptions! Your audience often contains highly-qualified prospects. People choose to attend a sales presentation, product demonstration or continuing education course because there's something of interest to them.

4. **Presentations furnish high-value marketing at a lower cost.** Compared to almost any kind of advertising, presentations produce a higher ratio of qualified prospects. What would 30 minutes of airtime on a radio or television station cost? When you send out 5,000 pieces of direct mail, how much of it ends up in the recycle bin? Presentations require an investment in time, but if you plan properly, you'll receive a very high return on that investment. Presentations also lower the cost of acquiring new clients. This is the most direct way to be in front of your prospects. When you speak to a group, you'll often get three opportunities for publicity. First, when the event is advertised, you can provide a brief synopsis of your talk for brochures, mailers, the website and even a newsletter. Second, if your talk is newsworthy, you may receive some media coverage during the event itself. Third, there is an opportunity for exposure in a summary of the event for the organization's newsletter or annual report.
5. **Presentations offer prospects the opportunity to "try before they buy."** When prospects see you present, they get an idea of what it would be like to work with you. They get the opportunity to see your unique take on issues and to see how you interact with others. Past experience always influences the choice of a professional service provider.

Also, because someone has seen you present, they often feel they can safely refer you to friends and colleagues.

Now that you're sold on the idea of using presentations, the question becomes "Where do I start?" If you search Books in Print using the keywords "public speaking," you'll get thousands of results. On Google, the same keywords return over 20,000,000 pages! So how do you sift through this mountain of data to find the approach that's right for you? A great starting point is to separate the wheat from the chaff.

Why You Should Question Conventional Wisdom

I should warn you at the outset that much of what you'll learn in this book is contrary to conventional wisdom about presentations. That's because conventional wisdom usually finds its roots in casual observation, repetition and marketing ploys.

There's much misinformation circulating about what makes an effective presentation. You should be wary of any article, book, course, workshop or advice based on any of the following premises.

The key to great presentations is developing your stage presence.

Unless your goal is to become an actor or a keynote speaker, be wary of any approach that focuses primarily on delivery. These tend to be superficial. Good delivery is an instrumental goal, but it is a means to an end, not an end in itself. In fact, the very first treatises on effective speaking from ancient Greece didn't focus on delivery at all. The three standards used to judge presentations were topic development, organization of the message and effective language use. Delivery does play a role, but it's part of a larger picture.

The key to great presentations is humor.

Humor has many uses in a presentation; it can relieve tension, illustrate a point and involve the audience. But unless your goal is to become an entertainer, recognize that humor is a tactic, not a key to great presentations. I've seen presenters become so focused on being humorous that their presentations devolved into stand-up comedy routines.

The key to great presentations is being confident.

Confidence is important, but it's not the cornerstone of effective presentations. Some of the speakers with the greatest self-confidence are the worst presenters! They have such a sense of self-importance that the message becomes too "me-focused" and not "we-focused." People who suffer from communication apprehension at least recognize they have a challenge and take steps to manage it. Confidence doesn't equal competence. In fact, I've seen many speakers who could benefit from a dose of humility.

The key to great presentations is a good electronic slide show.

If your only concern is to produce attractive visuals, then a book on PowerPoint™ may be right for you. But again, visuals are only part of the picture. Too often, computer slide shows become a crutch the presenter leans on. If your presentation is well designed, you should be able to present it even if all your technology fails. Don't make the technology such an integral part of your presentation that when it fails, you fail also.

There is an instant system for success in presentations.

About the only "instant" key to success is to be quiet when you've been talking too long. There is no shortcut to an effective presentation. It takes knowledge, planning, discipline and practice.

The Seven Steps to Rainmaking Presentations

Now, let's step away from conventional wisdom and look at a system that's proven to be effective. The Rainmaking Presentations System was developed from the analysis of over 8,000 presentations in a variety of contexts and professions. Although based on extensive research, clients call it "street smart" and "results-oriented."

It is designed to take your message from concept to presentation in the quickest, most effective way possible. Here's a brief synopsis of what you'll learn in this system.

Step 1—Analyze. Who are you talking to? What are the characteristics of your audience in terms of age, education,

knowledge of your topic, group membership, beliefs and values? In Chapter 2, you'll learn how to find this information quickly and effectively. You'll also learn how a No P.A.I.N. = No Gain Analysis will make your presentation directly relevant to the needs and interests of the audience.

Step 2—Strategize. By the end of your presentation, what do you want the audience to understand or act upon? Until you can answer this question in a single, declarative sentence, nothing else you do will produce a winning presentation. The Presentation Action Planner introduced in Chapter 3 will show you exactly how to design a strategic goal that gets results.

Step 3—Organize. Clear organization of your material will make it easier for the audience to understand and retain. The presentation needs to have a clearly defined introduction, body and conclusion. In Chapter 4, I will show you how to write an introduction that overcomes audience preoccupation, builds rapport and establishes your value proposition. You'll also learn how to reinforce your message, provide the three necessary types of closure and motivate the audience to action.

Step 4—Vitalize. Vitalizing a presentation means bringing it to life. Chapter 5 shows you how to make your presentation more interesting with illustrations, narratives, analogies, examples and case studies. One mistake even seasoned presenters often make is to believe that "the facts speak for themselves." You'll discover ways to make certain the audience has a way to translate statistics and pieces of information into everyday experiences they can understand. You'll also learn what will help your audiences believe what you're saying.

Step 5—Verbalize. Your choice of words has a tremendous impact on how your audience receives your message. Language choice affects our success in at least three ways. You'll learn each of them in Chapter 6 as you discover how to create more compelling messages by choosing persuasive language.

Step 6—Visualize. Visual aids help reinforce a message, clarify abstract concepts, add variety and lend credibility to the presenter. Some messages are helped tremendously by a visual

demonstration, and in some contexts, audiences expect an electronic slide show. Chapter 7 shows you the different types of visuals, when to use each for maximum effect and how to avoid the Seven Deadly Sins of Slide Shows.

Step 7—Dramatize. Good delivery alone will not create an effective message, but poor delivery will certainly kill one. The key is to strike a balance between being lifeless and overly dramatic. Chapter 8 shows you how to easily overcome 95 percent of the most common delivery problems and reveals the single most effective way to improve your delivery quickly.

Rainmaking Presentations System Requirements 1.0

When you buy a new piece of computer hardware, you'll see a section of the packaging that's titled "system requirements." It's the section that lets you know the minimum requirements that must be in place to use that new piece of hardware. The Rainmaking Presentations System has its own "system requirements." These are the elements you must have in place or be willing to put in place to use this system. They are:

1. Established Expertise
2. A Proactive Approach
3. An Ongoing Strategy
4. A Focus on Educating
5. The Ability to Speak Well

Established Expertise

This book is designed for experts in their respective fields. No book on presentations you read and no seminar on becoming a better speaker you attend can help you develop your expertise. Your expertise is the result of your university education, graduate or professional schooling and experience. You will have learned and cultivated your expertise during your career. You can't leverage what you don't

have, and any attempt to “wing it until you can swing it” will damage your credibility.

A Proactive Approach

This system works best for those who actively seek out speaking opportunities. The most successful approach to presentations in business development begins with strategic planning and execution. This is not an effective system for someone who hopes to passively wait for phone calls and emails that contain speaking invitations.

An Ongoing Strategy

Not every presentation you give will result in direct business. However, every effective presentation you give *will* help build your credibility among prospects, establish you as a thought leader and give you top-of-mind awareness among potential clients. It will probably also lead to other speaking opportunities. You’ll sometimes see immediate results, but more often, the fruits of your labor will appear weeks or even months later.

A Focus on Educating

When asked about common mistakes people make when trying to use presentations for business development, all the service professionals interviewed for this book agreed on the top three: Overtly selling a service, not taking into account the needs of the audience and poor presentation skills. No one likes to sit through a self-serving sales pitch. Business development presentations must have some educational value for the audience.

The Ability to Speak Well

Surprisingly, an often-overlooked system requirement is to make sure you or the person you designate to speak for your organization can speak well. Some people simply don’t realize what poor presenters they are. To put it another way, they operate at the level of unconscious incompetence.

Expertise is a necessary but insufficient condition for success. Is one attorney within a firm the rainmaker because she knows more about the law? Does one engineer have greater career success because he understands math equations more fully? Does the architect chosen for a project have a better sense of spatial relationships than the competition? These people achieve greater success because they can articulate their ideas and persuade others to implement them. In today's economy, expertise is just the price of admission. Success depends on your ability to communicate clearly and persuasively. Facts sometimes need explanation and ideas sometimes need to be sold.

Expertise and eloquence are complementary. Expertise needs eloquence to give it force. Eloquence needs expertise to provide a foundation. Speeches must have strong intellectual content, vitalized with examples, narratives, illustrations and other forms of support. But they must also contain compelling language and be delivered with enough variety and fluency to capture and sustain audience interest.

Weak platform skills could mean that you embarrass yourself, the organizer and the audience. You'll damage your credibility and your marketing will be counterproductive. When you're invited to speak to a group, you have an obligation to present your message in a courteous, timely and compelling way. Speaking from the platform is a privilege. That means you have a responsibility to develop your own competency as a speaker.

Becoming a Better Speaker

Effective presenters are made, not born. Recognize that no one is a "natural." The ability to communicate effectively is a skill that can be learned, developed and practiced. Presentation skills enable you to become a more successful influencer, a more effective advocate for your cause and a more persuasive agent of change. Developing your presentation skills will make you better at what you already do by increasing your overall performance level. When you choose to invest the time and resources necessary, you can improve as a public speaker.

The avenues available to you range from self-study to working with a professional speaking coach. Reading *Rainmaking Presentations* is a good start. You can also find articles and books on effective presentations at your library, on Amazon.com or by searching the

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

Orlando Hanselman is the education programs director at the IPS Sendero Institute. He speaks to the state- and national-level conventions of financial services institutions. Hanselman uses presentations to create market awareness of strategic uses for and concepts related to the software his company sells. In creating demand, he also believes he's establishing himself as a credible expert and trusted advisor. From the market awareness presentations, he is then invited to conduct for-fee, in-house education and consulting engagements. He states, "My awareness-building presentations are 100 percent education and 0 percent sales. I give the audience ideas, concepts and strategies. That's one of the primary differentiators between my presentations and the competition's." Hanselman also notes the importance of speaking well. He specifically strives for three types of feedback from the audience. He wants them to say: "I received information that's valuable to me in executing my responsibilities. I'm leaving with practical ideas that I can implement in the workplace tomorrow. I enjoyed the presentation because it was lively and entertaining."

web using the keywords "articles on effective business communication." You'll find many articles on improving your presentations at the companion website to this book, <http://www.RainmakingPresentations.com>.

The next step is to find groups where you can practice delivering your message. Toastmasters International provides a supportive environment that can help you overcome any communication anxiety. Their highly structured format provides limited opportunities for longer speeches, but you'll gain confidence and experience if you make a commitment to attend weekly meetings.

You can also consider a professional development course or a one- to three-day workshop on presentation skills. If your trade or professional organization doesn't already offer professional development or continuing education courses on creating effective presentations, request them.

The greatest level of involvement, and the one that will produce the quickest results, is working with a presentation coach. The right coach can help to refine your key messages, suggest techniques to better connect with target audiences, and polish your presentation skills. The first step is making the commitment to improve.

What to Look for in a Coach

If you make the decision to work with a coach, here are some things you should look for that will dramatically improve your chances of success:

A Process-Based Approach

A process approach focuses on getting you from point A to point B. A process approach has the advantages of being definable, learnable and repeatable. It's a "how to" instead of a "here's something about." A process approach saves you time, energy and has a higher return on investment.

Comprehensiveness

A process approach is enhanced by synergy. That is, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Synergy shows you how to integrate individual components of a presentation such as delivery, organization, language and audience analysis to build an overall result much more effective than a fragmented approach. At the very minimum, any approach you consider should teach you how to strategically design the content of the message, how to organize it and how to use the appropriate language structures to make it persuasive.

Credentials

Does the person have an advanced degree in one of the following fields: communication, rhetoric or speech? People without the requisite education sometimes try to make the case that such training is "too academic" and not applicable to the "real world." If you needed surgery, would you look for someone who purposely did not attend medical school because she thought it was "too academic"?

A Results-Oriented Approach

Is the focus on delivering a certain amount of time or on delivering results? Most likely, you are interested in buying solutions to your problems. Ask the provider exactly what you're buying. If the answer

is a training program or the provider's time, you might want to keep looking.

Applicability

Can the person you're considering working with synthesize the theoretical background of the subject with practical application? It's one thing to be able to repeat a theoretical construct or theory. It's something entirely different to demonstrate how that theory applies in the real world.

Frequently Asked Questions about Presentations for Business Development

What does it mean to take a strategic perspective on presentations?

A strategic view examines all four elements of a speaking situation: presenter, audience, message and logistics. Each of these elements is important, but by itself, no one element will ensure a successful presentation. A strategic perspective operates on the principle of synergy: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Why are some presentations complete failures?

There are many reasons why presentations fail. Among the most common are a failure to define goals, neglect of audience needs, weak organization, a lack of support, poor planning and distracting delivery.

Which is more important: what I say, or how I say it?

You may as well ask whether food or water is more important to life. Both have their purpose, but focusing on one at the expense of the other eventually results in death. You must have something worthwhile to say, and you must say it in a way that enhances the message.

When should I use humor in a presentation?

Only when you are absolutely certain it will work. Humor is one of the most difficult tactics to use well in a presentation. Even experienced speakers are cautious. Always avoid any humor that could offend a segment of your audience. Self-deprecating humor is usually the safest.

Which type of support is most effective?

It depends on you goal, your message and your audience. Some listeners find statistics to be objective and more convincing. Others will be persuaded by expert testimony. For some, stories and narratives lend a personal touch to your message. Don't limit yourself to one type of support. Often, a combination will be most effective.

What should I do if I make a mistake during the presentation?

Move on. Ninety-five percent of the time, your audience won't realize you've made a mistake, so there's no use in drawing attention to it. If it is painfully obvious that you've said something wrong, try to make light of it. Also, never apologize for things like your lack of preparation, poor health or inexperience in presenting.

What's the single most important thing in giving a presentation?

Have a strategic goal in mind as you prepare your presentation. You should know what you want from your audience by the end. How will you know how to get there if you don't know where you're going? Be as precise as possible. "To convince my audience to become clients" is much more specific than "to talk about our consulting services."

Overcoming Nervousness

Although this isn't a book on overcoming speech anxiety, the fact that public speaking causes so much anxiety deserves at least some attention.

It has many names; glossophobia, communication apprehension, stage fright, having butterflies in the stomach. It has several symptoms: a rapid heartbeat, sweaty palms, a dryness in the mouth and unsteady hands. Most people are familiar with one recent poll or another showing that Americans rank fear of public speaking ahead of fear of death. Find something people are afraid of and you can sell a cure. Unfortunately, many "cures" out there are platitudes peddled by the snake oil salespeople of presentation training. They can actually increase apprehension as well as sabotage other aspects of the presentation. Here are the top five popular gimmicks for calming your nerves, followed by three that actually work.

Imagine everyone in the room sitting in his or her underwear.

The results of your imagination could range from highly erotic to downright scary. One thing's for certain; your mind won't be on your presentation.

Pick a spot in the back of the room and focus only on it.

Your audience will wonder why you refuse to look at them. Eye contact is essential to create good rapport. Presenters who establish and maintain eye contact are perceived to be more honest and more persuasive.

A little bit of nervousness is good.

You've probably heard the saying "It's okay to have butterflies in your stomach. Just make sure they fly in formation." Enthusiasm, energy and excitement are good. Nervousness is bad. Nervous symptoms are easily recognized and rarely mistaken for energy. If you're speaking to a hostile or indifferent audience, a little bit of nervousness is like a little bit of blood around sharks; it only takes a little to start a feeding frenzy. In other words, swat those butterflies!

Use visual aids to channel your nervous energy.

Visuals should be used because they provide a visual reinforcement of your message, not because they provide an outlet for nervous movement. Presenters who use visuals to reduce their communication apprehension turn visual aids into visual distractions.

Memorize your speech, then recite it.

People who memorize tend to think of information as something stored up inside them waiting for release. When they start reciting, they want to dump it out as quickly as possible. Look up "recitation" in the dictionary and you'll find one meaning is "reading or repeating aloud." Would you want your presentation to be described as "reading or repeating aloud"?

To conquer your fear, you have to focus on what caused it. Attack the cause and you diminish the condition. Here are three ideas that actually work.

Be prepared.

When you bring the requisite knowledge to your presentation, you have eliminated one of the major causes of apprehension. Keep in

mind the fact that you're the expert. Anticipate difficult questions and prepare responses. Another aspect of preparation is practice. You should have rehearsed your presentation three to five times before you deliver it before a live audience. Ask a friend or associate to listen in and "red flag" any unfamiliar language or confusing statements. The fewer the surprises, the more in control you'll be.

Focus on the audience.

Research their needs, their knowledge level, their concerns and their motivations. Tailor your presentation to this unique audience, not some abstract conglomerate of people. Arrive early and mingle with individual audience members. Get to know a few of them. Ask them why they're attending the presentation and what they hope to gain from it. Refer to some of them by name during the presentation. Remove some of the anonymity and you'll also remove some of the apprehension.

Visualize Success.

The perspective you bring to the situation frames your experience. Thoughts of failure often become self-fulfilling prophecies. Instead, picture yourself speaking confidently and accomplishing your purpose. Don't think about it simply as something to "get over with." Presentations provide excellent opportunities for business development and networking. When you have developed your presentation skills, you'll enjoy a competitive edge. Leadership development specialists, business coaches and performance experts all agree: Effective communication skills are essential to achieving growth in any profession. There's also no doubt that public speaking causes anxiety. You probably won't be able to eliminate it completely, but if you're sufficiently prepared, audience-focused and success-oriented, you'll be able to keep anxiety under control and your career on track.

The facts are in and it's a solid case for presentations as marketing tools. No other approach combines all the benefits with a low cost/high-impact effect. It's an approach that professional services firms and practitioners are using with great success. Still, it's not a

system for everyone. Without the requisite expertise, an ongoing strategic plan and proficiency in speaking, you simply won't meet the system requirements. For those who do, read on. Now that you've had an overview of the Rainmaking Presentations System, it's time to explore each step in more detail.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—

Leveraging Your Expertise

- Presentations occur in a variety of contexts. Be willing to think beyond the traditional model of “one person in a room speaking to many.”
- Don't be afraid to question conventional wisdom. Just because you've heard something repeated a number of times doesn't make it accurate.
- The Rainmaking Presentations System is a process. Each step builds upon the others to create a whole greater than the sum of its parts.
- To make Rainmaking Presentations work for you, you'll need to meet the “system requirements.”
- Be willing to learn to speak well. No amount of expertise can compensate for information designed, developed and delivered poorly.

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CHAPTER 2

ANALYZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 2— UNLESS YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO, YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS ARE FEW.

One of the biggest problems with using a sales script is that it assumes too much. It assumes similar motivators, perspectives and situations in life. A financial planner I know has developed a very clever approach to meeting clients. He places bowls near the cash registers of higher-end restaurants in his territory. On each bowl, he places a small sign encouraging patrons to drop their business card in for a chance at a free meal at that restaurant. He goes through the cards periodically and invites someone to lunch with the understanding that he'd like a few minutes to talk about his services. When I met him for lunch, he presented his sales talk that assumed (a) I had taken on a big mortgage to finance my house (I didn't), (b) I had to save for a child's college fund (I don't), and (c) that my parents might someday need assisted living care (they're both deceased). Treat each meeting as unique and don't assume too much.

Audience analysis shows you how to connect with your audience. This connection helps you build trust, adapt your message and increase involvement. To better understand the synergy that drives the success of the Rainmaking

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

CPA Mel Abraham estimates that 80 percent of his business development is presentation-based marketing. He speaks primarily to CPA's, attorneys, financial planners and banking and trust companies. After a presentation to an estate conference, he later was chosen for two projects totaling \$60,000 by members of his audience. He believes much of his success lies in making complex topics understood. "You may have great information and expert knowledge, but if you can't present it in a way the audience can digest it and you can't show them how it applies to them, it's useless. I always strive to be authentic when I present, so I can build trust with the audience."

Presentations System, let's look briefly at each part of the Rain-making Presentations model.

We begin with the presenter, who takes a message he wants to deliver to an audience. In face-to-face communication, the message is coded through three different channels, the visual, the verbal and the vocal, as Figure 2.1 illustrates.

The visual channel includes both the body language of the presenter and any visual aids such as charts, graphs, props and electronic slide shows. The verbal channel relies on the language the presenter uses to code the message. The vocal channel consists of voice qualities such as tone, pitch, rate, volume and articulation. While always present in face-to-face communication, these three channels can work

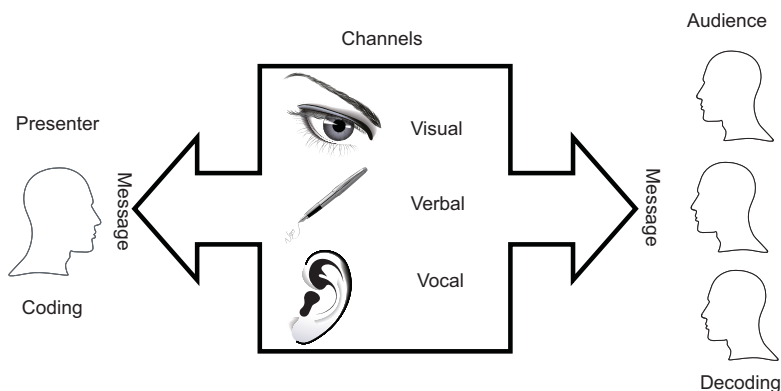


Figure 2.1 The Coding Process

in harmony to reinforce a single message or they can send contradictory messages. For example, a speaker who says he's excited to be speaking to the group and has lots of energy for his topic, but delivers his speech in a slow monotone while slouching or leaning has subverted his own contention. In other words, the vocal and visual channels have undermined the verbal channel's message.

Frame of Reference

Successful coding and decoding of the message depends on the overlap between the presenter's and the audience's frames of reference (Figure 2.2). *A frame of reference is the multifaceted interpretive framework someone depends on to create meaning.* It includes language, culture, age, gender, education, occupation, and other life experiences that influence how people understand messages. A presenter who uses technical language that his audience doesn't understand has failed to adapt to their frame of reference. So has the presenter who speaks on investment strategies to a group who has little disposable income. Frame of reference differences become even more pronounced in presentations to cross-cultural audiences, as we'll discover in Chapter 9.

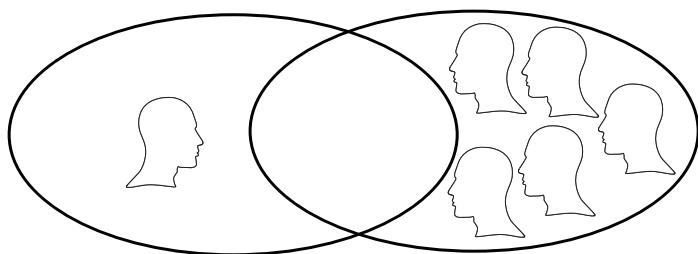


Figure 2.2 Understanding Depends on Overlapping Frames of Reference

Forms of Interference

Until we can communicate telepathically, we'll always contend with interference in the coding and decoding of messages. In presentations we deal with three forms:

Semantic Interference

This occurs when we're using the same words but attaching different interpretations to them. This commonly occurs with relative language such as "as soon as possible," "usually," "a lot" and "sometimes." In my Rainmaking Presentations seminars, I ask participants to define what they mean when they use these relative terms. The results are always eye opening. For example, within the same class of 12 participants, "as soon as possible" is defined as anywhere from five minutes to one week! You can see, then, how such semantic interference leads to misunderstanding and frustration.

Channel Interference

This occurs when some factor prevents the message from reaching the audience or distorts the message. Visual channel interference includes graphics or text that is too small to see, a lack of contrast between background and foreground and too many data points that obscure key information. Examples of vocal channel interference include presenters speaking too softly, speaking in a monotone voice or filling their sentences with vocalized pauses and filler words. Verbal channel interference may take the form of jargon or specialized language the audience doesn't understand. In Chapter 8, I'll discuss each type of channel interference in more detail.

Situational Interference

This includes any distractions during the presentation. Examples are cell phones ringing, side conversations, problems with audio-visual equipment and unexpected events. As participants introduced themselves at the beginning of one of my seminars, we learned that one of them was due to deliver her baby that day or the day after. Every time that participant looked uneasy or uncomfortable, we thought the event was imminent.

Feedback Loops

The most successful presenters recognize that effective communication involves a joint effort between speaker and audience, rather than

TOOLKIT

Look at the Eliminating Interference worksheet in the Toolkit section of this book. Think back to the last two or three presentations you attended and see if you can identify any of these types of interference. What were the sources? What could the presenter have done to avoid or manage the interference?

a one-way process similar to broadcasting (Figure 2.3). Puzzled looks on audience faces might provide feedback that you're confusing them and need to explain things more fully. Stern looks or frowns may indicate disagreement. Yawns, clock watching and disengagement from the presentation probably indicate boredom and disinterest. Be prepared to adapt to such feedback.

Contextual Factors

Your presentations occur within a context. Audience expectations for the presentation define that context. As we saw in Chapter 1, participants at an educational seminar expect to be educated, not pitched to. Violating these expectations leads to loss of trust, damaged credibility and resentment. The more formal the event, the more rigid the audience expectations. For example, at ceremonial events such as graduations or funerals, speakers have very little latitude in their topics or treatment because the expectations have been largely determined by precedent.

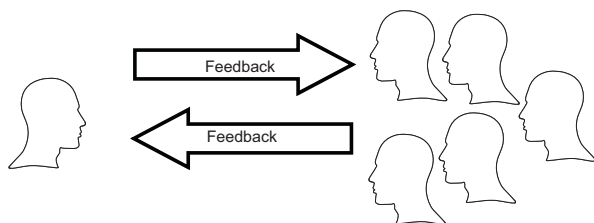


Figure 2.3 The Feedback Loop

Now that we have a clearer understanding of the Rainmaking Presentations model, we'll turn to individual parts in more detail. We'll begin with audience analysis and the role it plays in successful presentations.

The Rhetorical Triangle

As the Rainmaking Presentations model illustrates, the three anchor points of any presentation are the presenter, the audience and the message, or what we can call the “Rhetorical Triangle” (Figure 2.4).

Consciously or unconsciously, when we approach presentations we all emphasize one aspect over the other two.

Presenter-focused

Presenter-focused presentations are mainly focused on the self-importance of the presenter. VIPs and senior partners are often guilty of this kind of presentation style. Recognizing their own importance, they think that by logical extension, any message they deliver carries the same importance. In the village of Kandy in Sri Lanka sits a magnificent Buddhist shrine known as the Temple of the Tooth. It's supposed to contain one of Buddha's teeth. Believers consider it to be an

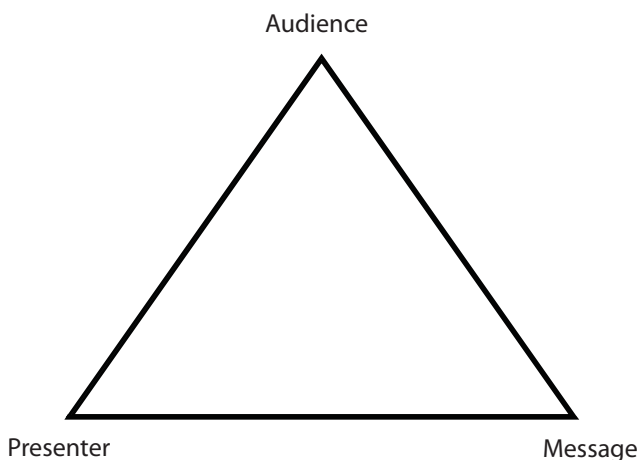


Figure 2.4 The Rhetorical Triangle

especially sacred relic since all the words of wisdom Buddha ever spoke flowed past that tooth. Presenters would do well to remember that not everything flowing past their teeth would be considered wisdom. Stream-of-consciousness speaking, little organization and self-referent pronouns such as “I” and “me” often characterize such presentations. Because of the title, degree or position that follows their name, these presenters simply don’t see the need to communicate well.

Message-focused

Message-focused presentations rely heavily on data, statistics and other information points. They are favored by accountants, engineers, scientists and others with technical backgrounds. Because they are so familiar with the context in which such information is meaningful, presenters who are message-focused mistakenly tend to believe that “the facts speak for themselves.” Message-focused presentations often lack contextualization, interpretation and explanation for lay audiences. As we’ll see in the next chapter, these presentations tend to focus more on what the presenter wants to say, rather than what she wants to accomplish.

Audience-focused

Audience-focused presentations are at the heart of the Rainmaking Presentations System. Presenters with this approach recognize the crucial roles played by thorough audience analysis, language adaptation and appropriate proof points for specific audiences. They make decisions concerning which visuals to include, how much background information is needed, and what language will best resonate with the audience based on what is most likely to elicit the desired response.

Defining a Target Audience

Figure 2.5 illustrates how your audience breaks down into three distinct categories. Part of your audience will already be in agreement with you. They may be inclined toward your position because they’ve already thought about the issues or simply because you have signifi-

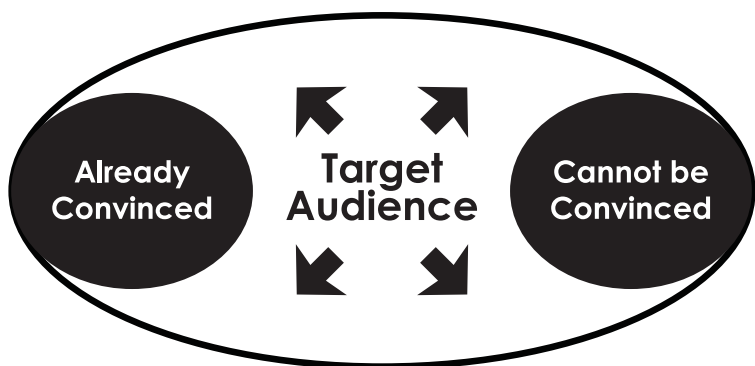


Figure 2.5 The Target Audience

cant credibility with them. A second part of your audience won't be open to persuasion. They may have already made up their minds, have their own agenda or decide for some reason they don't like you. You gain little by "preaching to the choir" or trying to convince those who have become obstinate. You'll reap the greatest benefits from focusing on that segment of the audience that is open to persuasion and can effect change. This is your "target audience."

I'm often asked if presenters can have more than one target audience. The answer is "yes." Target audiences can be broken down into different segments as well, each with its own best method of approach. But the more target audiences you strive to convince at one time, the less persuasive you'll be with each. If you've been strategic about choosing your speaking opportunity, you'll have a very narrow target audience that allows you to hone your key messages for maximum effect.

Adapting Your Message to the Target Audience

Almost any book you consult about presentations will contain the advice *you must understand your audience*. While good advice, the more important subsequent step that's often neglected is *adapt your message to the audience*.

Careful attention to the specific characteristics of your audience allows you to:

- Adapt messages to your audience's frame of reference
- Build rapport and trust
- Create interest in your message
- Anticipate questions and objections
- Identify the appropriate persuasive strategy
- Customize your presentation

The Rainmaking Presentations System focuses on four specific areas of analysis that help you better understand your audience: demographics; psychographics; factors of fear, uncertainty and doubt; and benefits.

Demographics

Demographics are readily observable/measurable statistics of a given audience. The most useful demographic traits for audience analysis are typically age, gender, education, income and culture.

Age

As people age, they tend to become more conservative socially, politically and financially. They're less likely to tolerate risk with their investments. Younger people tend to be less "future-focused." I've seen any number of financial planners illustrate the fact that if people would start even a modest savings program in their early twenties and maintain it throughout their working career, they could easily retire as millionaires. But people in their early twenties seldom prioritize retirement planning. Instead, they're focused on issues such as repayment of student loans, buying a home and starting a family.

A generational zeitgeist now defines many audiences as well. With four generations (baby boomers, generation X, generation Y and millennials) present among the working population, it becomes increasingly difficult to adapt messages to generationally diverse audiences. Each generation has its own understanding of work/life balance, its own familiarity with significant world events and its own definition of popular culture. Even preferences for communicating have evolved

from the letter to the phone call to the email to the text message. Attempts to create a connection with the audience must take these generational zeitgeists into account. As a baby boomer, I grew up with *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Gilligan's Island*. I quickly learned that when speaking to younger generations, references to the foibles of Barney Fife were falling upon deaf ears.

Gender

Although some topics naturally appeal more to one gender than the other (think breast cancer vs. prostate cancer), you should avoid stereotyping on the basis of gender. There are very few legal issues, financial concerns, insurance needs and management principles that are gender specific. Where these distinctions are genuine, use them. But remember that the lines between traditional gender “roles” have become increasingly blurred and your goal should be to avoid causing offense.

Education

Understanding your audience's educational level also affects how you adapt your message. Some of the factors to consider include vocabulary, the complexity of ideas and the amount of evidence required to create a persuasive message. For example, more educated audiences generally require more evidence to accept a position or change their minds. A lay audience lacking specialized knowledge and vocabulary will require more explanation and illustration of concepts to understand and act upon your ideas.

Income

Different income levels affect investment opportunities, leisure activities, and spending priorities. Equipped with this knowledge, you can better gauge your audience's needs and interests in areas such as estate planning, income protection and financial planning.

Culture

One of the fastest growing areas in market research is marketing designed for specific ethnic groups. In addition to the different cultural dimensions that influence audience perspectives, you'll need to be aware of different holidays, customs, and religious beliefs that affect your ability to create an audience connection.

The usefulness of any particular demographic trait will vary according to your topic. Although you might not utilize each trait, having the information on hand allows you select those that have the greatest impact on your presentation.

Psychographics

Psychographics refer to the mental constructs people employ to organize their lives and guide their behaviors. Psychographics include beliefs, attitudes and values.

Beliefs

These are what people take to be facts about the world around them. The beliefs people hold may be true or false. Often, creating a persuasive message means correcting false beliefs. A colleague of mine who sold color laser printers thought he had a very compelling marketing pitch: He focused on the clean, crisp text his printers produced, their reliability and the speed of printing. He complained that his target market was more interested in color inkjet printing because they believed it was more economical. He explained that while inkjet printers can be purchased for much less than laser printers, the price of consumables differs significantly. In some cases, laser printing may cost less than one-fifth the price of inkjet printing. He made a persuasive case for his product only after he changed their beliefs. Some examples of beliefs include:

- Social Security will be sufficient for retirement income.
- Online banking is unsafe.
- Dollar cost-averaging is the best way to invest.
- Restrictions on advertising increase professionalism.
- Business meals are 100 percent tax deductible.

Attitudes

These are positive or negative feelings toward a person, issue or situation. You might also think of them as preferences. Because they're tied to emotions and aren't subject to validation, they can be more difficult to manage. It doesn't make sense to tell someone her attitude is "wrong." When presenting, your goal isn't to "correct" attitudes, but, rather, to either reinforce or change them. Examples of attitudes include:

- Investing is only for wealthy people.
- “If it isn’t broken, don’t fix it” (a negative attitude toward change).
- Flextime is for employees who can’t really commit to their job.
- You should avoid involvement in a legal proceeding at all costs.

Values

These are orientations for choices we make. For example, think about what someone values when purchasing an automobile. Someone who values economy might purchase a Toyota Yaris or a Scion. The person who values safety might be more inclined toward a Volvo or an SUV. When performance is valued, the choice might be a BMW. Prestige might lead to the purchase of a Lexus or Mercedes. Excitement and speed may manifest themselves in a Porsche. For business and professional presentations, the most productive approach to values lies in descriptive statements about priorities rather than evaluative judgments about right and wrong. We observe these priorities daily. Some examples of competing values include:

- What is right vs. what is expedient
- Future planning vs. present enjoyment
- Having something completed vs. having something perfected
- Security vs. freedom
- Economy vs. quality

The success of your presentation to a specific audience will often depend on identifying the beliefs, attitudes and values that stand in your way.

Fears, Uncertainties and Doubts (FUDs)

Fears, uncertainties and doubts (FUDs) are mental roadblocks that prevent an audience from accepting and implementing your ideas. FUDs create reservations in your audience that you will need to overcome.

Fears

These revolve around the possible negative consequences of a decision. These might include loss of income, losing face (being made to look bad) and fear of failure.

Uncertainties

These arise when someone lacks the criteria or information necessary to reach a decision. Prospects trapped in this mental purgatory often fall victim to “paralysis by analysis.” You can reduce uncertainty by using educational messages, for example, “what you need to know before investing in a mutual fund,” or “frequently asked questions about choosing an attorney.”

Doubts

These stem from the audience’s reluctance to believe that your service or solution will actually work or that you are capable of executing it. It can be an especially acute problem for less experienced professionals and solo practices. The most effective ways to remove doubts include case studies, testimonials and examples of past work.

Benefits

If audiences were radios, the one station they’d be tuned into 24/7 would be WIIFT—What’s In It For Them. Listeners must be able to see what value your information has for them. Unfortunately, we’re too often focused on features instead of benefits. Let me illustrate the distinction: I once accompanied a commercial leasing agent on a sales call. When the prospective tenants arrived in the lobby where we had agreed to meet, the leasing agent greeted them with “You probably noticed the large parking lot outside!” While I’m sure he thought he was making a persuasive case for the property, he did little more than list a feature. A benefit would be something such as, “With so much parking available, your clients will never be reluctant to visit during certain times because they’re afraid they can’t find parking,” or “You’ll never have to rush to get to the office just so you can find parking.” The advice that “features tell, but benefits sell” serves presenters well.

I’ve seen dozens of professional service firms open their presentation for an account along the following lines: “Our company was founded in 1983 by principals from the ABC Group and the XYZ

Consulting Group. We have 15 offices nationwide. Forty-seven percent of our consultants have MBAs and 25 percent have PhDs. We have over 300 years combined experience in this practice area.” Such a list of features is meant to build credibility, but the fact is, the people making the decision probably don’t care about any of that. They care about the solutions you’ll deliver and the benefits they can expect from working with you.

The No PAIN = No Gain Benefits Generator in Table 2.1 shows you 28 specific ways to drive value for your audience. It’s named for the acronym formed from protect, advance, increase and neutralize. Psychologically, people will move toward benefits and away from discomforts. As a professional service, dentistry provides an excellent example of this principle. You can sell the idea of a visit to the dentist either on the advantages of a good smile through whitening and

Table 2.1 The No P.A.I.N. = No Gain Benefits Generator

No P.A.I.N. Means no Gain

To be successful in reaching an audience, you have to be able to demonstrate what they will be able to take away from your presentation. One of the biggest mistakes presenters make is focusing on what interests them instead of what interests their audience. Are you looking for ways to demonstrate benefits? Remember that “No P.A.I.N. means no Gain.

Protect:

Health
Security
Interests
Reputation
Assets
Planning Decisions

Increase:

ROI
Bottom Line
Market Share
Productivity
Competitiveness
Performance
Available Time
Opportunities

Advance:

Career
Professional Responsibilities
Relationships
Knowledge
Understanding
Comfort
Popularity

Neutralize:

Criticism
Trouble
Unnecessary Effort
Pain
Emotional Distress
Problems
The Unexpected

What other ways can you think of to connect with your audience?

straightening or through the consequences of poor oral hygiene, such as gum disease and tooth loss. Think about the factors that motivate your target market and how you can provide benefits.

The Best Ways to Find Information about Your Target Audience

Now that you understand the type of information you'll need about your audience, the next step is finding it. The Rainmaking Presentations System divides this process into both active and passive research.

Active Research

This involves interviews with key players in your audience. Some of the questions you can ask include:

- Who are your competitors?
- What are your major frustrations?
- What are the biggest challenges you face on a day-to-day basis?
- What's keeping you from increasing your profitability?
- What professional publications do you read regularly?
- What did you like / dislike about the last presentation or presenter you heard?
- What specific terms or technical language in your organization should I be aware of?

Conducting interviews with key players gives you opportunities to hear firsthand the thought leadership within the organization and to start building relationships with decision makers.

Accessibility to these top people and scheduling issues will sometimes make such high-level interviews impractical. When that's the case, shift your research emphasis from quality to quantity by polling as many members of your audience as possible. With an online survey tool such as Survey Monkey (<http://www.SurveyMonkey.com>) or Zoomerang (<http://www.Zoomerang.com>) you can construct a wide variety of questions including multiple choice, rating scales,

open-ended comments and demographic questions. The results of these surveys allow you to customize your presentation with phrases such as “Over 75 percent of you say you’d be satisfied with an eight percent return on your investment,” or “Less than one-third of you have a living will in place.”

Passive Research

This involves collecting already existing data about the company or organization you’ll be speaking to. Sources for this data include:

- The company website
- Annual reports
- Newsletters or other publications
- Hoover’s Company Information (<http://www.Hoovers.com>)
- Lexis-Nexis (<http://www.Lexis-Nexis.com>)
- James J. Hill Business Reference Library (<http://www.jjhill.org>)

You can also use a combination of these research methods. The key to success lies in using the information you find to adapt the message to your audience.

How to Make Your Presentation Interactive by Involving the Audience

As Figure 2.6 illustrates, when you increase the level of interactivity in your presentation from mere observation to actual participation, you’ll notice a corresponding increase in understanding, retention and implementation of ideas. You will see several benefits of interactivity:

- Periodically involving the audience keeps them mentally engaged.
- Asking the audience to help generate content gives them greater ownership of the ideas.
- Practicing implementing your action steps increases the likelihood of actual implementation.

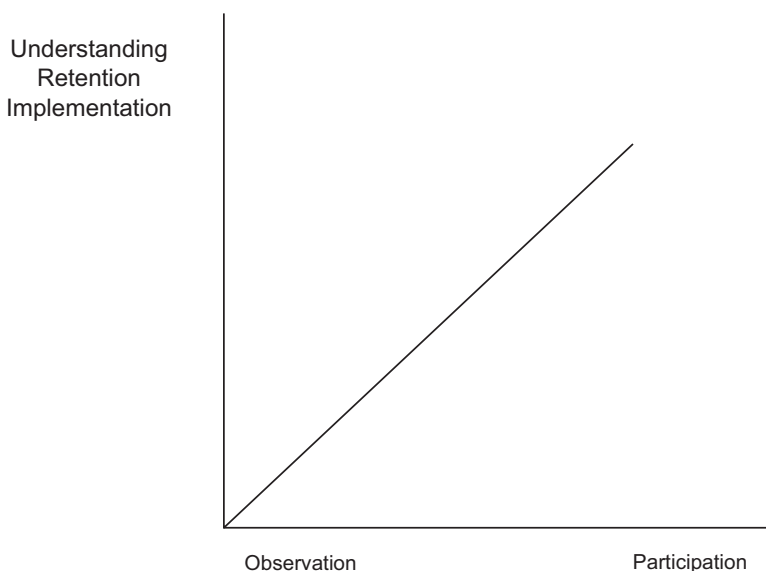


Figure 2.6 The Benefits of Interactivity in Presentations

Audience Interaction—The Wrong Way

There's lots of advice about how to involve your audience during your presentation. Unfortunately, much of it backfires because it makes the audience feel uncomfortable, alienated or patronized. In my own observation and analysis of effective presentations, here are the top three cardinal sins of audience interactivity.

Asking the audience to guess what's on your mind.

This occurs when you ask a question and expect a specific answer. I've seen presenters use this technique, anticipating the correct answer with the first couple of responses. Instead, what they get is a series of incorrect responses to which they must contritely reply: "No, that's not what I was thinking of." "No, that's not quite it, but that's close." "That might work in some situations, but that's not what I'm looking for." "This is easy. Doesn't anyone know the answer?" These replies make the audience feel inadequate and frustrated that they don't know the correct answer.

Asking the audience to repeat something after you say it.

This technique usually goes something like this: “Please stand, raise your hand and repeat after me.” Such a request takes many audiences out of their comfort zones. In my research about why this makes audience members uncomfortable, two responses stood out. First, it asks them to perform three actions, each of which may potentially cause discomfort; applied cumulatively, discomfort is almost guaranteed. Second, this technique asks them to mimic taking an oath, so for many, it trivializes what is a very serious act.

Asking the audience to raise their hands in an informal poll.

The questions in these informal polls are usually designed to simply encourage participation rather than elicit any meaningful information. The audience quickly senses that there’s no real point to the question. Even worse is when a presenter frames the poll this way: “How many of you believe X?” “How many of you believe Y?” “How many of you would refuse to raise your hands no matter what I asked?” The last question, designed to evoke a humorous response to the lack of participation only draws attention to the ineffectiveness of the technique.

Audience Interaction—The Right Way

I’ve found the following techniques to be the most effective ways to involve your audience in your presentation. Please note that the success of each technique will depend on how professionally you administer it and the composition of your audience.

- Ask them to write down a statement or belief.
- Record, report or fill in the blanks on handouts.
- Ask them to write questions for a later Q & A period.
- Solicit volunteers from the audience.
- Reward participation with a giveaway (but please don’t throw things at them).
- Ask them to complete a statement (but make certain they are familiar with the statement).
- Ask a rhetorical question and give them time to mentally consider it.

- Get audience members to supply their own stories to illustrate your points.
- Ask them to contribute business cards as the basis for a prize drawing (but make certain you have the permission of the organizer).

You'll find which techniques work best for you partly by research and partly by trial and error. The key to success is a willingness to try new things, keeping those that work for you and letting go of those that don't.

Audience Interaction— How to Handle Questions Like a Pro

Some presenters avoid the phrase “Are there any questions” because they feel it puts the audience on the spot to immediately start supplying questions. Alternative phrasing might include “What can I explain more fully?” “What would you like more information about?” and “Where can I fill in some details?” However you choose to frame the Q & A, remember that you can respond to even “difficult” questions with the right tools. Here are ten strategies that will help you handle questions effectively and professionally.

1. Announce how and when you will answer questions. That way, if you're interrupted, you can say “I'll be glad to return to that questions at the end of my presentation. Please be sure to remind me to do that.”
2. Be prepared. You should already have thought about the three most difficult questions your audience could ask and prepared an answer for each. You can usually anticipate points of disagreement and objections. When you can respond directly, the “difficult” questions become less difficult.
3. Use your audience as a resource. People are always happy to give advice and by soliciting their opinion, you've enlisted them as allies. Use a phrase such as, “Before I give my input, does anyone in the audience have experience with this issue you'd be willing to contribute?”

4. Admit when you don't know something. It's OK that you're not an expert on everything. If the question doesn't fall within your area of expertise, you might respond with, "Rather than give you anything less than 100 percent accurate information, let me research it more thoroughly and I'll get back to you with a detailed answer." This strategy also provides a built-in follow-up mechanism for further contact.
5. Answer only one question at a time. Participants will sometimes string together several questions at once. Be sure to separate them and answer first the question for which you have the best response. You can justify your choice because you've been "working on something similar," that's where you have the "most experience" or that will have the "broadest appeal to everyone in the audience."
6. Change the scope of the question when it's necessary. If you can best demonstrate your expertise with details, answer a broad question with a specific example. If your forte is a bigger-picture view, take a specific question and show how it applies to many situations.
7. Don't make your Q & A the end of the program. Save some piece of your conclusion to insert after the Q & A. You want to finish in control and leave the audience with a positive impression.
8. Determine the reason for the question. Questions are sometimes genuine requests for information and sometimes thinly veiled attempts to make you look bad. When it's the latter, deflect such attempts by responding "So that I can be completely responsive, let me ask your interest in knowing this."
9. Repeat the question. This gives other audience members who had difficulty hearing a chance to catch up and affords you some extra time to compose your answer.
10. Make certain there's really a question. People sometimes use the Q & A to make statements or deliver mini-lectures. If the question goes on for more than a minute, politely ask the person to state the question so you can respect the time of the other audience members.

Audience Interaction—When There's Hostility in the Room

If you make enough presentations you'll eventually face some hostility from the audience. Perhaps they're hostages, forced to attend the presentation when they'd rather be somewhere else. Maybe they have a negative attitude toward your profession. There might be a situation at their workplace that's causing them stress. Again, the right approach will allow you to defuse the hostility and make the best of the situation. Here are the most effective tools for dealing with hostility from your audience:

1. Separate the person from the issue. Make certain you're seen as a human being and not as a disembodied extension of the contentious issue. Show the audience you respect their concerns.
2. Ask them not to kill the messenger. When you have to deliver unpleasant news, let them know it's your job, not your pleasure.
3. Don't argue with a heckler. Hecklers are motivated by temporarily becoming the center of attention. A friend of mine was the president of a private club. During the annual meetings, there was always a heckler or two. His strategy was to be polite and refuse to engage in disagreement. Eventually, the audience tired of the inappropriate behavior and silenced the heckler themselves. It worked for him every time.
4. Remain calm. People usually take their cue about how to respond to situations based on the person in front of the room—you. If you are visibly angry and upset, they'll take that as the appropriate mindset.
5. Recognize concerns rather than trivializing them. Nothing will make an audience turn against you faster than believing you're trivializing something important to them.
6. Frame your message as objective evidence rather than personal opinion. Instead of saying "I feel" or "I believe," say "Research shows us" or "The facts are these."
7. Ask hostile questioners to identify themselves and the organizations they represent before they repeat the question. Anonymity breeds courage.

8. Ask directly if there is something you or your organization has done to upset the person. You're giving the person an opportunity to make his case. If a person is being unreasonable or over-emotional, others will quickly recognize it. In either case, the audience will appreciate your willingness to listen.
9. Show the audience the direct benefits of listening to your message. Some of the most hostile audiences are hostages forced to attend a presentation. The best way to win them over is to show them what they'll gain by listening.
10. Avoid emotional phrasing. Complex issues are often distilled into simplistic terms. For example, if you're asked "Have you stopped defending employers who retaliate against whistleblowers yet?" rephrase to "The question was about our HR policy."

Audience Interaction— A Final Word about Disconnects

We've seen that audience engagement is crucial to the success of presentations. Yet, it remains one of the most overlooked aspects. Too many presenters operate on a broadcast model, where they believe information should flow from the source (them) into passive receivers (the audience). Here are the top five ways presenters disconnect from their audiences, and ways to avoid falling into the same traps.

They infodump.

Information without context is simply data. The information dump is to listeners what spam is to email readers. Don't provide information just because it's available. Use it in a supportive role. How does it help you explain your point? If you can't draw a direct link between the information and the strategic goal of the presentation, don't use it. Be sensitive to what level of detail your audience expects.

Remember the marketing maxim: Features tell, benefits sell. Focus on giving people a reason to listen to you. Will you help them save time, money or other resources? Will you improve their health, career or productivity? Will you help them reduce uncertainty, ag-

gravation or frustration? Don't just tell them your information is valuable or important. Explain why.

Their delivery detracts from the message.

Although good delivery alone cannot guarantee success, poor delivery can usually guarantee failure. Some of the most common culprits are weak eye contact, vocalized pauses such as “uhm” and a monotone delivery that has no variation in pitch, rate or speed. The cumulative effect can be excruciating. People who think what they have to say is so important that they don't need to make it compelling or interesting are in the greatest danger.

The best way to improve delivery is to strive for engaged conversation. Think about how you'd speak with a friend, add enough volume and energy to fill up the room and infuse your presentation with enthusiasm. Use the vocal channel to reinforce the verbal channel. For example, when you want to convey thoughtfulness or seriousness, slow down a bit. When you want to convey excitement or urgency, increase your rate. The key is to inject variety.

Their language causes a disconnect.

Within a particular trade or profession, jargon serves as an economical way to communicate. When used with people outside that linguistic community, however, jargon serves as a barrier to understanding. Technical presentations to a lay audience are especially at risk, as are explanations that involve complex financial, legal or medical issues. Presenters are often tempted to use larger or more obscure words because they think it will make them sound smarter.

Choose the words that will best get your point across to your audience. There's also a difference between oral and written language. As a general rule, oral language uses shorter sentences and more direct language. Be sure to define and explain any terms that might be unfamiliar to your audience.

Their information is poorly organized.

Because of the way we process information, we expect to receive it in distinct and patterned ways. When material is presented merely as a

“grocery list” of seemingly unrelated pieces of information, an audience will have difficulty seeing the connection. It’s one thing to think in a nonlinear fashion. It’s quite another to try to communicate in it.

Use the organizational pattern that best mirrors the mental connections you want the audience to make. For example, if you’re introducing a new policy or change, spend time making the case that a problem with the current situation exists, then offer your policy as a solution. Show how the new policy will solve the problem you’ve identified. If you’re trying to teach someone a skill, a step-by-step organization pattern makes it easy to remember.

They lecture.

Long gone are the days when you could simply recite a lengthy speech and expect to hold the audience’s attention. Some presenters read directly from a written paper or, worse yet, read lines of text from a PowerPoint™ show. In our multimedia-rich age, attention spans are shorter and expectations are higher for some form of interactivity. Your audience members may remain in their seats throughout a lecture, but your chances for effecting change or moving them to action are slim.

Remember, it’s not about you; it’s about them. When you keep focused on the needs of the audience, you’re more successful in getting your message heard.

Remember that people make mountains out of molehills.

While waiting in the business lounge of the Tokyo airport, I couldn’t help but overhear a frustrated individual talking on his phone. Given the time difference, I’m sure he woke someone in the United States at 2:00 A.M. to deliver his tirade.

This @#\$* me off. I’m looking at the #*\$@ing plane that I can’t get on sitting on the runway. The @#*\$ing thing isn’t even leaving for another four and a half hours. That means I’m going to be late getting into L.A. and have to wait another @#*\$ing two hours for a flight to Minneapolis. Yes, there is a direct flight to Minneapolis, but I think it cost something like \$112 dollars more, so those @#*\$s at corporate decided I had to fly through L.A.

They offered me a @#*\$ing \$10 meal voucher for my inconvenience. I told them they don’t even know what inconvenience is!

This is a bunch of @#\$. They don't care. They don't have to travel. They just sit on their @#\$\$ behind the desk all day and ruin people's lives.

I didn't mean to wake you up this early and bring you down. I just wanted to call so you didn't worry about me not being home when I was supposed to be. Now, instead of 7:30, it's going to be 10:30 or 11:00. Assuming of course, those @#\$\$* don't cancel the flight from L.A. I'll see you whenever I get home.

To put this in perspective, here was a person who might arrive three hours late from an international flight and who was enjoying his wait in the comfort of the business class lounge. Granted, I fly well over 100,000 miles a year, but many times I would have welcomed only a three-hour delay. In the context of international travel, this person's problem just wasn't all that significant, but I pity anyone who tried to tell him that.

One of the quickest ways to make someone angry is to trivialize something they think is important. Presentations offer plenty of opportunities to do just that. Be mindful of this principle as you use humor, answer questions and evaluate ideas.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Analyze

- Make certain the three channels of communication (visual, verbal, vocal) work together to reinforce the same message.
- Focus on adapting your message to the audience's frame of reference rather than expecting them to adapt to yours.
- Consider possible sources of interference and plan how to eliminate or manage them.
- Think about what beliefs, attitudes and values might prevent the audience from implementing your ideas.
- Plan on both active and passive research to get the necessary information about your audience.
- The more you can involve the audience in the presentation, the more they will understand, remember and implement.
- Develop a strategy for handling the Q & A part of your presentation.
- Don't let hostility from the audience derail your presentation. Learn to defuse hostility.

**Web Resources**

Gathering information about a company or organization:

- Hoover's Company Information
(<http://www.Hoovers.com>)
- Lexis-Nexis (<http://www.LexisNexis.com>)
- James J. Hill Business Reference Library
(<http://www.jjhill.org>)

Conducting online surveys:

- Survey Monkey (<http://www.SurveyMonkey.com>)
- Zoomerang (<http://www.Zoomerang.com>)

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
CONTAIN PURPOSE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 3— FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT TO ACCOMPLISH RATHER THAN WHAT YOU PLAN TO SAY

In Chapter 2, we examined the characteristics of audience-focused presentations. Your strategic goal is what you want the audience to understand or act upon. Your key messages give them reasons why they should act on your suggestions. During a practice presentation, I listened to a speaker whose strategic goal was to get her supervisors to reassign some of her responsibilities to the people under her. Her key messages were that it would free up some of her time and eliminate some of the tasks she considered tedious. Neither of these key messages would be effective because they focused only on self-serving benefits. With some coaching, she changed her key messages to point out the work reassignment would increase overall productivity in her department and result in a more efficient allocation of limited resources.

Imagine you are traveling on an airplane when suddenly you hear this announcement: “*Ladies and gentlemen, from the flight deck, this is your captain speaking. On behalf of the outstanding flight crew, I’d like to welcome you aboard. We have no destination today, but we do have an ample supply of fuel. We’re going to fly around until we get*

low on fuel, then we'll look for a safe place to land. Please sit back and enjoy the flight." Think how quickly you'd wish you never boarded that plane!

Too many professionals put their audiences in exactly the same situation. Just like the pilot, who focuses on the activity of flying rather than reaching a destination, many speakers focus on what they want to say, rather than what they want to accomplish.

A focus on what you want to say results in lists, histories of the firm and biographies of the firm's partners. This information rarely persuades prospects to become clients. Have you ever attended a presentation or sat through a meeting where the speaker provided ream after ream of data with no apparent connection? If so, you've been a victim of the "infodump." That's the highly technical term for a presentation or briefing where someone fails to distinguish knowledge from information. Presenters who infodump overwhelm their audiences with a torrent of facts, statistics and technical details. They'll often lose the potential business because they create a glassy-eyed sea of apathy and indifference rather than a pool of interest. Experts are in the gravest danger of committing this presentational sin simply because they have so much data at their command.

Infodumpers fail to recognize that information isn't necessarily knowledge. Knowledge gives purpose to information. It adds value and context. A focus on knowledge transfer means less emphasis on just providing information and more on how your audience can actually make use of it.

Understanding the Strategy Funnel

Suppose someone asks what your presentation is about. You might respond, "Our firm's specialty areas." But that's merely a topic. It's the most general level in the strategy funnel (Figure 3.1). As we move toward the bottom of the funnel, each level is more specific and concrete than the one above it. The strategy funnel provides a way to narrow your scope and focus.

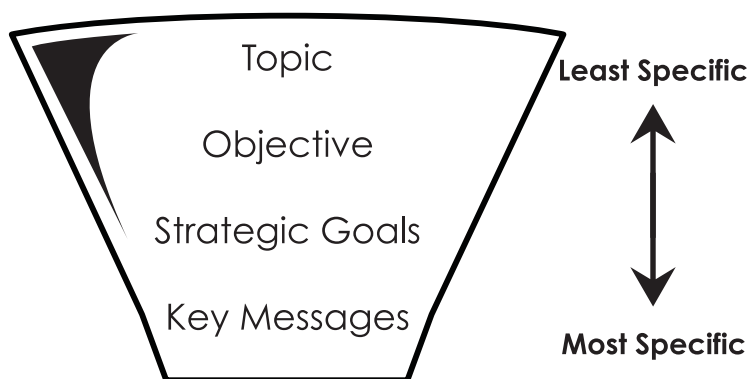


Figure 3.1 The Strategy Funnel

The Conventional Wisdom Approach to Objectives and Why It's Wrong

Maybe you've heard or read that there are three types of presentations: informative, persuasive and entertaining. It's certainly been repeated often enough. Don't believe it! It's a creation of twentieth-century textbooks on public speaking and more of a marketing ploy than a useful distinction. It was a distinction unfamiliar to those in the classical world who wrote about rhetoric and public speaking. Practitioners knew that through our choice of words, facts and delivery methods, we consistently attempt to influence others. Leveraging expertise demands that we become more mindful that how and what we communicate affects our credibility with clients. As a presenter, the danger in believing in this false distinction is that you'll be tempted to "Let the facts speak for themselves" when you deliver a Continuing Education Units (CEU) course or educational seminar. They never do. Facts always need context, interpretation and illustration.

Another good reason to approach all presentations as attempts at persuasion is that you'll keep focused on presenting a logical case why a client should choose your services.

Developing Effective Strategic Goals

The next level of specificity is the strategic goal. *A strategic goal is what you want the audience to understand or act upon after the presentation.* You should be able to state your strategic goal in a single, simple, declarative sentence. If you asked me to pinpoint a specific area where the majority of presentations that I researched could be improved, it would be defining a clear strategic goal.

Designing a clear strategic goal is the number one way to reduce your preparation time because it takes so much guesswork and indecision out of the preparation process. When your destination is clear, you'll be able to choose the best route to get there. You'll know what visuals to include, how much support is necessary and where you're likely to encounter objections.

Once your strategic goal is defined, you can align all of your information in the service of accomplishing that goal.

Table 3.1 provides a quick and effective way to make sure your strategic goal has rainmaking properties.

Tangible

Is your strategic goal specific and concrete? Avoid simply "talking about" your subject. According to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, definitions of "about" include "in no particular direction" and "moving here and there." That's not how you want people to describe your presentation. How will you know if you've been successful? Suppose a financial planner took the approach of telling prospects about new investment opportunities. The temptation would be to describe the features of these new products. A more effective approach would be

Table 3.1 The T.A.R.G.E.T. Approach to Strategic Goals

To develop a clear strategic goal, keep it on "T.A.R.G.E.T."	
	Tangible
	Audience-Centered
	Results-Oriented
	Grounded in a Single Objective
	Easily-Remembered
	Time-Sensitive

to show prospects three ways to diversify their portfolios in the coming year.

Examples

Vague: *“To talk about the advantages and disadvantages of investing in initial public offerings (IPOs).”*

Tangible: *“To explain the four steps to invest in an initial public offering.”*

Vague: *“Protecting titles, names and copyrights”*

Tangible: *“To show audience members how to register a service name.”*

In both cases, the tangible strategic goal focuses on putting theory into practice. The information is benefit driven and provides concrete examples of an abstract concept.

Audience-Centered

Is your strategic goal appropriate to the audience you're speaking to? What benefits can the audience expect by investing their time in your presentation? Will it help them save money? Will it advance their careers? Will it make them more effective at business development? Does it solve some problem common to their situation?

Recall the financial planner from Chapter 2. He hadn't taken the opportunity to discover what was unique about my situation. What an opportunity he missed! He had a captive audience for 45 minutes. He could have customized his presentation by asking questions and then tailoring his approach to meet my needs and interests.

Examples

Message-Centered: *“To describe some of aspects of online marketing.”*

Audience-Centered: *“To explain three ways our online marketing services can help independent agents sell more.”*

Presenter-Centered: *“To explain two aspects of my firm's community involvement program.”*

Audience-Centered: *“To explain two ways my firm's community involvement program benefits the local economy.”*

Results-Oriented

Is your strategic goal something your audience can actually achieve? Focus on getting results, not just providing information. Many business

development professionals I coach make tremendous improvements once they understand how to focus on productivity rather than activity. I'll begin by asking them what they want to accomplish with their presentation. They might respond, "I'm going to explain the advantages of our new service." But when I press them, they'll finally begin to see that what they really want is for the client to buy the service. Explaining the advantages is just one tactic to get them there. Focusing on results keeps the end in mind.

Examples

Information-Oriented: *"To talk about three services my firm offers."*

Results-Oriented: *"To convince my audience to become clients."*

Feature-Oriented: *"To inform the prospect about two different types of retirement plans."*

Results-Oriented: *"To persuade the prospect to open a retirement account."*

Grounded in a Single Objective

Is your strategic goal limited to one distinct idea? Anytime the words *and/or* appear in a statement of your goal, reevaluate. It's better to accomplish one thing with excellence than two or three with mediocrity.

You also need to distinguish between instrumental goals and terminal goals. When you hear someone making excessive use of the word *and* during a presentation, he's confused the destination with how to get there. If someone wants to make you aware of a product *and* its advantages *and* get you to buy, what's the real objective? Making you aware of it and of the advantages ought to be in service of getting you to buy.

Examples

Multiple Objectives: *"To explain how the Roth IRA came into effect and how it has changed over the years. Then, to discuss its advantages over other types of retirement accounts."*

Single Objective: *"To persuade my audience to open a Roth IRA account."*

Multiple Objectives: *"To explain the business operations of Fabrosan, Inc. and why it is the target of anti-trust investigations."*

Single Objective: *“To explain the two ways Fabrosan, Inc. violated anti-trust laws.”*

Easily Remembered

Does your strategic goal make your point with the fewest words possible? Have you avoided the use of platitudes, clichés, relative language and vague descriptions? I developed a program to show people some of the ways language choice affects our success in professional relationships. I could say: “Our linguistic choices implemented each day will dramatically impact the degree to which we succeed or fail in various endeavors.” Isn’t it more memorable to say, “The words we choose make us win or lose”?

Examples

Vague: *“To talk about various ways our firm’s services could improve your organization’s profitability.”*

Easily Remembered: *“To persuade the audience we will save them resources in three areas.”*

Vague: *“To inform my audience about some of the various features that our new product line will have that will make it stand out from other competitive products.”*

Easily Remembered: *“To explain three benefits of our new product line that give it a competitive advantage.”*

Time-Sensitive

Can you accomplish your strategic goal in the time you have for your presentation? This is especially important if you are one in a series of speakers. Set a realistic goal for the time you have available.

A few years ago, I witnessed a presentation where the speaker’s goal didn’t align with his allotted time. As soon as he was introduced, he began at a frenzied pace. His rate of speech was about 20 percent faster than average and he was changing transparencies across the overhead projector so quickly his hands never stopped moving. He continued this pace until he sat down. I heard him say afterward that he knew it didn’t go very well. As he was trying to explain to the organizers the reason his presentation bombed, he said: “I tried to fit a two-hour presentation into an hour.” That was

exactly the problem. You can't squeeze a two-hour presentation into an hour unless you talk twice as fast. You need to develop an hour-long presentation.

The lesson here is that you can't take a "canned" presentation and force it into whatever time you have available. You can't take a 30-minute presentation and put it into 10 minutes. If you've been given 10 minutes to speak, you need a 10-minute presentation. You must adapt to the time constraints you face.

Save the "How To" until You've Made the Case "Why To"

You've heard the saying, "give a man a fish and he eats for a day; teach him to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime." However, you'll never be successful teaching him *how to* until he understands why he'd *want to*. Business development is the same. Presenters sometimes jump ahead of that "want to" phase and spend their time simply talking about how to implement their service before making the case why it's beneficial. Make certain the "want to" exists before you begin the "how to."

During an international human resources forum I attended, I witnessed two software development consultants address their ideal target market—a group of senior human resources managers from multinational corporations who had the buying authority to implement their software solution. There was great potential for large contracts and repeat business throughout these organizations. As the presentation began, the consultants described their company, how the software was developed and a list of the features it contained. As the presentation progressed, they went on to describe in minutiae how anyone using the software could input, analyze and report the data. They concluded with an examination of how the software could be scaled to fit different sized organizations. They were clearly experts in their field and demonstrated great command of the information. Why weren't they flooded with business afterward? They spent the entire presentation explaining how to use the software, but no time convincing anyone to use it.

From the Mind to the Mouth

Your strategic goal will often be unstated; the audience arrives at the desired destination through the logical development of your presentation. Other times you might explicitly state the strategic goal. A good rule of thumb to determine whether to state your strategic goal: *When selling, keep it implicit. When ostensibly telling, make it explicit.*

Key messages are the most specific step in the strategy funnel and should always be stated—both in the introduction and throughout the presentation. These are the main themes you want the audience to remember. They're the main points of your presentation. They break a process down into its component steps, a whole into its parts or provide the reasons why someone should act on your recommendations.

Creating SMART Key Messages for Rainmaking

Simple, complete sentences make the best key messages.

An effective key message is expressed clearly and directly. It should be a simple, declarative sentence that lays out a proposition.

Maintain roughly equal balance among key messages.

If you have three key messages, you should spend roughly equal time developing each. A key message significantly longer than the others might need to be further subdivided. If a key message is significantly shorter than the others, perhaps you could organize it more effectively by placing it as a sub heading under one of the others.

Align your key messages to the strategic goal.

Effective key messages should complement the strategic goal. The relationship between the strategic goal of a presentation and its key messages mirrors that of a destination to a roadmap. If we look at it in terms of a logical argument, the strategic goal serves as the claim or conclusion while the key messages constitute the evidence or support.

Examples

Strategic Goal: *“To persuade my audience to open an account with our firm.”*

Key Messages: *“When you open an account at our firm, you’ll get personalized service, free trades and online access to your accounts.”*

Strategic Goal: *“To explain the two key factors in a successful company website.”*

Key Messages: *“The two key factors in a successful website are traffic and conversion.”*

Strategic Goal: *“To explain the three major differences in the revised benefits plan since our acquisition by company X.”*

Key Messages: *“The three major differences in the revised benefits plan are increased co-payment of health insurance claims, the elimination of loyalty bonuses and a longer term for becoming vested in the pension plan.”*

Reduce key messages to five or fewer.

Audiences have difficulty remembering too many key messages hurled at them all at once. With too much information, nothing stands out as important. When you have more than five key messages, you’re in danger of simply reciting a list of ideas.

Tailor key messages to a specific audience.

Focus on the decision points most persuasive to your specific audience. For example, in selling a benefits plan, the finance department might find the cost savings attractive, while the human resources department favors a plan that can be administered easily. Determine what your audience values and craft your key messages in accordance with their preferences.

TOOLKIT

You’ll find the Presentation Action Planner in the toolkit section of this book. You can also download an electronic version at <http://www.RainmakingPresentations.com>. It asks a series of questions designed to provide an in-depth analysis of your presentation.

You can develop effective key messages by developing good reasons. Why should the audience do business with you? Why should they participate? How will they benefit if they follow your advice?

Creating Your Title

If your presentation is designed to deliver CE credits, your title can safely be descriptive. If you are prospecting for clients, title your presentation to grab interest. It's the first thing about your presentation most audiences read or hear. It should be a statement of benefits or a "how to." For example, "Often overlooked tax deductions for small business owners" isn't as catchy as "How to save \$5,000 before the end of the year." The best titles encapsulate your key messages. Be prepared to do a title "makeover."

Before: *Ten Things You Should Know about Dining Etiquette*

After: *How to Avoid the Top Ten Table Taboos*

Before: *Great Techniques to Involve an Audience*

After: *How to Bore an Audience to Death*

Before: *Principles for Using Visuals Well*

After: *How to Avoid the Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint™*



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Strategize

- Begin with the end in mind. Decide what you want the audience to understand or act upon after they listen to your presentation.
- Focus on what you want to accomplish instead of what you plan to say.
- Don't try to teach people how to fish until you've sold them on the benefits of fishing. In other words, save the "how to" until you make the audience "want to."
- Limit key messages to five or less. The audience will find it difficult to assimilate any more.
- Give some thought to what would make an effective title. You can be creative and provocative, but don't be misleading.

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CHAPTER 4

ORGANIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
TRANSFORM INFORMATION
INTO KNOWLEDGE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 4— YOUR TIME WILL EXPAND OR CONTRACT IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE INCONVENIENCE IT CAUSES YOU

Give enough presentations and eventually you'll find yourself with time to fill or time to cut. In 90 percent of the cases it's the latter. It could be for any number of reasons: The program is running late, a speaker before you went over his time or it took longer to set up than the organizer anticipated.

When you're on a panel of presenters, your time constraints become even more compelling. I was part of an organizing committee for an international conference in Singapore. There were three VIPs coming from neighboring countries to speak at a general session. The chair of this session informed the speakers months earlier they'd each have 20 minutes to present during the one-hour session. One speaker insisted that she needed 30 minutes. "Well, I'm sorry ma'am," the chair of the session told her, "but you only have 20 minutes because we have three people and only one hour for the program. If yours is 30 minutes that would unfairly detract from the time of the other speakers." "But I have a 30-minute presentation," she protested. When she began speaking, she spent the first five minutes explaining why

she should have 30 minutes and how she was not going to be able to do the job she needed to in the remaining 15. Her mindset doomed her to failure.

When you find yourself with less time than you planned for, you can quickly adapt by looking at your outline and cutting out a key message or eliminating some proof points. The outline allows you to “modularize” your presentation. Complaining about your time won’t gain you any points with the organizer. Being willing to adapt will.

As a youngster, I remember accompanying my grandmother to the local J.C. Penney store. The basement level housed the fabric and pattern section. She would spend what seemed like hours to me consulting the oversized pattern catalogues that contained illustrations of the various garments one could sew together from scratch. Once she settled on a design, she’d jot down the corresponding pattern number then search for it among the large filing cabinets that occupied much of the floor space. The pattern was a thick packet of tissue-thin paper that you placed over your chosen fabric so you’d know exactly where to measure, cut and sew. The pattern showed the seamstress how to transform yards of fabric into individual pieces that were then organized and assembled into a functional and attractive garment. Although I didn’t realize it at the time, I was witnessing the principle of synergy at work—the whole became much greater than simply the sum of its parts.

The same operative principle applies to presentations as well. We start with pieces of information—key messages, statistics, data points, illustrations, evidence and narratives. With effective organization, we then assemble them into something much more useful and powerful than a simple collection of individual pieces of information. We transform them into knowledge.

The Rainmaking Presentations System

Information is random. Knowledge is organized.

Imagine picking up a dictionary where words weren’t arranged alphabetically. How would you ever find what you were looking for?

Think about trying to learn a new skill if the steps were presented out of sequence. We're constantly trying to organize and classify new information to fit within the mental constructs we already possess. It's the way we make sense of things. Effective presentations follow an organizational pattern familiar to the listener.

Information can exist in isolation. Knowledge is contextualized.

Does the audience have the appropriate interpretive framework to understand the importance of any facts you're giving them? Suppose your physician reported to you that your hemoglobin count was 8. You have no way of knowing whether that's good or bad unless you understand that the normal range is 14–18. Measurements and reports are only meaningful when we know what the “normal” range is. Provide enough context that your audience can appreciate the value of the information you present. This is particularly important when someone in law, medicine, engineering or another highly technical field speaks to a lay audience.

Information is transactional. Knowledge is transformational.

It's the principle of synergy at work. In other words, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A great novel contains many different constituent parts such as plot, character development and setting. In isolation, no individual piece can sustain the interest of a reader. Artful integration of the parts, however, creates a work of literature. When you communicate, you need to consider many different aspects of the interaction including nonverbal signals, content of the message, your listener's preference for communicating and the nature of your relationship. Focusing on only one part of the interaction will lead to a fragmented message.

Levels of Organization

Rainmaking Presentations organizes ideas at both the macro and micro levels. Macro organization refers to the overall structuring of the presentation into a clearly defined introduction, body and conclusion. Micro organization refers to the internal consistency and

logical order of the key messages through the use of specific thought patterns as well as transitions. Figure 4.1 illustrates the overall structure of an effective presentation.

Macro Organization—Introductions

Introductions can make or break a presentation because they're your gateway to success. Even seasoned presenters must pay close attention to their first few minutes with an audience. One of the most common pitfalls is going overboard. The appropriate technique for an effective introduction usually falls between two extremes. Learning to recognize those extremes will better equip you to search for the middle ground. Here are three dimensions of introductions and a description of what happens when their techniques are carried to excess.

The Structure of An Effective Presentation

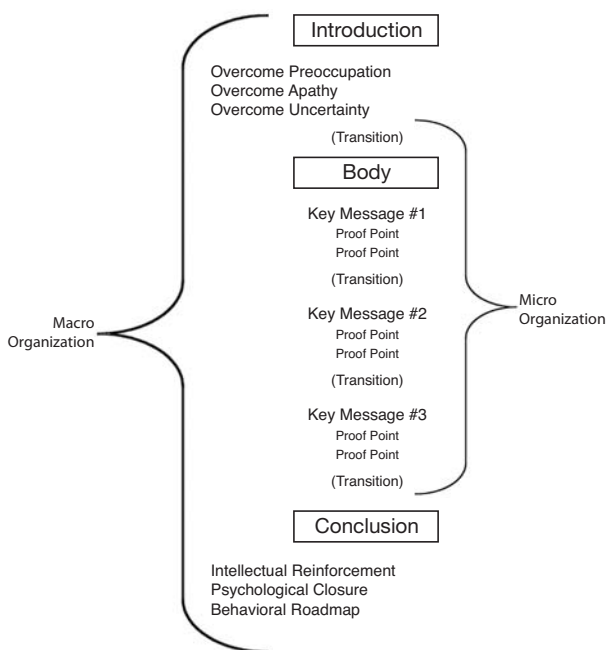


Figure 4.1 The Structure of an Effective Presentation

Time

Too Lengthy.

There are several reasons introductions go too long—here are the top three. (1) The introduction is stream of consciousness, made up as the presenter goes along. (2) The presenter is using a narrative and becomes so involved in the story he loses track of the time. (3) The presenter tries to accomplish too much in the introduction.

Too Short.

At the other end of the spectrum is the presentation that begins with “I’m Stan Brown and I’m here to talk about X.” If you’re trying to plant food for thought, you need to get the ground ready. An audience isn’t prepared to hear a presenter simply launch into his or her remarks. The presenter needs to establish a connection with the audience and get them to invest their attention in the presentation.

The Middle Ground.

As a general guideline, an introduction should be about 15 percent of your presentation. Any longer increases the likelihood that it will detract from the main message. The introduction is the place to overcome preoccupation, hostility, apathy and uncertainty. If the material isn’t working toward one of those objectives, it doesn’t belong.

Presentation of Self

Apologies.

One of the worst ways to begin a presentation is by apologizing for your lack of skill, preparation or interest. The biggest danger is that apologies may be interpreted negatively.

Said: *My boss couldn’t make it, so I was tasked to deliver this speech only two days ago.*

Heard: *My boss had something more important to do than fulfill her obligation to you, so here I am.*

Said: *I wanted to have some more slides ready, but I’ve been really busy.*

Heard: *I didn’t think talking to you was important enough to prepare properly.*

The audience doesn't need to know about all the things that went wrong or the last-minute inconveniences or your lack of preparation.

Arrogance.

The ancient Greeks had a special word for excessive pride—*hubris*. It's a significant character flaw. Another version of this extreme is to repeatedly tell the audience how lucky they are to be listening to you or how much value your information has. If it's really valuable, it will show through. Repeating an assertion doesn't make it true.

The Middle Ground.

False modesty is as big a sin as pride. You should strive to be confident, yet humble. Let the person who introduces you build your credibility for the audience—it's more effective to have third-party validation. Another suggestion is to use a bit of self-effacing humor. It will let the audience know you're one of them.

Presentation of Message

Over-dramatization.

People sometimes try to begin a presentation by shouting, dramatizing their movements and acting out parts of a story. When they try to make the transition to the tempo of the presentation itself, the result is incongruous. This technique can be used by a masterful presenter, but less skilled presenters should avoid it.

Dullness.

It isn't necessary for a serious subject to be presented dully. Poor presenters can numb audiences if they simply dump information on them. This is a common shortcoming of canned presentations because the focus is on simply getting a set of information delivered. Presenters who fail to demonstrate how their message is tied to the interests of their audience will make any subject dull.

The Middle Ground.

No subject is inherently exciting or tedious. It all depends on the treatment. Masterful presenters can make what at first glance might appear to be dull subjects come alive for the audience by showing them benefits and points of connection.

Effective introductions are designed to achieve specific functions in the presentation. Those functions revolve around removing the roadblocks to success that stand in your way. Let's look at each function along with some techniques to achieve it.

Introduction Function 1—Overcome Preoccupation

Your first challenge is to overcome preoccupation. Any time you present, I can guarantee you that people aren't initially focused on your presentation. Instead, they're thinking about any combination of the following: the conversation they had with their spouse that morning, what the drive into work was like and what to expect on the way home, what new project they're going to be assigned, whether that performance bonus will come through, whether they can close the deal, etc. You get the point. Choose any dozen topics and you can bet people are more concerned with them than your presentation. The Rainmaking Presentations System uses specific techniques to capture the audience's attention.

Humor.

Please remember that humor does not necessarily equal joke telling. In fact, I strongly discourage using jokes. I've heard a lot of presenters fall flat by beginning their presentation with "I'd like to start with this really funny joke . . ." Once you say it's really funny, it better be. Jokes can be risky. They depend on the audience's understanding of the situation. Besides the writing of the humor, there's also a performance element involved. Timing is crucial, so if you lack the skills, you might want to try something else. Also, you never want the audience to think that you're making fun of something that's very serious to them or something they're sensitive about. You'll immediately alienate them. Instead of a joke, try a humorous short story, illustration or cartoon. The following short story illustrates the effective use of humor to capture attention in the introduction of a presentation.

The principal of a middle school in upstate New York begins each day by using the school's public address system to lead the pledge of allegiance, make the daily announcements and read a Snapple real fact. (Snapple real facts are bits of trivia printed on the underside of Snapple bottle caps.) On this particular day, students recited the

pledge of allegiance, listened to the daily announcements and heard the following Snapple real fact. “It is impossible for human beings to lick their own elbows.” Teachers reported that no sooner had the words been uttered than all 177 students in the school tried to do exactly that. How much more could we accomplish if we took the impossible to be a challenge instead of a rule?

Startling fact or statistic.

This technique captures audience attention with the use of a counterintuitive statistic or unusual factoid. Here’s an example. “Most of you probably think that you haven’t been very busy during the last 24 hours; but let me assure you that at least your body has been very busy. During the last 24 hours, you ate over 4 pounds of food, you drank about 3 quarts of water, you inhaled 12 cubic yards of air, you lost at least 2 pounds of waste, you spoke 25,000 words, you moved 750 different muscles, you breathed 20,000 times, your heart beat over 100,000 beats, you exercised 7 million brain cells (some more, some less), and your blood traveled 165 million miles. Now, do you still think you haven’t been busy?”

I saw an architect begin his presentation on “green” building principles by displaying a slide that said: “40 years of oil left. 5,500,000,000 years of sunshine left.”

“By the time I finish my presentation today, 180,000,000 email messages considered spam will be sent around the world.”

Reference historical importance.

Do a web search for “on this day in history.” You’ll find a number of sites that let you enter a specific date. The site will return events of historical significance for that date. Suppose you were speaking about the need for tighter accounting standards within your organization and found that the Sarbanes-Oxley law was enacted on that particular day. Wikipedia (<http://www.Wikipedia.org>) lets you enter a specific date and returns historical events, births and deaths for that day.

Situational reference.

Is there something in the news, something about the room or something going on in the city you’re in that everyone would be aware of? Has a previous speaker said or done something memorable the audi-

ence might know about? Be open to observation and incorporate situational references to strike a chord of immediacy with the audience.

Narrative.

A brief story or anecdote can often set the stage for your presentation. Here's a narrative I used for a speech on persuasive language.

There is a story about a multilingual Chinese salesman who had a phenomenal track record. He consistently had the highest sales of anyone in his group. And it wasn't just in China. No matter where the head office moved him, he was the top producer within a very short time. It happened in Korea, in Japan, in Australia and finally in America. During their annual sales kickoff meeting, one of the vice presidents asked him, "What do you think is the best language to do business in?" Here was his reply: "The language of my customer." There is a lesson there for all of us I think, because we have to wonder how many times we fall back on a language we're most comfortable with, rather than learning the language of our customer.

A narrative introduction must be brief and to the point. The example above is 96 words, so it can be told in well under a minute.

Props.

Props can be effective attention getters when used well. There must be an obvious and immediate connection between the prop and your topic. I once saw a financial planner pass out \$2 bills to his audience while making the point, "You don't see these very often, but they spend just the same as the other bills we use everyday." His segue into the topic was, "Just like the \$2 bill, there are some investment strategies we don't see very often, but that are producing equally good results." If you plan to interact with your props in some way, they should be large enough to be easily seen by everyone in your audience.

Questions.

Rhetorical questions can arouse curiosity and engage the audience. When you ask a question, pause for a few seconds to give the audience time to mentally digest it. Remember not to play the "Guess what's on my mind" game. "If I could show you a way to double your productivity in half the time, would that be of interest to you?"

Introduction Function 2—Overcome Apathy

Your next challenge in the introduction is to overcome apathy. Trainers are fond of using the metaphor that training participants generally fall into one of three categories: hostages, vacationers and learners. The first two categories present the problem. Sometimes people don't want to hear what you have to say because they disagree with your point of view. At other times, they're simply indifferent to it. Sometimes audience members will be attending your presentation because they have to, or they need to for some type of professional education credit. The most powerful foe of indifference lies in showing the audience exactly what benefits they'll take away from your presentation. Are you saving them time or money? Will they be able to perform their jobs faster, more efficiently or more productively? Are you helping them protect their health, their financial well-being or their reputation? Remember, features differ from benefits. Features are only the delivery vehicles of benefits. Refer to the No P.A.I.N. = No Gain Benefits Generator I introduced in Chapter 2 to develop your list. You can also tackle apathy by performing "CPR" on your introduction.

Credibility.

Your credibility begins with the person who introduces you. Never leave this to chance. Give your introducer a well-crafted script that positions you well with the audience. You'll also build credibility by demonstrating your experience and knowledge of the topic, your command of the facts and your credentials.

Proximity.

Proximity refers to the connection you create with the audience. You build proximity by showing the audience what you have in common with them. You might do this through language specific to a profession or shared experiences ("we all remember what the bar exam was like"). Other shared experiences might focus on referencing a point of popular culture such as a song ("We're in the money"), a movie ("Show me the money!") or an event within the organization. I saw former presidential candidate John Anderson build immediate proximity with his university audience by remarking he was sure they'd "stomp" their arch rivals at the upcoming weekend's big football game.

Rapport.

Rapport means getting the audience favorably disposed toward you. Cast in the language of psychographics from Chapter 2, creating rapport means the audience has a positive attitude about you. So how do you get people to like you? One way is by showing them you're working toward a common goal or have common interests (e.g., increasing returns on investments). You might also demonstrate that you're working to defeat a common enemy or solve a common problem (e.g., avoid paying excess taxes by taking all available deductions). A second approach is to recognize the accomplishments of your audience. Be careful that such compliments don't come across as pandering.

Introduction Function 3—Overcome Uncertainty

By the time you complete your introduction, the audience should have a clear idea of the key messages they'll hear. This preview helps them listen better, forecasts how the presentation will develop and provides a roadmap for the ideas that follow. The preview usually works best when you place it right before the body of the presentation. When it's the first thing you do, it comes across as too abrupt. When you're planting seeds for change, you first have to cultivate the ground.

Macro Organization—Conclusions

Have you ever heard a speaker end a presentation by “telegraphing” the conclusion with a phrase such as “Thank you” or “That concludes my presentation”? Speakers who rely on such phrases to trigger audience applause are like the driver who stops not because he's reached his destination, but because he's run out of gas. Effective presentations don't simply end. They accomplish three specific goals: intellectual reinforcement, psychological closure and a behavioral road map.

Intellectual Reinforcement

The conclusion should reinforce the key messages. If you've communicated clearly, an audience member should be able to repeat your

key messages to someone who wasn't present. Remember that reinforcement is more than simply restatement. It's more than just saying the points again.

Psychological Closure

When you watch a movie you get a sense of psychological closure before you see the credits start rolling. All the elements have come together in a certain way that pointed toward closure. Conflicts are resolved or the hero has saved the heroine or evil has been defeated. Things have come to their completion and it leaves you with a sense of satisfaction. Here are some specific techniques to provide psychological closure.

Refer back to the introduction.

In the introduction to one of my own presentations, I note that on average, we speak between 15,000 to 20,000 words each day. Here's the part of the conclusion where I try to provide psychological closure:

Do you remember at the beginning of the program when I said that we speak between 15,000 to 20,000 words each day? During the past hour, I have spoken about 9,000 words, so I'm well on my way to my daily quota. I've tried to be very conscious of the choices I've made.

You can also refer to a narrative you've used in the introduction.

Use a quotation if you must.

Many books on public speaking recommend that you use a quotation to end your presentation. It's good in theory, but is often poorly applied. The problem is that most speakers fail to make certain the quotation has something to do with their presentation. The quotation is often topical, but not applicable. Let's say someone is giving a presentation on business ethics. They go to a quotation book and look for something on business. They'll say: "And in conclusion, I'd just like to say in the words of Calvin Coolidge, the 30th president of the United States, that the business of America is business. Thank you." The quote may have very little to do with their actual presentation business ethics. Whenever you use a quotation, make certain it is applicable as well as topical.

Use an anecdote.

The appropriate anecdote can often be used to great effect. A short story can be just the vehicle to pull all your points together and leave something memorable. And again, be careful. Don't drag on. Make certain it's relevant to the presentation. Your own stories will work best. Don't simply repeat one you've heard in another context.

Behavioral Roadmap

Behavioral closure tells the audience how they can implement your ideas, become a client, or take the next step in the process. Don't leave them wondering. You lose 100 percent of the sales you never ask for. Help them to visualize the benefits they'll enjoy when they take action on your recommendations. The more specific you can be, the more likely they are to take action.

Goal	Purpose	Tactics
Provide Intellectual Reinforcement	Strengthen Understanding	Review Key Messages
Provide Psychological Closure	Satisfaction	Reference Earlier Information Quotation Anecdote
Provide Behavioral Road Map	Provide "Next Step"	Specific Request Visualization Psychological Commitment

Table 4.1

Your conclusion is the last thing in the audience's mind as you finish, so make that last impression a positive one. To help you maintain your momentum, avoid these 3 commonly used, but ineffective conclusions that detract from your message.

The Stall.

That means you're promising to conclude but you never quite get there. "In conclusion . . . , I'd like to just summarize by saying . . . , and to move toward my final point . . . , so I guess I'm at the end . . ." Don't keep promising to conclude; just do it!

The Porky Pig.

How does Porky Pig end every cartoon he appears in? Bdeh, bdeh, bdeh, that's all folks! How many presenters do you hear say: "I guess I'm out of time so I'll stop there. That's it, that's all I have to say. I'm done. I guess I should quit. They are telling me to stop. I'll stop there for now." It's an awkward close. The presenter might as well say, "I don't know how to get out of this, so I'll just stop talking."

The Apology.

Don't draw the audience's attention to your shortcomings by apologizing for them. "I hoped to talk about X, Y, and Z, but only talked about A." "I had hoped to cover more points, but I ran out of time." "I was thinking maybe that we should have covered the problem and the solutions but I only talked about the problems, so I guess we'll just have to have another meeting on this." These are all examples of telling the audience how you've failed as a speaker.

Micro Organization—Thought Patterns

The Rainmaking Presentations System organizes key messages with one of five primary thought patterns: topical, sequential, consequential, oppositional and spatial. Let's look at a definition and example of each.

Topical

Topical organization divides a whole into its parts. The Frequently Asked Questions format, or FAQ, is particularly effective because in today's Internet age, our initial search for information often leads us to a FAQ list. That translates into an information format the audience is familiar with. The other advantage of the FAQ is that while

it's ostensibly educational in nature, it's actually a subtle form of persuasion. Because you're defining the FAQs, you're setting the criteria for what's important. When you define the paradigm, your competitors are judged against your criteria.

Example:

"The most important issues in choosing a law firm are reputation, reliability and results."

Sequential

Sequential organization divides a topic into discrete steps or units of time. Let's look at an example that relies on the mental progression of Listen, Feel, See, Believe, Act. As you discovered in the section on effective introductions, one of a presenter's first tasks is to rise above all the mental clutter in the audience's mind. Next, you must make them feel some pain or inadequacy in their current state of affairs. In debate terms, this is called indicting the *status quo*. Its purpose is to create an appetite for resolution. You must then satisfy the appetite with your recommendation for action. The purpose is to create congruence between their pain and your solution. They must also *believe* your solution will work. You create this belief through examples, case studies and analogies. The final step involves getting the audience to act on your recommendations.

Example:

Listen:

"I'm sorry to have to inform all of you that you're dying. In fact, we all have been since the day we were born; we're getting closer to death. It's going to happen to everyone eventually. But I hope it doesn't happen to you before you've planned for it because I'm sincerely worried about your family."

Feel:

"Have you prepared for the unexpected? Could your family go on living in the manner to which they've become accustomed? Would they be able to meet financial responsibilities, get the education they need and be able to live free of worry and stress and debt?"

See:

“When you’re prepared for the future, I can guarantee you’ll never have to worry about your family being taken care of, ever. Our policies solve exactly those kinds of problems.”

Believe:

“For over 120 years, we’ve been providing peace of mind and a sound plan for the future. And, in the tens of thousands of policies we’ve written, we’ve never had a claim turned down. In fact, our customer satisfaction ratings are the highest in the industry, bar none.”

Act:

“You can get started by going to our website and using a custom calculator that we’ve created to see what you and your family will need for the future.”

Consequential

Consequential organization examines a subject from the perspective of cause and effect.

Example:

Many financial planners and investment consultants advocate dollar cost averaging. The theory is that when you buy mutual funds, you should average out the cost of the purchase. For example, if you’ve got \$1,200 to spend, you should invest \$100 each month instead of investing \$1,200 all at once. That way you’ll be unlikely to purchase at the absolute peak or the absolute valley of that fund’s value. Over the long run it means you’ll get a pretty consistent purchase price. And that’ll lead to a higher realized profit.

Spatial

Spatial organization arranges key messages according to a person’s relationship with the environment.

Example:

“The most promising areas for growing our sales are Washington, D.C., Boston and Chicago.”

Oppositional

Oppositional organization looks at competing sides of an issue. You might organize key messages according to issues / actions, fact / fallacy or advantages / disadvantages. This approach works well when you're trying to present a balanced view so that people can weigh their choices. As a doctor, you might present two or three treatment options and point out the positives and negatives of each. That way the patient can make an informed decision. It's also an effective technique for business development specialists providing information on different tiers of service.

Example:

"Apple computer users enjoy a more stable operating system, a more intuitive interface and better software, but they sometimes have to contend with less institutional support."

The least effective thought pattern is simply reciting a list. "I'm going to talk about 14 things to do with my product." As soon as I hear a speaker announce that he'll talk about 14 things, I dread the rest of the presentation. Remember that lists are much more appropriate to the written format. Lists are a way to store information, not communicate it. Choose the thought pattern that best meets your need. You should use a consistent thought pattern throughout the presentation.

TOOLKIT

You'll find additional thought patterns to use in the toolkit section of this book.

Micro Organization—Transitions

Transitions serve as a bridge between different parts of the presentation. They also indicate the relationships among the key messages, helping readers see the connections.

To show order

“First . . . , Second . . . , Third . . . ”

To show a causal relationship

“The result of all this is . . . ”

To summarize

“What does all this mean?”

“Here’s the importance of all this.”

“Why is this a problem?”

To show contrast or comparison

“On the one hand, . . . on the other hand . . . ”

“That’s how it looks in theory, this is how it works in practice.”

“Now that we’ve seen X, let’s look at Y”

To preface

“Here’s a case in point.”

“Let’s begin by looking at . . . ”

To show temporal progression

“That’s a look at where we’ve been, let’s now look at where we are and where we’re headed.”

To show logical progression

“Now that you see there’s a problem, let’s look at a solution.”

Four Transitions to Avoid:

Next

And

Also

Another

Why avoid these transitions? First, because they fail to establish any relationship among the key messages. Second, because they almost always lead to listing a set of facts or features. No one likes to listen to a list.

Outlining

The Rainmaking Presentations System utilizes a logical outline form to organize the structure of your ideas. An important distinction from other outlines you may have seen is the fact that it uses full sentences rather than simply keywords. Writing in fragments usually translates into speaking in fragments, adding vocalized pauses and filler words. The full sentence also provides much more detailed information about timing. Some of the advantages to organizing your ideas with this type of outline include:

- It's an excellent way to estimate the time of your presentation (on average, 150 words = 1 minute)
- It provides a visual representation of the presentation architecture.
- It provides a way to modularize the presentation.
- It keeps the presenter focused on the “flow” of the presentation.
- It forces the presenter to articulate strategies and techniques, thus providing a checklist.

Outline Formats

The two most commonly used formats in outlining are the Traditional and the Contemporary format.

The **Traditional** format uses a combination of Roman numerals, lowercase and uppercase letters and Arabic numerals.

- I. Main Point
 - A. subordinate to I
 - 1. subordinate to A
 - a. subordinate to 1

The **Contemporary** format uses the Arabic numeral system, punctuated by periods.

- 1. Main Point
 - 1.1 subordinate to 1
 - 1.1.1 subordinate to 1.1

Keys to Successful Outlining

- Make each key message one of your main points.
- Make each main point a simple, declarative sentence.
- Make each point in the outline subordinate to the one immediately above it.
- Include your strategic goal and key messages from the Presentation Action Planner.

TOOLKIT

The sample outline in the toolkit section of this book illustrates the appropriate format. Download your own template at <http://www.RainMakingPresentations.com/toolkit>.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Organize

- Never try to cram a longer presentation into a shorter one. When people say, “I have a one-hour presentation I need to give in 15 minutes,” what they really need to do is design a 15-minute presentation.
- Avoid this clichéd expression in your introduction: “I’m so pleased to be here with you.” If protocol demands it, be more specific and tell the audience why you’re pleased to be there.
- Write the script your introducer will use. Allowing them to ad lib the introduction can lead to disaster.
- Keep the parts of your presentation in perspective by making the introduction no more than 15 to 20 percent of the total and the conclusion no more than 10 to 15 percent.
- Prepare an abridged conclusion in case your time is shortened. When you do run out of time, use this version. Don’t try to rush through your longer conclusion.



Web Resources

Finding statistics to add interest:

- <http://www.worldometers.info>
- <http://www.nicefacts.com>

- <http://www.interestingfacts.org>

On this day websites:

- <http://www.wikipedia.org>
- <http://www.on-this-day.com>
- <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/default.stm>
- <http://www.reference.com/thisday>

Quotations:

- <http://www.quotationspage.com>
- <http://www.bartleby.com/quotations>
- <http://en.thinkexist.com>

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CHAPTER 5

VITALIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS MAKE
THE THEORETICAL CONCRETE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 5— MAKE IT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND YOU AND BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING

Proof points serve two purposes in a presentation: they help provide understanding and conviction. They help clarify complex and abstract ideas by providing specific examples. Once people can see an idea in action, they can more easily understand it. Proof points also function much like evidence in a logical argument. Once you make a claim, people mentally ask, “Why should I believe you?” Most audiences come in with some skepticism. Proof points help reduce it. Don’t be afraid to use different types of proof points. Nothing convinces some people more fully than statistics and data laid out in a logical sequence. Others are more easily persuaded by narrative structures that embody the ideas in key messages. Still others might be most compelled by a demonstration. Using a variety of proof points will help ensure you appeal to the largest possible segment of your audience.

While the strategic goal focuses on what you want the audience to understand and act upon and the key messages give them reasons to act on your ideas, proof points give the audience ways to understand

your ideas and reasons to believe you. As Figure 5.1 illustrates, proof points help you create both logical and emotional resonance with the audience. There's no reason presentations, even highly technical presentations, have to put audiences to sleep. Strategically placing proof points throughout your presentation reinforces your key messages, adds interest to the material and builds your credibility.

Functions of Proof Points

To Reinforce Key Messages

Proof points reinforce your key messages by making abstract concepts more concrete. The old adage “seeing is believing” captures the power of examples, explanations and demonstrations to bring ideas to life.

To Add Interest

A dry recitation of facts will quickly cause most audiences to lose interest in your presentation. We often hear the phrase, “Don't be so emotional. Be more logical.” This assumes logic and emotion are opposites. However, it's perfectly logical to be fearful of the consequences

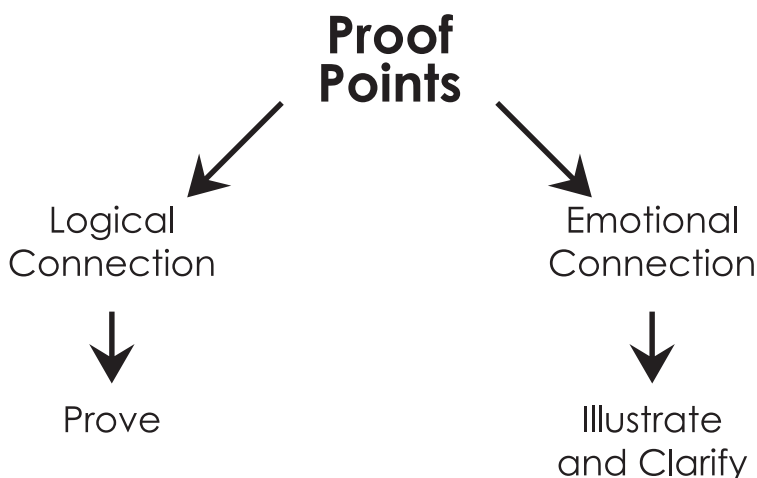


Figure 5.1 Proof Points Appeal to Both Logic and Emotions

of unhealthy behavior. Rather than opposites, logic and emotion are different ways of experiencing. If we believe that emotions are never logical, we lose the ability to empathize, explain motivations, and use one of the most powerful tools of persuasion. Just be sure to use it ethically.

To Build Credibility

For service professionals speaking to an audience who already recognize a need, the key to success is providing some type of evidence that they can best meet that need. Proof points help you adapt key messages to your audiences' persuasion threshold. They become the "proof of concept" that show your listeners you can actually deliver what you're promising. Proof points also help you build credibility with the audience by providing a more objective source for your evidence.

Types of Proof Points

You have several different forms to choose from when developing your proof points. These include examples, explanations, statistics, demonstrations, testimony and instantiation. Let's look at each in detail.

Examples

Examples strengthen your presentation because they create a connection with the audience. They help explain the abstract, obscure and theoretical through language and experiences the audience understands and can relate to. You can think of examples that contain more extended details as brief narratives. Four powerful types of examples are factual, historical, hypothetical and humorous.

1. Factual Examples

You might think of this proof point as a "mini case study." It could come from a newspaper or magazine article, something that's been in the news or even personal experience. Its purpose is to illustrate the truth of what you're saying by pointing to a similar factual case. An

insurance agent might relate the story of how one of his clients was saved from financial disaster by wisely purchasing health or disability insurance. An attorney might refer to previous cases, or a real estate agent might point to successful transactions she's brokered in particular geographic areas. Consultants can point to their success with previous clients as proof that they can deliver what they promise.

2. Historical Examples

This proof point relies on a historical fact or anecdote. You'll create a great connection if you can link the date of your presentation to some event of historical significance. Research this by searching Google for "on this day in history." You'll find several websites where you can enter a specific date and discover what happened on that day historically. You can also use historical analogies or lessons learned from historical events. In a presentation warning of the dangers of an avian flu outbreak, one speaker referred to the great influenza pandemic of 1918 to illustrate the widespread health and public safety effects such an outbreak could have in modern times. Others have compared the gold rushes of the nineteenth century to the modern-day boom and bust of some Internet businesses.

3. Hypothetical Examples

This proof point makes the theoretical practical. It's useful for financial planners to illustrate the differences among various retirement plans, to point out differences in contracts or for a CPA to show the implications of tax code changes. To be most effective, a hypothetical example should resemble the audience's characteristics and experiences as closely as possible. That means researching your audience's knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and values before the presentation and adapting your hypothetical example to align with them.

4. Humorous Examples

Humorous proof points can increase audience retention of the key messages and lighten the mood. I discussed some of the dangers of using jokes in your introduction in Chapter 4. It's important to note that humor has two parts: writing and delivery. Unless you're good at both, you probably shouldn't attempt it. Like factual examples, the

best humor will come from your own personal experience. Be cautious about using any humor that could appear to insult or belittle anyone or that audiences could judge to be in bad taste. If you really believe that a humorous touch would help your presentation, consider using the services of a professional comedy writer. You can find them at <http://www.comedywritingpros.com>.

Explanations

Explanations literally seek to make something “plain” or understandable. Three of the most effective explanations for Rainmaking Presentations focus on definitions, functions and causes.

1. Explaining by Definition

Explaining by definition involves laying out the essential parts of a concept. For example, a consultant might explain the concept of short-term interval staff management or an attorney might define a point of law. Definitions are particularly useful when a concept is unfamiliar or commonly misunderstood.

2. Explaining by Function

Often, something is best understood by explaining its function. An insurance agent might explain differences in insurance policies by pointing out what they are designed to accomplish. A consultant might explain elements of Sarbanes-Oxley compliance by showing how they are designed to function. Technical consultants might explain a new technology by showing what it's designed to do.

3. Explaining by Causal Relationships

Explanations involving cause and effect relationships usually focus on what produced the current state of affairs or which course of action is likely to produce the desired effects in the future. A financial planner might explain how the combination of overspending, poor debt management and failure to save caused a couple to become mired in debt. He might then go on to show how changing those habits will lead them out of debt and help them save.

You can also use a combination of explanations. For example, you might explain mutual funds by both defining them and showing how they function.

Statistics

When used appropriately, statistics can make a presentation more credible, more persuasive and more authoritative. Used inappropriately, they can make the presentation less interesting, less effective and less audience-centered. Statistics can be a powerful form of support, but they can also alienate your audience and bury important points you're trying to make. It's unlikely you'll be presenting to a room full of statisticians, so you need to find ways to translate those numbers for a lay audience. You'll be more effective using statistics when you make them attractive, contextual and economical.

Making Statistics Attractive

Use visuals: Many people prefer to process information visually rather than verbally. Use graphs and charts whenever appropriate to reinforce your point visually. Visuals also aid retention and will help the audience remember your point. Make certain to use the graph or chart that is appropriate for the point you're trying to make. You'll learn a step-by-step process for constructing effective visuals in Chapter 7.

Use infographics: Infographics are a special kind of visual representation. For example, if you wanted to talk about the difference in domestic oil production between 1998 and 2008, you might use a barrel symbol to represent X million barrels of oil. This easily recognizable symbol adds visual reinforcement to the message.

Making Statistics Contextual

Use analogies: An analogy works by explaining something unfamiliar in terms of something the audience already knows about. When CD-ROMs first arrived, people had difficulty grasping how much information they could hold. One way to explain it would be to say that a CD-ROM could hold approximately 450 floppy discs. For the computer illiterate, a better explanation would be to say that a CD-ROM could hold 200,000 pages of text. Analogies become even more important as the number of zeros increases.

Use reference points: Statistics are meaningful only when the audience has a point of reference to understand them. Contextualize your statistics within a point of reference the audience understands.

Here's an example. Suppose you are talking to an audience about advances in transportation technology and you are trying to describe how long it took pioneers to travel via horse and wagon. You could say that early pioneers could only travel about 15 miles in a day. To help them better understand your point, say that a trip 45 miles away that now takes less than an hour would have taken pioneers three days.

Making Statistics Economical

Round your numbers: Unless there is an overriding need for precision, round off your statistics. No one needs to know there are 304,025,607 people in the United States. Saying the population is 304 million will be more memorable and make your point more succinct. Round off statistics whenever possible.

Recognize the point of diminishing returns: Adding more statistics to your presentation is good, but only to a point. After that, the audience is overwhelmed, and using more statistics can actually damage your presentation. How much is too much? That depends on the audience, their expectations and your purpose. You'll get the best sense of when you've added too many statistics by reading your speech in front of a few people who resemble your target audience and getting their reaction.

Demonstrations

Demonstrations are common in presentations designed to sell a product. Just think of the infomercial. Although less common in presentations designed to sell professional services, they still have their place. In the context of Rainmaking Presentations, demonstrations might take the form of props, audio or video clips or navigation through a website. To use them effectively, keep these keys in mind:

Make certain the demonstration can be easily seen

This is especially important when using props. Some of your audience members might be sitting 20 to 30 feet away. Unless your props are large or oversized, they will have difficulty seeing them. Amplify any audio through the AV system and make certain video clips or websites are magnified through a multimedia projector.

Don't bore the audience

Today's audiences have short attention spans. Don't bore them by showing lengthy video clips, especially if you're simply playing a "talking head." Navigating through a website or using a piece of software is interactive for the user, but merely observing as the audience quickly leads to disinterest and disengagement. As a rule of thumb, try to limit any demonstrations where the audience is merely observing to two minutes or less.

Make certain you've rehearsed the demonstration

Remember the saying that attorneys should never ask a question they don't know the answer to? You should never begin a demonstration unless you're certain of the outcome.

Testimony

Testimony can take the form of both expertise and firsthand knowledge. Expertise is most effective when it's recognized and respected by your audience.

Expert Opinion

The qualifications of your experts will sometimes be institutionalized. For example, when you cite the Supreme Court on matters of law, or the American Medical Association on medical issues, audiences easily recognize their authority. When you're citing an individual, you might have to work harder to establish his credibility. It's always better to say "John Doe, chairman of the economics department of XYZ University for the past 15 years" rather than "A professor of economics at XYZ University."

Research Studies and Reports

This type of proof point comes from the published findings of a credible group or organization. Academic departments are a good source for research studies. Government hearings often produce reports. The key to using this proof point effectively is to make certain the source is qualified and free from any apparent bias.

Public Opinion Polls

Public opinion polls reflect popular thought about a person, event or issue. It's important to note that opinion polls can't be used to estab-

lish the veracity of a claim. For example, a June 2007 poll revealed that 41 percent of Americans believe Saddam Hussein was involved in the terrorist attacks of 9/11 despite the lack of any evidence in support of that claim. Financial planners could compare what people believe about their likely sources of retirement income with the current reality to show the disparities and highlight the need for prudent retirement planning.

Instantiation

This proof point takes a hard-to-understand figure and uses an analogy to make it clear. Astronomers working with the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) Project once said their efforts were like looking for an inch-long fish in all the world's oceans by straining one quart of water at a time. It's useful for making sense of very large numbers, as well as the unfamiliar. For example, a web page at Berkeley University explains that a gigabyte of information is equal to a pickup truck full of paper. Professional speaker Jeff Dewar illustrates the concept that 99.9 percent isn't good enough by pointing out the consequences of accepting that figure. If we're willing to accept 99.9 percent, then:

Each hour, 22,000 checks would be deducted from the wrong bank account

Each day, two planes would crash at Chicago's O'Hare Airport

Each year, 4,368 babies would be given to the wrong parents



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Vitalize

- When telling a story, give characters their own identifying traits such as voice, posture, peculiar language or speech habits.
- Use hypothetical examples to illustrate abstract concepts. Instead of simply telling someone to save for retirement, show them how much they'll have, based on when they start and how much they save.
- Build the credibility of any experts you quote by including their position, experience, recognition by others, education and accomplishments.
- Should you use raw numbers or percentages? Use whichever lends more impact to your presentation in the given context.

- There should be a strong and easily identified connection between any proof point you use and the strategic goal of the presentation. Don't be tempted to include a story or example for humor value if the connection is weak.



Web Resources

U.S. Government Reports and Statistics:

- <http://www.usa.gov> U.S. Census Data
- <http://factfinder.census.gov> Gallup Opinion Polls
- <http://gallup.com/> Atlas and Encyclopedia
- <http://www.infoplease.com> Reference Collection
- <http://www.refdesk.com>

General Dictionary:

- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary.htm>

Specialty Dictionaries:

- <http://www.yourdictionary.com/specialty.html>

Expert Opinion:

- <http://www.refdesk.com/expert.html>

CHAPTER 6

VERBALIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
PERSUADE WITH LANGUAGE

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 6— WHEN DEVELOPING BUSINESS, THE WORDS WE CHOOSE MAKE US WIN OR LOSE

The audience will form their impressions of you just a few moments into your presentation. After looking at how you're dressed and how you carry yourself, the next bit of data they'll use to make their judgments is what you say. That first impression acts as a filter for everything that follows. In Chapter 2, I discussed how the coding and decoding process worked within overlapping frames of reference. That means the creation of meaning is a collaborative effort between you and the audience. Consequently, what you say sometimes differs from what the audience hears. For the best results, focus on the latter instead of the former.

I imagine yourself as a consultant faced with the following situation. You're advising the communications team of a large oil company. One of the company's tankers has run aground off the coast of an island in Asia. The hull has ruptured and oil's leaking out. You've been asked to advise the communications team in drafting a press release that gives the details of the incident. One of the first decisions you have to make is how you're going to describe how much oil has

been spilled. Will you say it was “more than 10,000,000 gallons,” or will you say it was “less than 250,000 barrels”?

Most people who want to keep their jobs will choose the latter. They choose it not because it’s more accurate or more objective, but because it *sounds* like a smaller amount. You can describe any given situation in myriad ways. Given that this choice exists, why not choose the language that makes the most compelling case for your position?

The first four steps in the Rainmaking Presentations System (Analyze, Strategize, Organize, Vitalize) focused on designing the message. The remaining three steps (Verbalize, Visualize, Dramatize) focus on delivering the message for maximum effect.

At the risk of incurring the wrath of my former Latin teacher, I want to emphasize that effective language use isn’t about using proper grammar, making sure you have complete sentences and cutting out dangling participles. *Effective language use depends on choosing language your audience finds persuasive.* Rather than thinking of language choice as merely a *stylistic* choice, think of it as a *strategic* choice.

I invite you to learn the nuances of a special language. Most of you already speak it, so my goal is to help you become more fluent in it. I’m referring to the language of influence. When you take the time to become fluent in the language of influence, here’s the return on your investment: You’ll enjoy greater visibility in your market because you can differentiate yourself from others. You’ll enhance your credibility because you can articulate your expertise, your experience and your professionalism. You’ll increase your business because you can persuade prospects that you’re the right choice to solve their problems.

Three Effects of Language Choice

To understand how language shapes our audience’s view of us and our message when we present, let’s look at three effects of language use in the professional context. Language creates perspective, mental distance and relationships.

How Language Creates Perspective

To explain how language creates different perspectives, I’ll use the analogy of taking photographs with different camera lenses. Imagine stand-

ing in front of a room taking several pictures. You take one with a telephoto lens, one with a normal 50 mm lens, one with a wide-angle lens, and maybe even one with an aspherical fisheye lens. You might start adding filters to keep out certain types of light or emphasize other types. When you looked at those pictures, you'd see different scenes—not because the physical arrangement had changed, not because you changed reality, but because you chose to present things differently. Words then, are a lot like camera lenses. Different words give us a different picture. Most of the time, we don't even stop to think about the lens, we just look through it.

A particularly powerful lens that creates perspective is the metaphor. Consciously or unconsciously, metaphors encourage us to think of things from a certain perspective.

Consider each pair of descriptions below and notice the difference in perspective more thoughtful language choice creates:

*This training program tells you about doing better in the sales process.
It costs \$5,000.*

Our training program shows you exactly how to master the sales process to improve your results. Your investment in increased sales is \$5,000.

Our firm's partners said they would find a solution to your retention problem.

Our firm's partners are committed to solving your retention problem.

Our clients are important to us.

We value our clients' time.

We got additional work because our client was satisfied.

We earned additional work by building trust with our client.

Much of a political campaign involves imposing a perspective on the rival candidate.

Thoughtfully considering your language choice will ensure that you create your own perspectives rather than let competitors impose them upon you. Effective translators sort through numerous subtleties when choosing possible interpretations. Likewise, effective presenters are aware of the language choices that best communicate their professionalism, expertise and credibility with prospects.

How Language Creates Mental Distance

Words often serve to distance us from the unpleasant or unpopular. Think, for example, of all the euphemisms we have for death. The English language has 137.5 such euphemisms, including bit the dust, bought the farm, croaked, flat lined, gave up the ghost, kicked the bucket, and passed over Jordan. There are 137.5 because the guy writing the list expired before he could finish it. Just kidding!

Another way to create distance involves the use of “doublespeak.” It’s language that’s used to elevate the mundane or conceal something. Examples include calling a car salesperson a “transportation investment consultant” or someone who pumps your fuel a “petroleum transfer engineer.” Politicians are adept at disguising tax increases as “revenue enhancement,” “receipts strengthening” and “updates of the revenue mechanism.”

These examples catalog deliberate attempts to create distance. But sometimes we create it unintentionally. We create it through information overload when we pile on statistic after statistic or add so much unnecessary detail that our audience loses interest. We create it through language that isn’t shared, such as abbreviations, acronyms and technical terms our audience doesn’t understand. We also create it through making explanations too complex and too abstract. That feature of language cuts both ways. If it can create mental distance, it can reduce it as well. Language can involve and engage the audience. Involvement lies not only at the heart of all effective marketing copy, but at the core of effective presentations as well.

Can you think of changes you could make to your presentations that would create involvement? Several years ago, I had a friend who was a facilitator. It’s a skill that has benefited from a tremendous image upgrade and now it doesn’t carry the negative connotations that it used to. But I can remember a time when people thought a facilitator would get people at meetings to toss stress balls at each other, then stand in a circle and sing Kumbaya. My friend was telling me about his frustration with this perception, so I asked him what benefits he delivered to the participants at meetings he facilitated. He replied “shorter meetings that are more productive.” To reduce distance and create engagement with the audience, focus not on what you do, but what you can do for them. Nobody really cares what you do. They are captivated by what you

can do for them. Which of the following descriptions would create for interest for you?

I'm a financial planner.

I show people how to retire early while maintaining their wealth.

I'm a realtor.

I help people find their dream homes at prices they can afford.

I'm an accountant.

I show small business owners how to keep more of their money.

Creating engagement also relies on Rainmaking Presentations Principle 3—focus on what you want to accomplish with your language, not what you want to say.

How Language Creates Relationships

Words create and define relationships on a daily basis. It's probably most obvious in the use of titles. When soldiers address a superior officer as “sir” or “ma'am” in the military, when attorneys address a judge as “your honor” or when we address an elected official as “senator” we not only show respect, but also define our relationship to that person. Depending on the institutional culture and the region of the country, students address their professors with various levels of familiarity. In addition to establishing relational hierarchies, language also establishes our “in-groups,” defines how we view others and manages our credibility.

When to Use Jargon

Our word choices identify which groups we are a part of and which groups we're apart from. Those choices build either bridges or walls. A perfect example of language that can build either is jargon. It builds walls when you use it with prospects from outside your profession who are unfamiliar with terms you use on a daily basis. Your audience members don't think your use of incomprehensible jargon makes you smart. They think it makes you unclear and unable to relate to them. Make certain prospects understand any acronyms or abbreviations standard to your profession.

It builds bridges when you use your clients' jargon to connect with them. It identifies you as someone familiar with their world. It can provide an economical shorthand to express your ideas. In Chapter 2, I discussed the need to adapt to your audience's frame of reference. Let adherence to that principle guide your decision of when jargon is appropriate.

Your Word Choices Define How You View Others

Another way language builds relationships is through letting people know what we think of them. A salesperson was once observed asking a business owner for the name of the person responsible for benefits in his company. When the owner replied that he was a sole proprietor, the salesperson replied that he'd be happy to talk to the "chief cook and bottle washer." Although it's a commonly used term for sole proprietorships, the owner was offended because he felt such a term denigrated the hard work he'd put into building his business.

Avoid phrases such as "What you don't know is," or "You probably don't understand . . ." It's the same as saying "I'm smarter than you." And please don't tell an audience you're providing an "idiot's guide" or a "dummy's guide" explanation of something.

Your Word Choices Build or Destroy Your Credibility

"Illocutionary Suicide" is a term linguists use to describe the subversion of a contention by the uttering of it. An obvious example would be to say "I am good at constructing of grammatical sentences." We also commit illocutionary suicide with certain commonplace phrases. Consider what these phrases really mean when you translate them.

I probably shouldn't be telling you this.

Translation: Don't trust me with any confidential information.

To be honest with you.

Translation: Being honest in this instance is an exception rather than my normal practice.

After seeing how you dress and carry yourself, the next judgments the audience makes will come from the language you use.

The Ten Commandments of Rainmaking Presentations Oral Style

As you put together your presentation, keep in mind that you're writing for the ear instead of the eye. That generally means shorter sentences, more informal language and more direct speech. The following guidelines will help ensure that your presentations get the desired results.

1. Thou Shalt Avoid Clichés Like the Plague

Just as a proverb advises us “not to put new wine in old wineskins,” resist the urge to put your fresh ideas into worn out phrases. Unless you are blind as a bat, you'll see that clichés will leave you linguistically as poor as a church mouse. If you really want to stand head and shoulders above the crowd, using clichés is like barking up the wrong tree. All it does is open up a can of worms that could end up being your swan song. See my point?

Have you ever heard a person who wanted to sound like he knew a lot? Perhaps he said something like “We'll need to revisit that offline in a face-to-face so that we can ramp up the synergies that give us a strategic fit we can run up the flagpole. Because at the end of the day, we want cutting-edge best practices that help us think outside the box. Then we can benchmark our bottom line.”

If you currently have a “core competency,” please replace it. When I choose a professional, I don't want to hear that she's just competent. Competent means having just enough skill or knowing just enough to get the job done. It's also just across the line from incompetent. Think how much better an impression you create by referring to your “expertise” or “experience” rather than your competence.

2. Thou Shalt Use Language to Express Rather Than Impress

Audiences can immediately see through presenters who try to wow them with a large vocabulary. When I ask seminar audiences if they know anyone who uses words in an attempt to impress them, I get almost universal affirmative responses. I then ask them to identify the reasons for such behavior. The number one answer is: “to make us think they're smarter than us.” If the presenter uses a malapropism

(the unintentional misuse of a similar sounding word), he damages his credibility as well. I actually heard a presenter tell a group of training participants he wanted them to be sure to “conjugate” (rather than “congregate”) on time for the next day’s training. He could have avoided confusion, and embarrassment, by simply telling them to be on time. For those particularly adept at language, please subordinate skillful and correct use of your vocabulary to audience understanding. Continually using words others don’t understand brands you as a “word nerd.”

3. Thou Shalt Find Alternatives to Am, Is, Are, Was, Were, Be and Been

As their name implies, “being” verbs show existence rather than action. Eliminating them when possible makes your sentence stronger. If you want to test how dependent we’ve become on this verb form, try writing a short article of 300–500 words without any form of the verb “to be.” The results range from frustrating to impossible. The value of such an exercise lies in forcing yourself to think of ways to express your ideas more clearly. The verbalize step at this stage in the process primarily takes the form of editing. Start cutting and rephrasing after you already have a first draft so you won’t be stymied by writer’s block.

Our results from working with past clients are an impressive list of accomplishments.

Our results with past clients speak for themselves.

We strive to be the firm that is a one-stop solution for your accounting needs.

Our firm provides a one-stop solution to your accounting needs.

My practice is concerned with watching out for the well being of investments of older investors.

My practice safeguards the investments of mature investors.

4. Thou Shalt Use More Descriptive Verbs Than Do, Does and Done

“Do” doesn’t do anything and never has done anything. The dictionary lists over 30 ways to use “do” as a verb. That alone should alert you to the fact that “do” conveys no precision in language use. Be-

cause it fits in so many situations, we use it as a poor substitute for more precise wording. Sometimes, you can eliminate it completely.

What the new policy does is to increase interaction with clients.
The new policy increases client interaction.

We need to do a thorough analysis of the situation.
We need to thoroughly analyze the situation.

He did his job.
He performed his job.

5. Thou Shalt Favor the Active over the Passive Voice

The active voice makes a sentence stronger and usually shortens it as well. Use the passive voice only when you want to avoid responsibility or depersonalize your presentation. In addition to eliminating unnecessary words, which makes your style leaner, speaking in the active voice creates a more emphatic delivery.

Passive: *Some of the pieces of our new policy have already been put in place.*

Active: *We have already implemented pieces of our new policy.*

Passive: *Three out of five top managers have been retained by the new CEO.*

Active: *The new CEO kept three out of five top managers.*

Passive: *The value of your money will be increased through wise investment.*

Active: *Wisely investing your money increases its value.*

6. Thou Shalt Not Be Wordy

You've already seen how using the active voice cuts down on wordiness. Other ways to make your sentences more concise include:

Substitute Verbs for Nouns

Conduct an investigation into	Investigate
Do an analysis of	Analyze
Make an inquiry into	Inquire

Eliminate Unnecessary Words

The program developed by our firm was used by our client to gain an increase in their sales.

Our client used the program we developed to increase sales.

He dropped out of the MBA program on account of the fact that he became more interested in pursuing a law degree.

He left the MBA program to pursue a law degree.

Eliminate Redundancy

An early time

early

Of a rectangular shape

rectangular

In a prompt fashion

promptly

7. Thou Shalt Not Use Absolutes

Absolutes include phrases such as you always, or you never. When someone hears an absolute, the mind immediately defaults to self-defense mode. It reminds me of the old Godzilla movies from Japan. Remember the sequence of events? First was a trigger event, such as testing an atomic bomb in the wrong place. That would cause a volcanic eruption or earthquake that would unleash some creature that had been peacefully sleeping for thousands of years. The creature makes its way to Tokyo to wreak havoc. Alarms go off, the military bases shut down and they get ready to fire missiles. It's the same chain of events when you use an absolute. Mental alarms go off, the mind is shut down from any further listening and the missiles getting ready to fire are the exceptions to your absolute.

8. Thou Shalt Use Parallel Construction

Parallel construction simply means you should express coordinate ideas with parallel structure.

They didn't like how much the proposal was going to cost and our implementation of it.

They expressed dissatisfaction with the proposal's cost and implementation.

We should be remembering the past, live in the present and be planning for the future.

We should remember the past, live in the present and plan for the future.

Accounting professionals are noted for accuracy, attention to detail and their honesty.

Accounting professionals are noted for their accuracy, their attention to detail and their honesty.

9. Thou Shalt Use Vivid Descriptions

Which of the following descriptions in each pair helps you to visualize better?

A teacher

A history professor at Harvard

The car

The red Mustang convertible

The sound

The high-pitched klaxon

Yes, the second description in each pair uses more words, but the additional words serve a purpose. They help the audience visualize. Even better choices of single words make your descriptions more vivid.

**Table 6.1 More Descriptive Language
Triggers Greater Involvement**

Took	Stole
Yelled	Screamed
Controlled	Mastered
Left	Fled
Said	Committed

10. Thou Shalt Avoid Relative Language

In discussing the different types of interference, I noted that relative language often causes semantic interference because we have different

interpretations for the same word. Avoid confusion by eliminating relative language in favor of specificity. Relative words include:

Expensive
A lot
Few
Many
Long
Soon

When you eliminate the relative terms in favor of more specific measurements, you help avoid misunderstanding.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Verbalize

- Build your credibility by shifting from the language of tentativeness to the language of certainty. Instead of saying “I think” or “I believe,” substitute “I know” or “As you can see.”
- Clean out your linguistic closet by getting rid of clichés, obscure metaphors, and foreign phrases.
- Use jargon to express your ideas, not to impress your audience.
- Use the language of inclusiveness. Instead of “you” and “your,” try “us” and “we.” It also helps build rapport with the audience.
- Avoid the triple repeat: “You need to practice cost averaging. What is dollar cost averaging? Dollar cost averaging is . . .”



Web Resources

Online Dictionaries and Thesauruses

- <http://thesaurus.reference.com>
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com>
- <http://www.thefreedictionary.com>
- <http://www.yourdictionary.com>
- <http://dictionary.reference.com>
- <http://www.bartleby.com/reference>

- <http://wordweb.info/free>
- <http://www.visualthesaurus.com>

To Find Rhyming Words

- <http://www.rhymezone.com>

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CHAPTER 7

VISUALIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
ILLUSTRATE IDEAS

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 7— MAKE CERTAIN YOUR VISUAL AID DOESN'T BECOME A VISUAL DISTRACTION

Remember that an electronic slide show is designed to support your presentation, not replace it. No amount of technology can replace thoughtful analysis and strategic planning. Screeching cars, camera shutters, letters going up in smoke and other animations contribute little to your message. They may demonstrate your familiarity with the software, but detract from the overall effect. A few years ago, I sat through a presentation where the speaker repeatedly emphasized the need for different units of the organization to work together to achieve common goals. Unfortunately, the screen behind him contained a looping slide show where a block was being blown into a dozen different pieces. Talk about the visual channel subverting the verbal! Adding visuals is just one step in the Rainmaking Presentations System. Don't let creating great visuals become an end in itself.

There is a saying that “one picture is worth 10,000 words.” Perhaps it is more accurate to say “the *right* picture is worth 10,000 words.” Television, multimedia computing and the Internet have conditioned audiences to expect visual messages.

Computer-generated slide shows have evolved from leading-edge technology to a standard expectation for most business and professional presentations.

While desktop publishing software put the ability to create publications in the hands of the masses, it did nothing to guarantee the quality of design. Likewise, today's presentation software has made it easier than ever before to create electronic slide shows, but in too many cases, has actually harmed the quality of presentations.

The Problem with PowerPoint™

Entire books have been written about how to construct an electronic slide show. Unfortunately, too many presenters make their slide show the cornerstone of their preparation. I've seen speakers who try to begin writing a presentation by substituting a blank template for an outline. If you were to take away their slide show, they couldn't finish the presentation if their life depended on it.

Not every presentation benefits from a slide show, especially if the slides are heavily textual. If all you're planning to do is read from your slides, you're probably better off without them. You also don't want to let your slides cause you to neglect your own delivery. After all, *you* are always your most effective visual. I've seen presenters speak for an hour without a single slide and keep the audience on the edge of their seats the entire time.

In the Rainmaking Presentations System, creating your slide show (if indeed you even need to use one) is the next-to-last step in the process. This chapter first explores different presentation media, then focuses specifically on the design principles necessary to create an effective slide show. You'll also learn how to avoid the Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint™ and how to keep your presentation technology under control.

Functions of Visuals

You must first decide if your presentation would actually be enhanced by visuals. Some of their functions include:

To Reinforce Key Messages

Visuals reinforce a message by complementing the verbal channel of communication. Visual reinforcement helps the audience remember key information. Even if they forget specific numbers, they can often recall the overall trends and proportions the visuals represented.

To Appeal To Diverse Audiences

Some people are more active visual learners. That is, they learn best when they see an illustration of a concept or principle rather than just hearing it described. Visuals also facilitate cross-cultural communication. They translate more easily across cultures because they are less language dependent than verbal or vocal channels of communication.

To Help Persuade

Visuals help persuade by enhancing the presenter's credibility and eliciting a more positive response from the audience. Presenters who use visuals are perceived to be more knowledgeable and hence more credible. Don't take this fact alone as an argument to include visuals. You will also enhance your credibility by creating clear key messages, supporting them with proof points, adapting to your audience and delivering the message effectively.

Types of Media

While you are always your best visual aid, you might sometimes want to use external media for variety and precision. Table 7.1 examines some different types of media, along with guidelines for their use.

Visuals can increase your chances of success when you present. The key to using them effectively lies in understanding some of the differences among them and choosing them based on the type of information you want to present. You can see examples of each type at www.RainmakingPresentations.com.

Table 7.1 Types of Media

Media	Guidelines
Objects and Models	Must be large enough to be easily seen. For small objects, use a video camera and projector.
Flip Charts / Whiteboards	Minimum equipment needed. Use only in small, informal groups. Avoid writing with light-colored inks that don't provide enough contrast to be easily seen.
Photographs	Fine for individuals, but almost never large enough to be seen unless projected. Scan the photos and insert them into an electronic slide show.
Overhead Transparency	Easy to produce and inexpensive, but can you say Jurassic? Use color whenever possible. Use a light background / dark foreground. Keep in order with a numbered plastic sleeve.
Video	Cue material beforehand and use only short segments. Be certain TV monitor is large enough or use projection. For international presentations, be aware of different video formats and voltages.
Electronic Slide Show	Ubiquitous. Now the standard for presentation media.

Graphs

Bar / Column Graphs

Bar and column graphs are useful for providing a comparison between two or more data groups. Bar graphs are arranged horizontally. Column graphs are arranged vertically. Limit the number of data groups to provide ease of viewing. Use different colors to highlight different data groups.

Line Graphs

Line graphs work best to emphasize trends or changes over time. One common use is to display the history of a stock price. Limit the number of data groups and avoid using the markers that are available in most presentation software applications.

Pie Graphs

Pie graphs display the relationship of parts to a whole, so they typically contain only one data group. They work best to illustrate proportions or percentages. Enhance pie graphs by making them three

dimensional and “exploding” or pulling out the piece you want to emphasize. Try to limit the pie to seven pieces or categories.

Infographs

Infographs use symbols representative of the data groups to illustrate the amount. For example, if you are talking about how inflation is eating away at retirement savings, you could use pictures of stacks of money to represent monetary units. Infographs can reinforce otherwise static information by visual representation. They are particularly useful with lay audiences.

Photographs

Photographs work best when projected on screen through a presentation program. Remember that your computer screen displays only 72 dpi. Therefore, a large file will look no better than a smaller one. A photograph that was originally a 22MB tiff file will look the same as a 100kb jpeg file. Exercise caution so your presentations aren't bloated with large image files.

Diagrams and Illustrations

Diagrams and illustrations are useful substitutes for an object or model. They're also helpful in displaying information a photograph cannot, such as a cutaway view or internal arrangement of parts.

Flow Charts

Flow charts represent processes or sequences. Flow charts usually contain some type of chronological significance or point to a cause and effect relationship. Break complex sequences down into smaller parts.

Organizational Charts

Organizational charts work best to display hierarchical relationships such as an organization's chain of command or product categories.

Maps

Maps can be useful to illustrate spatial relationships. Use the appropriate type of map (physical, political, etc.) to best make your point.

Cartoons

Cartoons or humorous drawings can often make a point succinctly and clearly. Because your audience members will read at different speeds, a single frame cartoon works better than a panel. Respect the copyright of the artist. Licensing cartoon use for presentations is inexpensive and the ethical thing to do.

Tables

Tables organize numbers or text into rows and columns. Each point at which a row and column intersect should be a clearly defined cell. Limit the amount of information in a table and make certain the information is large enough to read.

Screen Captures

Screen captures reproduce the image from a computer screen. They're especially useful in training. Many screen capture programs have the ability to capture motion as well.

Text Slides

Text slides are some of the most often used, and least effective slides. They're visuals in name only. Audience members report one of their most frequent frustrations with slide shows is a presenter who simply reads the text that's displayed. Use text slides only to highlight key information and don't use them as a teleprompter.

Designing Slides on the I.M.P.A.C.T. Principles

There are six simple design principles you can use to ensure your slides look professional, help your audience process information easily and help you make your points clearly.

Identify Key Information

When your audience looks at a slide, they should immediately understand the organization and main point. Limit how much information you include on a slide so what's important stands out. If your information has ordinal significance such as a number of steps or leading causes of X, use numbers. Otherwise use bullets. Avoid using a laser pointer to highlight information. They're difficult to hold steady and often hard to see. Instead, highlight a point by making the word or phrase a different color or placing a box around it. Tell the audience what the visual represents before you display it.

Minimize Distractions

Reduce Visual Noise: Minimize the movement between your notebook computer and where you're speaking from by using a remote control for your slide show. Constant movement just to advance to the next slide is wasted movement.

You can reduce visual noise by practicing the principle of *Reveal and Conceal*. Direct audience attention to you rather than the screen by making the screen blank. Then they're focusing on you. Most remotes have this capability. If you're not using a remote, just press the letter B on the keyboard. It stands for both blank and bring back. When you're using a flip chart, and you're not talking about it, cover it up.

Maintain Eye Contact When Using Visuals: Some presenters stand in front of a screen talking to their slide show with their backs turned to the audience. No one wants to watch the back of your head during the entire presentation. Make sure you maintain your eye contact.

Pare to a Minimum

Don't use your visuals as teleprompters or scripts. Slides are not meant to be read—they're meant to be absorbed. Remember that you're using a *visual* aid, not a *verbal* aid, so economize in language use. Your information will stand out more clearly if you use words, phrases and fragments instead of complete sentences. Table 7.1 illustrates this concept.

Add Contrast and Consistency

A basic principle of perception presenters would do well to keep in mind is that our eyes are immediately drawn to the area that contains

Elements of Multimedia

- Images can include pictures, clip art, and any kind of drawings.
- Audio might be sound clips, a voice over, or background music playing while someone is talking or the user navigates.
- Video can be created from scratch or edited from pre-existing video you already have.

Elements of Multimedia

Images

- pictures
- clip art
- drawings

Audio

- sound clips
- voice over

Video

- new or edited

**Figure 7.1 Information in Words
and Phrases Is Easier to Digest**

the most contrast in a slide. Make certain your slides have enough figure-ground contrast to be easily read. For example, yellow lettering on a white background makes reading difficult. Avoid using any color combination that creates a three-dimensional effect.

Your visuals should create a sense of consistency throughout. Use the same borders, margins, colors, fonts, type sizes and layouts.

Coordinate the Visual and the Verbal

Any graphic image you use should have a direct relationship to the idea you're trying to express. Presenters sometimes choose graphics that are attractive or decorative rather than because they reinforce the message. Remember that fonts do communicate a certain image.

Textualize Appropriately

Just as emails written in all capital letters are poor form, using all capital letters on a slide makes it more difficult to read. A better choice is title case or all lower case letters. In reading English, the natural move-

Giddyup is a poor choice for serious ideas

Courier doesn't appear high tech

LITHOS DOESN'T SAY MODERN

Figure 7.2 Fonts Communicate an Image

ment of our eyes is to go from left to right and top to bottom. Arrange your information in a way that respects this movement. Finally, remember that your choice of font will communicate an image about your ideas. Figure 7.2 illustrates that certain fonts can subvert the image you're trying to create.

These six principles focus on creating visuals that are easy to see, that make their point understood quickly and that enhance credibility. Now that you understand how to create effective visuals, let's look at some of the most common problems presenters encounter with them.

The Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint™

It's not surprising electronic slideshows have become the norm for visuals in most business presentations. They are quick to produce, easy to update and effective to inject visual interest into the presentation. However, they can also spell disaster even for experienced presenters. For the best results, avoid these common "seven deadly sins" of electronic presentations.

1. Slide Transitions and Sound Effects

They become the focus of attention, which in turn distracts the audience. Worse yet, when a presentation containing several effects and transitions runs on a computer much slower than the one it was created on, the result is a sluggish, almost comical playback. Such gimmicks rarely enhance the message you're trying to communicate. Unless you are presenting at a science fiction convention, leave out the laser-guided text!

Leave the fade-ins, fade-outs, wipes, blinds, dissolves, checkerboards, cuts, covers and splits to Hollywood filmmakers. Even “builds” (lines of text appearing each time you click the mouse) can be distracting. Focus on your message, not the technology. If you think that these effects are a “must have,” ask yourself why. Then, if they truly serve a purpose, use them sparingly.

2. Standard Clipart

Death to screen beans! Some presentation software is now so widely used the clipart included with it has become a “visual cliché.” It shows a lack of creativity and a tired adherence to a standard form. A piece of clipart from a popular software program contains a man on a sinking rowboat holding a towel and a sheet of paper. I’ve seen that graphic in presentations about software piracy, organizational change, volunteer recruitment and sales forecasts. That means it’s probably not appropriate for any of them. It’s not specific enough. Avoid clipart wherever you can. It’s a visual cliché. If you see the same piece of clipart in one presentation after another, soon you just can’t distinguish them from one another.

First, make certain that you need graphics to enhance your message. If you do, use your own scanned photographs or better-quality graphics from companies listed in the resource box at the end of this chapter.

3. Presentation Templates

Another visual cliché. Templates force you to fit your original ideas into someone else’s pre-packaged mold. The templates often contain distracting backgrounds and poor color combinations. Pick up a good book on web graphics and apply the same principles to your slides. Create your own distinctive look or use your company logo in a corner of the screen.

4. Text-Heavy Slides

Projected slides are a good medium for depicting an idea graphically or providing an overview. They are a poor medium for detail and reading. Avoid paragraphs, quotations and even complete sentences. Limit

your slides to five lines of text and use words and phrases to make your points. The audience will be able to digest and retain key points more easily. Don't use your slides as speaker's notes or to simply project an outline of your presentation.

5. The "Me" Paradigm

Presenters often scan a table or graphic directly from their existing print corporate material and include it in their slide show presentations. The results are almost always suboptimal. Print visuals are usually meant to be seen from 8 to 12 inches rather than viewed from several feet. Typically, they are too small, too detailed and too textual for an effective visual presentation. The same is true for font size; 12-point font is adequate when the text is in front of you. In a slideshow, aim for a minimum of 40-point font. Remember the audience and move the circle from "me" to "we." Make certain all elements of any particular slide are large enough to be easily seen. Size really does matter.

6. Reading

An oral presentation should focus on interactive speaking and listening, not reading by the speaker or the audience. The demands of spoken and written language differ significantly. Spoken language is shorter, less formal and more direct. Reading text ruins a presentation. A related point has to do with handouts for the audience. One of your goals as a presenter is to capture and hold the audience's attention. If you distribute materials before your presentation, your audience will be reading the handouts rather than listening to you. If you think the audience will benefit from taking notes while you speak, give them a fill-in-the-blank handout. This also helps maintain their attention, because they want to complete the handout. I recommend not handing out a copy of your slides—it's distracting. If someone would like copies, offer to email a PDF of your slides to anyone who'd like one. That provides a built-in way to follow up.

7. Inseparable from Your Slide Show

If you present enough times, you'll eventually encounter a situation where your visuals are unavailable. It might be a burned-out projector

bulb that has no replacement, a computer crash or a last-minute shift to a new venue that has no projection capabilities. You should still be able to give an excellent presentation if you focus on the message. Always familiarize yourself with the presentation, practice it and be ready to engage the audience regardless of the technology that is available. It's almost a lost art.

Keep Your Technology under Control

Remember Murphy's Law? "Things will go wrong in any given situation if you give them a chance." This holds especially true for gadgets and gizmos during a presentation. You can keep an already stressful situation from worsening if you watch for these common technology complications.

Keep the Connection

Make certain you have all the connections you'll need for two devices to communicate. For example, to connect an Apple notebook to a multimedia projector requires a mini-DVI adaptor. If you're connecting a video camera to a television monitor or projector, you'll need to determine whether you'll be using S-video, component or composite interfaces.

Don't Let the Tail Wag the Dog

The placement of your notebook, not the length of any projection cords or power cords, should determine the optimal room set-up. Bring, or arrange for, extensions so you aren't limited by an arbitrary standard. Also, be sure to bring any adapters needed for power cords.

Know All the Formats

Video formats vary around the world. The United States uses NTSC, much of Asia uses PAL and several countries in Europe use SECAM. This means a video tape from the United States wouldn't play in standard equipment in Asia. If you're giving international presentations, or hosting them, resolve any format issues and arrange for multisys-

tem equipment to be available. If you're using a DVD, make sure the necessary hardware and software is available and installed.

Get to Know Your Software and Equipment

Most people have a basic knowledge of slide presentation software, but to use advanced features, you'll need practice and an awareness of any cross-platform issues. When I present, I prefer to bring my own wireless presentation remote because I know its features. I've seen presenters press too hard on the advance button of an unfamiliar remote and burn through 30 slides before they even knew what was happening. Older remotes use InfaRed technology that requires a more precise line of sight positioning. Presenters who move around the room sometimes exhibit contortionist behavior to get their remotes lined up with the USB receiver.

Prepare a Backup

Eventually, you'll find yourself in the position of not having your presentation loaded on the computer you'll be presenting from. Without backup, you're doomed. Have a copy of your presentation slide show on a USB flash drive and make it available online. The advantage of these two media over a CD is that you can edit the slide show.

Everyone Needs a Spare

Always carry spare batteries with you for any peripherals such as your remote, external speakers, timers, recorders, laser pointers and wireless microphones. Replacement bulbs for projectors are expensive, but if you're bringing your own equipment, having a spare could save the presentation.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Never wait until the start of your presentation to begin interacting with the technology. If you're giving your presentation offsite, arrive early to test equipment and review placement of the projector. The image should fill the screen and be in sharp focus. Avoid "keystoning" (presenting an image that is smaller at the top or bottom) by adjusting the

height of the projector. Avoid lateral distortion by making sure the projector is perpendicular to the screen.

You can prevent most of these technology mishaps if you supply your own equipment. Offsite presentations sometimes make it impractical, so when that's the case, remember the three "Ps." Plan for the best. Prepare for the worst. Practice with what's available.

A final word of warning for presentation road warriors: Despite your best efforts, technology will still sometimes fail. When it happens, keep in mind that slide shows are support for presentations, not replacements. Cicero didn't have PowerPoint™. Nor did Lincoln, Churchill or Martin Luther King, Jr. They all delivered some of the most powerful messages in history.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Visualize

- The most important rule in using visuals is to make them large enough to be easily seen by everyone in the room.
- Instead of scrolling through each slide to navigate to a previous slide, simply type the number of the slide and press "Enter." That's a great argument for having a printed copy of your slides with you.
- The audience can read text much faster than you can say it. Don't get on separate mental tracks from your audience by reading from a visual or reciting text they can see.
- Explain to the audience the point you're about to make on a slide, then reveal the slide. Psychologically, the slide then serves as evidence of the point you're making.
- Take note of where you're standing when using any kind of projection. It's easy to block part of the screen without even realizing it.
- If you are one in a series of speakers, recruit some assistants to help you set up your equipment when it's your turn to speak. That way, you can focus on establishing rapport with your audience instead of fumbling with your equipment.

**Web Resources**

Sources for pictures and illustrations

- <http://istockphoto.com/index.php>
- <http://www.hemera.com>
- <http://www.fotosearch.com>
- <http://www.shutterstock.com>

Sources for Cartoons

- <http://www.cartoonbank.com>
- <http://www.cartoonstock.com>

Screen Capture Software

- Mac OS—SnapPro X (<http://www.techsmith.com>)
- Windows OS—SnagIt (<http://www.techsmith.com>)

Presentation Remotes

- <http://www.interlinkelectronics.com>
- <http://www.logitech.com>
- <http://www.targus.com>

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CHAPTER 8

DRAMATIZE

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS
ENGAGE LISTENERS

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 8— GREAT DELIVERY WON'T GUARANTEE A GREAT PRESENTATION, BUT POOR DELIVERY CAN GUARANTEE FAILURE

Effective platform skills are a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for success. Many speakers possess an excellent command of their material, yet fail to move an audience to action or understanding by the end of their speech. It happens to experts, professionals and even the “C-level” suite. Often, it’s because they’ve failed to deliver the presentation in a way that engages the audience. Expertise without eloquence is like an artist without paint: There’s much potential, but there must be a medium of expression to realize it. As far back as ancient Rome, people were debating whether delivery or speech content was more important. You need both.

The delivery of your Rainmaking Presentations represents the confluence of all three channels of communication: the visual, the verbal and the vocal. As I discussed in Chapter 2, those channels can complement each other to reinforce the same message, or work against each other by sending contradictory messages.

I want to make it clear that confidence in delivering your message is a result, rather than a cause, of effective delivery. Some of the most confident presenters exhibit the most lackluster platform skills. The hallmark of effective delivery is that it doesn't call attention to itself. Good actors seem natural and effortless on stage, and good delivery should make the audience feel as if the presenter is having a conversation with them.

Each presenter must define her own style—one that's comfortable, one that blends in seamlessly with her personality and one that fits best with a specific audience and situation. Because such delivery should appear spontaneous, it makes little sense to provide you with a lengthy list of delivery traits to embody. *In fact, attention to just five specific guidelines will solve 95 percent of delivery problems.* I'll discuss those later in this chapter.

To provide an overview, I'll first discuss five different modes of delivery and the pros and cons of each. Then, we'll look at some of the delivery elements in each channel of communication, along with the causes of interference. Next, we cover the logistics of an effective presentation staging. We'll conclude with some strategies for making the best use of your rehearsal time.

Five Different Modes of Delivery

Manuscript

As the name implies, this mode involves reading from a prepared manuscript. The problem is it often sounds like reading—instead of delivering a presentation. Still, there are places in other modes of delivery where reading becomes desirable. For example, you can read from note cards when you are delivering a quotation or statistics to add a sense of accuracy. Reading also may be required when the precise wording has legal or technical implications.

Memorization

Memorizing a presentation means committing a prepared manuscript to memory, then delivering it without notes. As you can imagine, as the length of the presentation grows, it becomes increasingly

difficult to commit it all to memory. Another danger lies in the fact that many people memorize by letting one word trigger the next. If you forget a word, you might forget everything that comes after it. You've witnessed this if you've ever seen a presenter repeat the same phrase several times in succession. "As we go forward, we must . . . As we go forward, we must . . . As we go forward, we must . . ." Memorization also inhibits adapting to feedback. If you're focused on getting your memorized script out, you'll be less attentive to feedback from the audience. Some presentations, including keynotes, rely on memorization because the speech has been practiced and honed to elicit the desired response from the audience.

Impromptu

The impromptu mode of delivery occurs when someone is asked to deliver a few remarks "off the cuff." I put "off the cuff" in quotations because most effective impromptu speeches are actually well thought out. Mark Twain is rumored to have said: "It usually takes me more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." Most ineffective impromptu speeches are delivered by presenters with an abundance of confidence in their ability to think quickly on their feet. This can lead to rambling, stream-of-consciousness speaking and a general lack of any organization.

At times, you'll have no choice in being called upon to deliver impromptu remarks. The principles of Rainmaking Presentations still apply. First, consider your audience. What do they expect? What is their frame of reference? Second, what do you want the audience to understand or act upon? Third, what are the key messages that will help you accomplish your goal? In a brief impromptu speech, limit yourself to three key messages. Fourth, can you come up with a brief explanation, example or statistic that will support your key message?

Extemporaneous

This presentation style is marked by just a few notes and the appearance of spontaneity. A majority of presentation coaches refer to it as the most natural speech delivery. Its danger lies in confusing it with impromptu delivery and preparing inadequately. A presentation delivered extemporaneously means that you've outlined it in detail,

committed it to memory and remain open to adaptation based on the feedback you receive.

Interactive

The interactive style means that rather than deliver your entire presentation uninterrupted, you may present specific key messages, then invite comments or questions. You might also involve the audience in the creation of your content. To use it effectively, you must adapt messages as you go, have a keen sense of your time parameters and be flexible with your content.

Table 8.1 summarizes the different modes of delivery along with their pros and cons. Which mode is most effective? It depends on the situation, the audience, the skills of the speaker and the strategic goal.

Table 8.1 The Different Modes of Delivery

Mode	Definitions /Uses	Pros	Cons
Manuscript	Reading a prepared statement.	Precise, especially when the presentation has legal implications	Little attention to vocal variety. Often used in inappropriate situations
Memorization	Ceremonial speaking such as introductions, accepting awards	Speaker can maintain eye contact	Can sound contrived. Danger that it sounds like mere recitation.
Impromptu	Called on to comment with little or no warning	Resonates with the immediacy of the moment	Speaker must be able to think quickly on his or her feet.
Extemporaneous	Sales presentations, training, reports	Most natural sounding delivery	Speaker must not rely too heavily on outline
Interactive	Presentations where audience members may ask questions	Highly interactive and responsive to audience concerns and interests	Greatest flexibility needed. Must be able to integrate key messages into evolving structure.

No one mode always represents the best choice. It would be just as painful to witness a State of the Union address delivered interactively as it would to see a training program delivered from a manuscript.

Visual, Verbal and Vocal Elements of Delivery

Visual Elements

I discussed the effective use of visual aids in Chapter 7. This section focuses on the use of your body and your interaction with various elements in the presentation environment. I'll organize it spatially, starting with the eyes, then moving on to the face, gestures, posture and feet.

Eye Contact

A common belief exists among many in our culture that when someone is lying to you, they find it difficult to maintain direct eye contact. We express this belief when we admonish children we suspect of dishonesty to "look me in the eye and tell me that!" We infer the opposite must be true as well; someone making eye contact with you is telling the truth. In fact, no research supports this belief. Skilled liars have no compunction about looking you in the eye while lying. However, we do know that eye contact indicates interest and respect in our own culture.

What causes interference

The primary reason for failing to maintain eye contact is that we're looking somewhere else. For some, insufficient preparation means excessive reliance on notes or an outline. Others may become focused on their visuals, even turning their backs to the audience to read from, or refer to, the screen where their electronic slide show is displayed. Presenters may also believe they can think better when not making direct eye contact, so they'll end up looking at the ceiling or the floor.

Interference also occurs when presenters make an extravagant effort to look at different parts of the room. Such extravagance appears contrived. The best way to maintain eye contact is to have a

conversation with the audience. You look at someone when you're talking with her.

Facial Expression

Certain facial expressions are recognized across cultures. These include fear, anger, disgust, surprise, happiness and sadness. You'll want to be sure that your facial expression reflects your verbal message in an appropriate manner. I remember coaching a senior executive presenting a comparison between her own company and the major competitor. Although her verbal message wasn't particularly harsh toward the competitor, every time she mentioned their name, she displayed a threatening scowl. She was oblivious to this and only believed me after I show her the videotape of her presentation. Her unfriendly facial expression was completely off-putting.

What causes interference

Besides an inappropriate expression, anything that draws attention to you, such as excessive blinking or a repetitive movement such as licking your lips or bringing your hand to your face too often, will cause interference.

Gestures

Gestures can help amplify or reinforce your points, as well as direct audience behavior. For example, when you ask for feedback you might make a gentle sweeping motion with your hand, or if you're trying to limit discussion, you might gently turn your palms toward the audience in a move designed to request them to stop. Your most effective gestures will originate at the shoulders rather than the elbows. Try to keep hands out of jacket or trouser pockets.

What causes interference

Nervous presenters sometimes grab the lectern in an apparent death grip. This limits their movement and their gestures. The audience will also notice nervous movement such as wringing the hands. Gestures should appear natural and unpracticed (especially when you do practice them). Don't point because it can appear threatening.

If you're unused to gesturing when you speak, figuring out what to do with your hands can be quite awkward at first. Avoid the temptation to fold your hands in front of you (the fig leaf position) or behind you.

Posture

Erect posture has at least three advantages. First, it reflects confidence in yourself and your ideas. Second, it shows respect for your audience. Third, it helps you breathe more easily because it provides the least restrictions on your air passages.

What causes interference

The most common barriers to good posture include leaning on something, such as the lectern or a wall, and sitting on a desk or table. You want to be relaxed when you speak, but not *too* relaxed.

Feet

Try to keep feet shoulder width apart with your weight slightly favoring the balls of your feet rather than your heels. Keep your knees slightly bent. At the end of a lengthy presentation, you'll feel the difference.

What causes interference

The biggest culprits when it comes to causing interference with your feet are pacing back and forth across the room and what I call the "nervous weight-shift dance." This practice involves standing in one place but continuously and observably shifting your weight from one foot to the other.

Verbal Elements

The entirety of Chapter 6 was dedicated to more effective language use, so here we'll cover only the main causes of verbal interference.

Filler Words and Vocalized Pauses

As the name implies, filler words fill the space between thoughts. We use them when we're trying to think of what to say next, when we're

searching for the right expression and when we're stalling for time. They include words and phrases such as "you know," "and," "so," "okay" and "right."

Vocalized pauses serve the same purpose as filler words, but they don't even rise to the status of a word. They're only sounds. The most common are some variation of "uhhh" or "uhhhm." These annoy some people so much, they'll stop listening to your presentation to count how many times you use them. The record from my own personal observation is 73 in a five-minute presentation.

Personal Clichés

Depending on your perspective, personal clichés constitute either a step up or a step down from filler words. While they might fail to attain the status of a universally recognized cliché, they are used so often by an individual they become a signature style (and not a flattering one). Unless you're trying to provide fodder for an impressionist, make a concerted effort to become aware of any phrases you tend to overuse.

Vocal Elements

The vocal channel has the ability to change the meaning of a message in certain circumstances. To see an example of what I mean, try repeating the sentence below, emphasizing a different word each time you say it.

"I didn't say he complained about her behavior."

You'll see that as you change the emphasis on different words, you affect the meaning of the sentence. Now let's examine the different vocal elements and what creates vocal interference.

Pitch

Pitch is an attribute of sound that refers to its frequency. For our purposes, we can think of pitch as the "lowness" or "highness" of someone's voice. Typically, lower pitches carry connotations of seriousness and authority. That's not to suggest we should all try to speak in a lower voice. We're all born with a natural range and straying too far

outside that range will cause discomfort or possibly even damage. More important is to make use of the *range* we have available.

What causes interference

Failure to make use of our vocal range results in a monotone delivery. It creates a lack of interest that may even escalate to boredom. Besides a lack of interest it can also induce an almost trance-like state in the audience. I have seen presenters with a monotone delivery literally put audience members to sleep.

Patterned speaking can also cause interference. It occurs when a speaker uses inflection, but uses the same pattern of inflection in each sentence.

Rate

Rate is the speed at which we speak. Different rates of speech will convey different emotional states and moods. An average rate of speech is between 125 to 150 words. Speak more quickly to convey excitement or urgency. Speak more slowly to convey the seriousness of the occasion or even thoughtfulness.

What causes interference

No variation in rate can lead to the same results as no variation in pitch. Remember that an audience can process information much more quickly than we speak, so slowing down too far under the average will leave lots of room for daydreaming.

Volume

You can also vary your volume to add emotional color. As a general principle, everyone in the room should be able to easily hear you. Remember that you sound louder to yourself than you do to others, so you'll probably need to speak more loudly than you usually do. You also may have to compete with other sounds in the environment.

What causes interference

Speak softly only for effect, not as a matter of habit. Ignore Teddy Roosevelt's advice to "speak softly and carry a big stick," unless that stick is a microphone. I'll discuss different types of microphones later

in this chapter. On the other hand, don't speak so loudly that the audience thinks you're yelling at them. Increased volume can reinforce a sense of excitement, but it can quickly become, as the British say, "over the top."

Fluency

I use the term fluency to describe the ability to speak in a smooth and flowing manner. It means sounds, words and sentences fit together well for an overall pleasing effect. That's not to suggest there isn't a place for the pause. A well-timed pause can create suspense or invoke thoughtfulness. Just make sure your pause doesn't turn into an awkward silence.

What causes interference

If you've ever ridden with inexperienced drivers, you may have noticed them having trouble maintaining the correct distance between them and the car in front of them. This leads to frequent application of both the brakes and the accelerator. The result is a "choppy" ride with the car's momentum sometimes throwing you toward the dashboard and sometimes pressing you back into the seat. The same is true with speaking. Repeating words or phrases and using filler words and vocalized pauses all cause fluency to suffer.

Articulation

Good articulation means forming sounds clearly and distinctly so those listening to you can recognize the sounds and piece them together into recognizable words.

What causes interference

One cause of interference occurs when presenters don't take the trouble to form sounds distinctly. The result is mumbling. A second cause is when a non-native speaker of a language is simply unfamiliar with the sounds of that language. For example, depending on their mother tongue, some non-native speakers of English have difficulty forming the sounds for "r" or "th." If they audience finds it too distracting, such speakers might want to consider accent reduction training.

Pronunciation

Correct pronunciation involves both saying the correct sounds in a word and placing emphasis on the correct syllables.

What causes interference

Incorrect pronunciation occurs when people haven't learned the correct pronunciation or they haven't encountered a word before. Incorrect pronunciation can damage credibility. When in doubt (or just to make certain) about how to pronounce a word, use the web resources at the end of this chapter.

The Goal of Effective Delivery: Create a Sense of Presence

Now that we've had a comprehensive look at the different elements of delivery and the factors that cause interference in each channel, let me distill the most important of them into a set of guidelines. I've found in my work with clients that practicing these five guidelines will eliminate 95 percent of any delivery problems. That's because their purpose is to create a sense of presence. That means during the delivery of your presentation, the audience experiences your presence in the moment, your presence with your message and your presence in your engagement with them.

1. Practice Vocal Variety

Vocal variety means periodically adjusting pitch, rate and volume. At the beginning of this chapter, I noted that good delivery should make the audience feel as if you're having a conversation with them. Think back to your last conversation with a friend. No doubt you adjusted vocal elements as you described events. Strive for that same variety when you present. If you find yourself speaking in a monotone voice, try reading some dialogue. Try different voices for different characters. It will help you develop the ability to add variety and emphasis.

2. Speak Loudly Enough to Be Heard

Presenters often tend to speak to the front of the room where they are positioned. They need to take into account the back of the room as well. It's especially problematic when people speak without a microphone. If you can't be heard, you can't be effective.

3. Make All Movement Purposeful

This includes all the visual elements I identified above. We're often unaware of nervous movement, but it distracts an audience. Just make certain that when you use a gesture, move from behind the lectern or exhibit a particular facial expression, there's a reason behind it.

4. Establish Eye Contact Early and Maintain It Throughout

It's difficult, if not impossible, to create engagement with an audience if you fail to look at them. When you look at a room, in addition to displaying interest, you'll get feedback. Share the wealth. Try to look at different parts of the room, not just those giving you positive feedback.

5. Eliminate Vocalized Pauses and Filler Words

These constitute the most common form of verbal interference and also the most distracting. To eliminate them, you must first become aware of them. Record your practice sessions or ask a colleague to listen as you practice and red flag the offending sounds.

How To Create an Environment for Success

Seating Arrangements

When you have the opportunity to provide input on your seating arrangements, choose the arrangement that best fits your purpose and occasion. You'll find some suggestions in Figure 8.1 and Table 8.2.

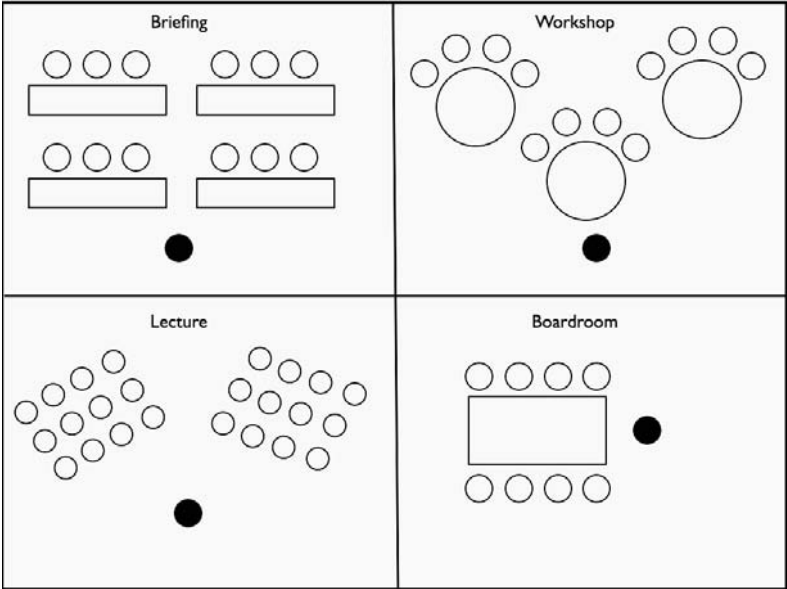


Figure 8.1 Presentation Seating Arrangements

Table 8.2 Best Uses of Different Seating Arrangements

Arrangement	Best Used For
Briefing	Teaching a skill, task, or knowledge set
Workshop	Most focus on group interaction
Boardroom	Smaller group, highly structured presentation
Lecture	High formality, little opportunity for interaction

Placing Your Equipment

Can They See You?

Any time you're speaking to more than 100 people, request a raised platform to speak. Unless you're in a lecture hall or a room with auditorium seating, people at the back of such a large group will have difficulty seeing you.

Screens and Charts

I prefer to have my projection screen on the left side of the room at a 45-degree angle to the audience. That way, attention is naturally drawn to me at the front of the room. It also prevents having to walk in front of the projector. If I'm using flip charts, I place them on the right side of the room, so I still own the center. Many rooms now have installed screens, usually placed in the center of the room. When you're speaking in one of these, position yourself to the left of the screen from the audience's perspective.

To Mic or Not to Mic

Unless I'm speaking to a small group, I'll always use a microphone. I'll even use one when speaking to a group of 12 people. First, it saves my voice, especially during longer seminars and workshops. It's as much for my benefit as the audience's. Second, it lends an air of professionalism to the presentation.

I don't want to bog you down with too many technical details about choosing a microphone. A good salesperson can help you choose depending on your needs and uses. I will say that I prefer a lavalier microphone that clips on your shirt or jacket rather than a handheld microphone. Because I use a remote mouse, one hand is already occupied. Having both hands occupied would mean less effective gestures. If you do use a handheld, remember to keep it in front of your mouth. That means that if you turn your head, the microphone needs to follow or you'll often lose the sound.

Perfect Practice Makes Perfect

I'm continually amazed by the number of presenters who simply try to "wing it" when they give a speech. Buoyed by their confidence in their

subject matter and their comfort in speaking in front of people, they deliver their presentation with little or no preparation. It often results in disorganized content and less than stellar delivery. Practice your presentation five to seven times before you “go live.” Effective practice is more than just sitting at your desk going over the presentation in your head. Stand up and speak out loud just as you would in front of your audience. This gives you the opportunity to adjust your breathing and rhythm in a way that more realistically approximates your actual speaking environment. It also lets you hear which words and phrases don’t fit together well and gives you the opportunity to make adjustments.

Record Yourself Practicing

Video is best, but use an audio recorder at the minimum. Video gives you the opportunity to catch distracting or unnatural gestures and reduce interference. It helps you refine your movement and posture. Audio alerts you to any filler words or vocalized pauses. Place the recording device far enough away to approximate the distance of your farthest audience member. You’ll be able to tell if you’re speaking loudly enough to be easily heard.

Practice with Your Technology

Take the opportunity to rehearse with your visuals. You can practice maintaining eye contact and see if any potential problems arise with the technology. When using multimedia clips, make certain they’re cued and that you know how to play them from within the presentation or an external device.

Find out who’s responsible for the AV equipment in the room where you’re speaking and make that person your best friend. The right relationship can save you from disaster. A poor relationship can spell disaster.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—Dramatize

- If you must read from a manuscript, slide the pages to one side after you finish them, rather than turning them over. This will help minimize visual noise.
- Position yourself under lights and free from any object that would obstruct the audience’s view of you.

- To keep your throat well lubricated during a long presentation, put two to three drops of peppermint oil in a warm glass of water and sip it occasionally.
- After delivering a humorous line, pause long enough to give the audience time to laugh. You want to avoid what performers call “stepping on your lines” by speaking too quickly after a laugh.
- Speak to the individual rather than to the group. You’ll make a better connection with everyone.
- Have upbeat music playing as the audience fills the room. It sets a good tone for the presentation. Make sure to observe copyright regulations.



Web Resources

To see and hear examples of the elements in the visual, verbal and vocal channels

- <http://www.rainmakingpresentations.com>

To hear the correct pronunciation of a word

- <http://www.m-w.com>
- <http://www.howjsay.com>

CHAPTER 9

RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 9— APPLY THE CONCEPT OF EQUIFINALITY.

The concept of equifinality states that we can achieve the same results through different means. Applied to Rainmaking Presentations, it means that you can “present” in different contexts than the traditional standing-in-front-of-a-group format to leverage your expertise. Notice I very deliberately used the term “contexts.” Although the contexts may change and evolve, the principles of effective communication remain unchanged. Regardless of the context, researching your audience, defining your strategic goal, organizing your ideas, providing proof of concept, using persuasive language and delivering in an engaging manner will continue to define your success as a presenter.

In this chapter, I’ll discuss the opportunities and challenges of presenting in different contexts. I’ll first look at more conventional venues such as international presentations, team presentations and panel presentations.

We should also recognize that increasing globalization, advances in technology and rapid adoption of new communication technologies make the evolution of rainmaking presentations inevitable. Contexts have emerged that allow you to leverage your expertise through the use of technology. Specifically, I’ll discuss the advantages teleseminars, webinars, CDs / DVDs and podcasts offer and how to make the best use of them.

Presentations with International Audiences

Presenting keynotes, seminars and workshops to participants from over 30 different countries has afforded me the opportunity to both deliver and observe a variety of presentations with an international element. The experience all points to one lesson—in addition to the careful preparation required for any presentation, presentations for an international audience demand extra attention. This concerns both presentations you may deliver abroad, as well as those you deliver in front of multicultural audiences here.

In any presentation, one of the keys to success remains a focus on the audience's frame of reference. When that audience is international, you'll need to step even further out of your own frame of reference and focus on making the presentation salient for your target group. The saying "When in Rome, do as the Romans do," is excellent advice. The goal is to "localize." Here are five key areas where you can apply the localization principle: (1) language, (2) measurement, (3) visuals, (4) equipment and (5) proof points.

1. Language

Even if most of your audience speaks English, it may not be their first language or "mother tongue." Avoid using clichés, slang and acronyms that may have meaning in your own culture, but not theirs. Some commonplace idioms you use regularly will have no meaning whatsoever for international audiences. I'm sure many of you have seen the list of translation gaffes that circulates on the Internet. Direct translations often present embarrassing results, so whenever possible, check with a native speaker of the language.

Having worked with translators a few times, I can tell you the experience is disconcerting at first. While simultaneous translation from another language into English is often possible, it doesn't always work as easily in the other direction. English is an "economical" language. That is, we often use fewer words to express an idea, or, our expression is less descriptive than it might be in another language. In practical terms, that means you may have to wait for your translator to finish an idea before you move on to your next sentence. Because humor depends so much on timing, the delays caused by translation make it even more difficult to use effectively in international settings.

Remember that even in English-speaking countries, there are a number of differences. An American “elevator” is a “lift” in Britain. Spelling is also different. “Center” in the United States is “centre” in British English. “Judgment” is “judgement” and “organize” is “organise.” To make matters even more confusing, some countries in South-east Asia use the American spellings while others use the British spellings. In the preparation for your presentation, find out what the accepted practice for your venue is and adapt both oral and written materials.

2. Measurement

I remember attending a presentation in Manila where German publishing company presenters talked about cost-benefit analysis solely in terms of deutschmarks. It made little sense to the Filipinos, who had infrequent experience with this currency. Translate monetary units into the currency of the country you’re speaking in. This shows sensitivity to the culture as well as respect. If your audience contains people of several nationalities, the U.S. dollar and the Euro are widely understood and usually provide an effective way to express monetary units.

Unlike the United States, the rest of the world uses the metric system for measurement. Use the measurement system your audience understands. For example, if you’re talking about the amount of land needed to erect a new building, they will probably understand “4 hectares” more easily than “10 acres.” If you’re talking about distance, “480 kilometres” will make more sense than “300 miles.” The same is true with measuring temperature in Celsius rather than Fahrenheit.

There are several good conversion programs you can download to your computer or handheld device. They make translating information into different frameworks quick and effective. You’ll find several at <http://www.onlinecalculators.net>.

3. Visuals

Use visuals that are truly “visual” in nature—don’t simply read from a series of text-heavy slides. The strategic use of visuals may also help compensate for language problems. Be sure to pay attention to details.

Attention to visuals extends beyond your own material, as well. At a seminar where the national flags of participants were to be displayed as a sign of courtesy, I noticed that the Indian flag was hanging upside-down. It was an easy mistake to make, since the tripartite colors of the Indian flag don't make the correct orientation obvious. Had it not been corrected in time, it would have been a serious insult to the Indian participants. Small details can have big consequences.

4. Equipment

As I noted in Chapter 7, presenting in a different country can introduce a number of technical difficulties, including different types of plugs, different voltage requirements, and different video formats. Outside the United States, "multisystem" equipment that will play several video formats is common, but request it before you arrive. Also, make certain you have the appropriate conversion plugs and adaptors for all your electrical equipment.

5. Proof Points

"Hitting it out of the ballpark," "making a slam dunk" and "throwing a Hail Mary" may be fertile grounds for sports analogies when speaking to an American audience, but soccer is probably more appropriate for many international audiences. Try to use examples that are geographically close, stories that will have cultural relevance and expert opinion that has credibility with your audience. Humor is a risky proposition even at home, so be doubly cautious when using it in front of an international audience. Be sure to test its effectiveness with a small sample before the presentation. Sarcasm can easily be taken literally. Most other countries don't joke about their government leaders with the same frequency and enthusiasm of Americans.

Be prepared to summarize often, ask for any questions or clarifications and remain calm when people ask questions about material you covered previously in your presentation. You'll also find that audience members sometimes discuss your presentation among themselves while you're speaking. This isn't necessarily a sign of disrespect. Most likely, they're translating and explaining to their colleagues who might not be as fluent in the language.

Remember, the more you are able to localize your presentation, the greater are your chances for achieving results. When you focus on the audience's own frame of reference, you are acknowledging their importance.

Several resources are available at the "Presenting Internationally" section of www.RainmakingPresentations.com. These include a table of electrical requirements, time and currency converters, international dialing codes and links to individual country fact sheets.

Team Presentations

Team presentations have always been a regular business development tool for professional services firms. Getting the business often depends on their success.

Team presentations have several advantages; they offer variety, provide an opportunity to showcase the firm's range of expertise and demonstrate how well the team works together. But hasty preparation or uncoordinated execution can also spell disaster. Even with changes in technology and formats, the greatest challenge in team presentations remains creating a sense of continuity among three or more presenters. To design, develop and deliver an effective team presentation:

Keep all presenters focused on the same strategic goal

You may have three or four presenters in a team presentation, but they should all be working toward the same strategic goal, rather than pursuing their own personal agenda. Don't let people get so wrapped up in their segment of the presentation that they lose sight of the overall picture. It shouldn't be used as an opportunity to stand out from the other presenters. The goal once again is to create a sense of synergy so that the overall team presentation creates a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Appoint a moderator

Appoint a moderator who is responsible for introducing each speaker, keeping segments running on time and deciding which presenter will

answer specific questions. Team presentations can bog down when individual members can't decide among themselves who will answer a particular question. The moderator keeps the presentation moving along by deciding for them. The moderator should make any adjustments to lighting, visuals, seating arrangements or room set-up.

Focus on skill sets instead of positions

Let each presenter handle what he does best. For example, if someone has great rapport-building skills, let her open the presentation. Consider having this person conclude the presentation as well to add psychological closure. A person with strong analytical skills and the ability to articulate them clearly is a good choice to lay out the problem-solution section of the presentation as well as present any data collection or survey information. Don't get too "title focused." Field your best team.

Make certain the visuals in your slide show are seamless

Visuals present special challenges in a team presentation. If you don't already have a corporate template, create one. Don't use one of the standard templates contained in PowerPoint™—chances are that your competitors will, and having your own distinctive look provides another way to make your presentation stand out. Work from the master slide. Too often, team members work on their individual portions of the presentation then assemble all the pieces at the end. Any incongruities in font type or size, color schemes or transitions become immediately apparent. Print out a copy of your slides so you can immediately bring up the desired one instead of flipping through them. If you're not within easy reach of your notebook computer, use a remote mouse to advance slides instead of trying to coordinate with another person.

Practice with the entire team until you see no room for improvement

Videotaping your practice sessions is best, but at the minimum, audio tape them. Make certain each presenter has a copy of the outline and update it regularly. If you'll be using microphones, decide how you'll

pass them from one presenter to the next. Determine the room setup, where everyone will be positioned and the optimum lighting situation. Anticipate what questions the audience will ask and develop thoughtful answers to them. You might also consider asking colleagues to sit in on the presentation and role-play asking difficult questions.

Speaking as Part of a Panel

Speaking as part of a panel presents its own set of challenges. Foremost is the fact that many things are out of your control. You'll have very little input on the room setup and seating arrangements. If the moderator allows another panelist to exceed her time and you're to follow her, you'll have to quickly adapt your presentation. Still, appearing on a panel with high-profile speakers will enhance your own credibility.

Gather as much information as possible about the panel and your specific role on it. Find out who else will be speaking and in what order. How long will you have to speak? What other events will immediately precede and follow your presentation? What AV equipment is available for you to use? Will each of the speakers have a microphone, or will you have to share one? When you deliver your presentation, just remember to practice the three Rs—Respect time, Respect the other panel members and Respect the audience.

Respect Time

Your moderator or panel organizer will provide you with your time guidelines. Ask them to be specific. If you have 20 minutes to present, are you expected to speak for the entire 20 minutes or save some time for questions? Adhere to the guidelines. If your standard presentation doesn't fit within the guidelines, change it. A speaker who goes overtime and isn't stopped can throw an entire day's schedule off. Audience members generally expect that time will be divided equally among different speakers. When you exceed your share of time, they stop listening and start wondering when you're going to conclude.

Respect the other panel members

Organizers sometimes place speakers with opposing views on a panel to create interest or controversy. When you're faced with such a situation, "respectfully disagree" rather than try to prove the other speaker is wrong or make him look bad. Audiences tend to be quite unforgiving of any behavior they might interpret as bullying. Don't disengage from the rest of the panel when you're not speaking. You need to project an impression of interest and active listening.

Respect the audience

Forget the saying "There's safety in numbers." Audience members tend to focus on individual speakers rather than the panel as a whole. Remember to maintain eye contact with them when speaking and look directly at individuals when answering a question. When a question is so specific it has little relevance to the rest of the audience, give a brief response, then offer to follow up with the individual after the panel concludes.

Teleseminars

Teleseminars are a presentation conducted over a phone line, typically between 45 and 90 minutes long. They have continued to grow in popularity during the last few years, due to two primary factors: (1) Plummeting costs. Not too long ago, you'd have to rent an expensive bridge line from a telecommunications provider. Now the technology is widely available. Some providers even offer this service free of charge. (2) The wide adoption of digital audio players. The explosive growth of these devices has meant an increasing need for different types of content to fill the available space. People listen to them while commuting, traveling and exercising.

This form of delivery eliminates travel expenses and can bring together several hundred interested people from geographically diverse locations at one time. Teleseminars recorded and later downloaded by individuals constitute an opportunity to "present on demand." You can also have the recording transcribed and made available for people who prefer to read. The resource section at the

end of this chapter provides a list of teleseminar providers. To use them successfully:

Pay special attention to the vocal channel of communication

Bereft of the visual channel of communication, the vocal channel becomes even more important. You don't want to sound like you're simply talking on the phone. Use vocal variety to create the sense of presence I discussed in Chapter 8. In the absence of an audience, presenters will sometimes pay less attention to their delivery and end up with a number of vocalized pauses, filler words and repeated sentences. A teleseminar is not a license to disregard the principles of effective oral style.

Utilize the moderator's controls

When you conduct a teleseminar, you'll have a set of controls available. For example, you'll have the ability to mute everyone else on the line while you're speaking, then open the line up for questions. You can ask participants to mute themselves, but some will forget and others won't bother. I've been on teleseminars where the leader didn't mute everyone's line and I heard dogs barking, babies crying and conversations that should have been held in private. Familiarize yourself with the options available well before the call.

Use the technical format with the widest appeal

When you make a teleseminar available for download, use a format such as MP3 that can be played across a wide variety of platforms and devices. Your goal should be to make it as easy as possible for people to listen. I've seen recordings in esoteric and proprietary formats that left potential listeners frustrated and confused.

Vary the presentation format to create interest

Instead of presenting the entire teleseminar yourself, consider an interview format where someone interviews you as the expert on your topic. This conversational approach can often be more interesting

than listening to a single voice for the entire presentation. You could also conduct a panel presentation via teleseminar.

Webinars

Webinars are teleseminars that include the visual channel of communication via the Internet. The most common visual used is an electronic slide show, although you can allow participants to use applications from your desktop or collaborate on documents and spreadsheets. They offer all the advantages of the teleseminar with some added opportunities for interaction and reporting. For example, you can conduct real-time surveys of participants, gauge their interest level and invite questions via a text interface.

You can also look at attendance information, and record the webinar and make it available for viewing later. The webinar has great potential for marketing professional services, especially if your reach is regional or national. You could even create a multipart series of webinars to showcase your expertise. They make excellent lead generation tools.

The resource section at the end of this chapter provides websites for leading webinar services providers. Each of them has extensive online tutorials and help.

CDs and DVDs

With CD and DVD production prices falling quarterly, what was once a cost prohibitive undertaking is now within the reach of independent professionals. Instead of producing a minimum 1,000 units, short runs of 100 or less are affordable now as well.

While some may think that CDs and DVDs are strictly for the celebrities in their profession, these media can actually help build your name recognition and create marketing momentum. They too, provide great opportunities for prospects to “try before they buy.” As with any successful Rainmaking Presentation, they must focus on providing educational value rather than a sales pitch.

You’ll also want to focus on producing a professional-looking piece. That includes the disc art, cover design and any inserts. This isn’t the place to economize. The packaging represents you.

Podcasts

Podcasts are brief audio segments that provide some type of educational content. You might provide a tip, a short “how-to” or an ongoing series that informs your listeners. They will be shorter than teleseminars, typically between 8 and 20 minutes. In its simplest terms, you can distill podcast creation into three easy steps: (1) extract or create content, (2) save the content as the appropriate file type, and (3) publish the podcast to a website.

1. Extract or create content

If you already have CDs or DVDs recorded, it’s likely you’ll be able to repurpose the content. Consider using individual tracks from an audio CD or extracting the audio track of a DVD and segmenting it into the appropriate length.

If you’re starting from scratch, you’ll need to write a podcast script and record it. Remember to use a conversational style and consider what program format would work best for your target audience. Try to script several podcasts in advance so that when you record them, you can optimize your studio time or your equipment setup time at home.

2. Save the content as the appropriate file type

Because of its wide adoption, the MP3 file format is your best choice. Some digital recorders now even record in the MP3 format. For others, you’ll need to convert the file into MP3 format with software.

3. Publish the podcast to a website

Your current web hosting provider may already have the structure in place for you to publish your podcasts—ask. If not, you can choose a hosting and distribution service.

My purpose is not to provide you with step-by-step technical instructions on how to produce a podcast. Rather this overview is designed to assuage any fears technophobes may harbor about the complexity involved. Most will probably hire their webmaster or an audiophile to help them anyway. My point is that podcasting will

continue to grow in popularity and offers an excellent distribution platform to leverage your expertise.

For the DIY types, you'll find equipment recommendations, specific software programs for audio editing and books that provide detailed instructions in the resource section at the Rainmaking Presentations website.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—

Presenting in Different Contexts

- Give international audiences the benefit of the doubt when it comes to expressing their thoughts. What sounds quite normal in one language may sound rude or puzzling in another.
- When you're scheduled to present on a panel, contact the other panel members to get a sense of how the presentations will fit with each other and if they represent a common theme.
- Don't use an 800 number for teleseminars and webinars. If someone is unwilling to attend a because of the long distance phone costs, it's unlikely he's a highly qualified prospect.
- When producing CDs and DVDs, hire a voice artist to read your introduction. It will sound more professional and more credible.
- When making the decision whether to produce a podcast, ask yourself if you can commit to a regular schedule. You should probably produce a weekly podcast at minimum.



Web Resources

Teleseminar Service Providers

- Great Teleseminars (<http://www.greatteleseminars.com>)
- Free Conference Call (<https://www.freeconference.com>)

Webinar Service Providers

- Webex (<http://www.Webex.com>)
- GoToWebinar (<http://www.GoToWebinar.com>)

CD & DVD Production

- Master Duplication Corporation (<http://www.Masterdup.com>)
- Prime Time Duplication (<http://www.primetimeduplication.com>)
- Flow Motion (<http://www.flowmotioninc.com>)

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CHAPTER 10

HOW TO DISCOVER AND CREATE RAINMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 10— FOCUS ON SPENDING TIME WITH YOUR CLIENTS INSTEAD OF YOUR COMPETITORS

Although you can speak to the associations you belong to, remember that you'll be speaking to your competitors rather than your potential clients. When I work with clients on developing a speaking strategy, I often find they're looking for speaking opportunities within their own profession. That's fine if it contains their target market, such as an attorney specializing in one area speaking to other attorneys who may be potential clients. But a focus on speaking within one's own professional association usually stems from a desire for recognition. A better marketing strategy is to focus on speaking to the associations of your target market. The key to successfully choosing your audiences lies in getting in front of people who can hire you.

Now that you have a system to show you how to design, develop and deliver Rainmaking Presentations, you'll need a place to put it to use. That means either discovering opportunities that already exist or creating your own. Meeting Professionals International estimates there are 770,000 meetings held in the United States annually. Divided by the number of working days, that comes out to over 3,000 each day. The challenge lies in identifying and finding which meetings best fit your target audience profile.

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

Aldonna Ambler is known at The Growth Strategist™. She's made it a point to give a presentation a week for the past 25 years. It's been integral to building her highly successful consulting business. "I wanted to go to the meetings where the prospects went. If the only association meetings we attend is where we're members, we're talking to ourselves. I wanted to speak to associations such as the Technology Council, the Association for Corporate Growth and the CEO Council. Go where your market is. Getting to know the people and being of service in an association is worth the time. You're going to be seen in a different way; you're telegraphing that you're not going away, that you're serious about adopting that marketplace and that you really want to know what they're about."

Fee or Free?

One of the first things many of my clients ask is if they should charge for delivering a presentation. It's a wonderful thing to be paid for marketing, but unless you plan to make professional speaking part of your revenue stream, you probably won't be paid for your presentations. You might not want to be either. After all, what's your real objective in presenting? If it's leveraging your expertise in front of your target market to develop business opportunities, keep your focus there. Being paid raises expectations exponentially about platform skills and the performance aspect of the presentation. You'll also eliminate many of the local venues and industry conferences, which simply aren't in the habit of paying their speakers.

You can however, look to other attractive forms of compensation besides money. For example, you can request the organization video record you and give you the master tape. That way you'll have demo video clips available. You can also request the participant list as well as testimonials from the organizers. In exchange for waiving your fee, ask for admission to the conference for three to five people and invite some of your clients or prospects to see you in action.

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

Bill Cates, President of Referral Coach International, is well known throughout the financial services world. He says he'll waive his fee when he knows there is a specific strategic marketing angle and that he can leverage the event in some way. "Most of my best, biggest, longest-running clients came through a fee-waived presentation that just turned into a ton of business over the years. I waived my fee, for instance, in front of the Million Dollar Round Table, which is one of the pinnacles of the life insurance profession because it's an event that can be highly leveraged. It did several things for me—first, it established me as an expert in my field in that industry; it adds great credibility when people know that you've spoken at that particular association. I had a booth so I was able to sell resources and services there. And it led to other speaking opportunities for which I got paid." Cates advises that people should have a fee, even if they choose to waive it. "Most people who have an opportunity to speak in a way to promote their business should have a fee—even if they waive it 99 percent of the time. Then they can say 'I'd be willing to waive my fee in exchange for . . . ' I'll even send them an invoice and mark it 'fee waived.' They see they're getting something of value."

The Three Ps to Marketing Your Presentation

1. Profile

What publications does your ideal client read? What groups and associations does he belong to? What are natural gathering places (both professional and social)? Also, where will you find most of your clients? Will they be local, regional or national? What job titles are common to your target market? What level are they typically at in the organization? Is your best focus on a particular industry or profession because of content familiarity or do you tend to deal in processes applicable across industries and professions?

If you already know the groups you want to be in front of, great. You can use the directories I describe later in this chapter to get contact information and meeting dates. If you have a general idea of such groups, but need specific names and characteristics, you can use the directories as search tools. If you're just beginning to compile your list, the directory gives size and budget information for different associations so you can prioritize.

Now comes the moment of truth. Ask yourself if the meetings you've identified align your expertise with the needs of the participants. Be brutally honest with the answer. Here are some considerations:

Can I offer something of value to the group?

As I noted in Chapter 1, and as every rainmaker interviewed for this book emphasized, nothing will turn an audience off more quickly than a sales presentation disguised as an educational presentation. Look at the No P.A.I.N. = No Gain Benefits Generator introduced in Chapter 2 to decide what problem you're solving or how you're helping the audience save time, money or energy. If you've agreed to give them something specific, don't be guilty of a "bait and switch."

Are there people in the audience that can hire me?

That means you want to be in front of the people who can actually write the checks to hire you or in front of groups that have influence with them. Unless you just want practice, don't waste time speaking in front of groups that can't lead to business. You'll grow frustrated with the results and blame the method rather than the execution. The method is proven. Execution is up to you.

2. Plan

Unless you have celebrity status, it's unlikely speaking engagements will simply fall into your lap. You'll need to develop a realistic marketing plan. First, decide how large a part speaking will play in your overall marketing strategy. Next, translate that into a specific number of speaking engagements. Divide that number into manageable time units. It could be quarterly, monthly or even weekly depending on how you work best. Set goals for how many organizations you're willing to contact to achieve that specific number. Keep a detailed account of your efforts and revisit your plan at the end of every month to make adjustments where necessary. The Rainmaking Presentations Marketing Plan in the toolkit section of the companion website provides a template you can customize to your specific needs.

3. Persuade

Although the time varies among different meeting organizers, you'll usually need to apply 8–12 months in advance to speak at most state,

regional and national conferences. Some conference websites contain online application forms for speakers. For others, you'll need to email or call. I'll cover the most common marketing materials that conference organizers request in Chapter 11. For local venues, plan two to three months ahead.

Making two sales is more difficult than making one. That means it's easier to find an existing need and fill it rather than first creating a need and selling yourself as the solution. That doesn't always mean the former is necessarily more productive. Depending on your business model and marketing plan, it may make more sense to create speaking engagements. I'll discuss the pros and cons of creating opportunities later in this chapter. First, let's look at filling speaking slots that already exist.

Where to Find Existing Rainmaking Opportunities

The best source of speaking engagements will probably come from your own network. Ask your clients what organizations and associations they belong to. Next, turn to your noncompeting peers who serve the same market and ask them for recommendations about speaking opportunities they think will help you build your business. When you have the right relationships, they're usually glad to help. If this approach isn't as productive as you'd like, you can widen the circle.

Speaking Locally

Don't think of speaking locally as "the minor leagues." Speaking locally has several advantages. First, you get to sleep in your own bed at night. For many people, travel time doesn't translate into very productive time. As security screenings increase and on-time arrivals decrease, travel will devour even more of your schedule. There's a lot to be said for being able to drive to and from your presentation. Second, when you decide to waive your speaking fee, you'll be less "out of pocket" for local engagements. Third, you might find your target market within close proximity. That translates into less overall marketing costs.

Once you begin actively looking for speaking opportunities, you'll be amazed at the number available. Your challenge will be in choosing the meetings that best align with your marketing objectives.

Service Clubs

Service clubs include organizations such as Kiwanis, Optimists and Rotary. They have weekly meetings so they need lots of speakers. The membership is diverse. It contains business owners, local politicians and other community leaders. They offer a great opportunity to hone your material, but might not contain the highest proportion of qualified prospects. Attend a few meetings to get a sense of whether it's a gathering place for your target market.

Chambers of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce count small to medium-sized business owners among their membership. If this is your target market, it might present an ideal opportunity. Many chambers have their own space that they rent to members for a nominal fee. It could provide a good venue if you choose to develop your own seminar or workshop. They sometimes include a presentation as part of their meeting agenda.

Networking and Referral Clubs

The primary purpose of these clubs is to provide business leads to those who attend. Some, such as Business Networking International (BNI) may have several chapters within a city. They may also restrict membership to one type of profession per chapter. For example, a chapter with a CPA member wouldn't admit another CPA. They permit outside speakers, but research a particular chapter's membership base to see if it falls within your target market.

Local Chapters of Trade and Professional Organizations

Most medium to large metropolitan areas will contain a local chapter of a national organization. If you're an intellectual property attorney, excellent groups for you to speak to would include the local chapter of the National Speakers Association—the very type of people concerned with protecting their intellectual property. If you're an insurance agent who works primarily with doctors, you'd probably benefit from presenting to your local medical society. A good venue for a business coach would be the local Institute of Manage-

ment Consultants chapter. If your target market includes human resources professionals, look into speaking at the local chapter of the American Society for Training and Development.

Another advantage to speaking to these local chapters is that you might meet someone who serves on the board of the national organization. If you've done an excellent job presenting to the local group, that board member can recommend you to speak at a regional or national conference.

Local Offices of Corporations

Sometimes, the best way to “get in the door” of a large corporation you're interested in working with is to find out if they have a local presence in your city. An excellent presentation to the local group can provide you with a recommendation to the home office. Many companies host “lunch and learn” sessions for professional development as well.

Convention Bureaus

Become a member of the convention bureau in your city or at least introduce yourself to them. They're often asked to recommend local experts when a convention is coming to town. By letting them know your area of expertise and that you're prepared to help, you'll become a valued resource. Ask them what you can do personally to help market your city as a convention destination. Many convention bureaus also have calendars of upcoming conventions. You can take an even more proactive approach by contacting the meeting organizer directly and offering to speak at the event. Make this initial contact eight to nine months before the event. A local speaker that provides a good fit for the program is often attractive because there are no travel expenses. About two to three months before the event, if you aren't chosen to speak, remind the meeting planner you're a local expert and offer to stand in for any speakers who cancel at the last moment. Here's some example wording:

Dear Ms. Brown,

I wanted to take a moment to wish you success on your upcoming meeting in Houston. No doubt your hard work in planning the meeting will pay big dividends for the participants. I'm sure you've had your main speakers and breakout sessions scheduled for some time. From experience, I know that occasionally, an emergency prevents

someone scheduled from appearing. I'm a business speaker who lives in the Houston area. My programs focus on showing professional services firms how to grow their business by leveraging their expertise. I'd like to make myself available as a resource for you, should you need an additional or replacement speaker.

If you need a presenter on another topic, please feel free to contact me as well. I have a wide network of professional contacts in Houston and am confident we can locate the needed expertise for you. My goal is to make your meeting a success and I'm happy to help any way I can. You can contact me at www.RainmakingPresentations.com or 1-800-420-xxxx.

Best of luck on your meeting and I hope you enjoy your time in our fine city.

*Regards,
Joe*

Newspaper Announcements

Look in the community events or business section of your local newspaper to find a calendar of events. See which groups routinely feature a presentation as part of their meeting agenda and start compiling a database of contact information for the presidents or program chairs.

Specialized Media

Search out specialized business media in your city. One example is American Business Journals (<http://www.bizjournals.com>), which publishes a weekly local business journal in over 40 U.S. markets. They also publish an annual "book of lists" that contains rankings of various industries and professions within that particular market. It's a great way to get contact information for the top people in those organizations. It will also point you to the 25 largest Chambers of Commerce and the 25 largest trade and professional organizations within your city.

Local Web Resources

Do a web search within your city with terms such as "networking meetings," "networking news," "networking groups" and "meetings calendar." My own city of Houston has a meeting "portal" that consolidates all the networking, service club and business interest meetings in the city. It's a valuable resource that lists all the meetings by

date with links to the organizations. Just one month lists over 500 meetings. Not all of these will be a good fit, but if just 1 percent falls within the target market, that's still five places to present each month. See if there is a similar resource in your own city.

Teaching Opportunities

Look at the course listings of colleges and universities in your city, especially in law schools and MBA programs. Teaching a course occasionally can put you in touch with future decision makers or provide you with an introduction to current decision makers within an organization. It's critical that you choose courses that will demonstrate your expertise. Teaching a course is a significant time investment. Besides the actual classroom delivery, there's preparation, grading and "offline" consultation with students. Still, it's an investment that has paid off handsomely for some professionals, myself included.

You can also investigate shorter "one-off" courses and professional development programs through your local learning annex or community college. Teaching one of these courses also means you'll be included in their course catalog. The mailing list is usually in the thousands, so it's an opportunity to gain additional exposure.

Speaking Regionally and Nationally

Look for opportunities to speak at trade or professional organizations. Go to the organizations whose members comprise your target market. Most have state, regional and national conventions and are eager to hear experts that bring value to their members. There is no better exposure than to be presented as an expert to your potential customers. If you want to speak at a convention however, you'll need to contact the program planning chair 8–12 months before the convention. Because of the logistics involved in organizing these meetings, the planning process is lengthy.

An advantage to speaking at regional and national meetings lies in the opportunity for "trickle-down" engagements or spin-off. When you've impressed someone at a large meeting, they're likely to promote you to the smaller organizations and associations under their umbrella. Most of these opportunities will fall under one of four categories: (1) state, regional and national meetings of trade and professional associations, (2) regional and national meetings of

corporations, (3) ad hoc industry seminars and conferences and (4) ongoing business roundtables. The strategy for finding these opportunities begins with knowing the right resources.

Finding State, Regional and National Meetings

The simplest strategy begins with your personal contacts. Ask your clients what out-of-town conferences they find most useful and which ones they attend on a regular basis. Next, turn to your peers who serve the same market and ask which of the conferences they've spoken at have been productive. Once you've exhausted those resources, you can turn to directories and websites.

Association Directories

Several directories exist that provide information about associations. This information may include a description of the association, the size, contact details for the executive director and/or meeting planner, scheduled meetings and publications. Many libraries have these directories in their reference section and some are available through online databases. If you plan to make extensive use of them, your own subscription will cost a few hundred dollars. Considering the depth and breadth of information you can access, it's a wise investment.

Associations Yellow Book (<http://www.leadershipdirectories.com>). Part of The Leadership Library, this directory contains detailed contact information for the officers and management of associations, their meeting dates and even the contact information for the editors of their publications. This is useful when you want to write articles for greater exposure.

National Trade and Professional Associations and State and Regional Associations (<http://www.associationexecs.com>). Published by Columbia Books, it contains information on over 16,000 associations, including their publications. It's the comprehensive resource for trade and professional associations, regardless of their size.

Association Meeting and Event Planners (<http://www.douglaspublications.com>). Published by Douglas Publications, this directory focuses specifically on the meeting planners for events. It's available only in print and a CD-ROM version.

Encyclopedia of Associations (<http://www.gale.cengage.com>). Published by Gale, this encyclopedia contains information for interna-

tional associations as well. It also contains a wider variety of associations, including political and religious associations. It contains publication information, but no meeting information. You can find that in larger online databases.

Conference Organizers

Organizations such as media companies, universities, continuing education providers, publishers and others produce several conferences each year geared to specific industries and professions. Most are open to receiving speaker proposals. You'll find some examples of such organizers in the resource section at the end of this chapter.

You can also seek out specialized conferences that contain your target market. Ask your current clients to save the advertising brochures they receive for such conferences. Start an "I'd Like to Speak There" file and use it to plan your future marketing activities.

Business Roundtables

If your target market includes business owners and CEOs, consider presenting to a business roundtable. It will often contain highly qualified prospects and decision makers. Some actively seek outside speakers that bring topics of interest to the group. The resource section at the end of this chapter contains examples of such groups.

How to Create Your Own Rainmaking Opportunities

In some situations, it may make more sense to create an event more specific to your expertise and that focuses exclusively on you. Some examples of these include courses, seminars and workshops.

Courses

If you've searched through the catalogs of your local learning annex and community college and didn't find any professional development courses you thought would provide a good showcase for your expertise, suggest one. Most providers are quite open to course proposals because it allows them to expand their offerings.

Another approach focuses on creating courses that help professionals fulfill their continuing education requirements. You'll need to work with the organization that credentials such courses to get them approved. It can be an involved, and sometimes expensive, process, but once you have approval, you can offer them on an ongoing basis.

Seminars

Seminars are short (think one hour to one-half day) presentations that educate the audience about some issue. You might combine a seminar with a breakfast or lunch to increase attendance. Think about where your target market naturally congregates and offer to present to them. Even groups that don't regularly feature speakers are often open to a seminar if you can provide value to them. For example, if your target market is seniors, you might contact the local chapter of the AARP and offer to present an educational seminar. You can defray your marketing costs by finding sponsors.

Workshops

Workshops generally last one to two days and cover the material in depth. They are notoriously difficult to market, especially public seminars. You must make certain that the value you offer at the workshop far exceeds the price of attending.

CASE STUDY IN SUCCESS

Mark Partridge is an intellectual property attorney with the firm of Pattishall, McAuliffe, Newbury, Hilliard, & Geraldson, LLP. He combines these different contexts to use presentations as a business development tool. These include: (1) continuing legal education programs for various bar associations, (2) seminars for potential clients, (3) seminars as a benefit for existing clients, (4) speaking to groups outside the legal community and (5) teaching as an adjunct faculty member at a law school. He advises making the most of each speaking opportunity: "You need to start with thinking about who you can get to that audience. If you get an opportunity to speak somewhere, let your target clients know and invite them. Don't just go to the event and hope that somebody there is going to be interested. When you invite people, follow up."

You can partner with other professionals who share your target market. For example, I recently partnered with two speakers to present a workshop on “Personal PR.” I covered the communication aspects of the topic, another speaker showed participants how to develop their personal brand and the third speaker gave them strategies for networking. Combining our resources allowed us to split marketing costs, add variety and increase the size of the list we marketed to.

Speaking is a proven way to build your business. You just need to be strategic in choosing your audiences and following through.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—

Discovering and Creating Rainmaking Opportunities

- Provide the “what to” for free, or at very low cost. Charge for the “how to.”
- Be certain to provide your audience with information of value to them. They’re not there to be pitched to.
- Remember there are other forms of compensation besides money that might be equally valuable. Think videotaping, participant lists, extra admission for colleagues.
- Consider partnering with another professional to create seminars.
- When speaking to association meetings, offer to work with them to get continuing education accreditation for your presentation. It makes you more attractive as a speaker.
- Offer to conduct multiple sessions. If you can present two different topics during a conference, be sure to let the organizer know that. It’s another way of adding value.
- Use a feedback form distributed to the audience to learn what other topics they’re interesting in learning about.



Web Resources

Conference Organizers

- ALM (http://www.almevents.com/contact_forms.cfm?ep_page=speaker_opp) is a media company focusing primarily on the legal and business professions. They produce several conferences each year.
- c5 (<https://www.c5-online.com/dynamic/Page551.aspx?PageMode=Hybrid>) produces over 500 conferences each

year in the legal, financial services, insurance and taxation fields.

- Forbes Conferences (<http://www.forbesconferences.com/?page=speakeropportunities>) is a leading organizer of business conferences.
- Lorman Educational Services (<http://www.lorman.com/contact/speaker.php>) organizes conferences, teleseminars and in-house training for legal, financial and accounting clients.
- The American Conference Institute (<http://www.americanconference.com>) produces several conferences each year, including several relevant to a wide range of professional services.

Business Roundtables

- Vistage (<http://www.vistage.com>)
- The Alternative Board (www.tabboards.com) Business Intelligence on Corporate Executives
- ZoomInfo (<http://www.zoominfo.com>)
- NetProspex (<http://www.netprospex.com>)

CHAPTER 11

MARKETING YOUR RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS

MATERIALS AND METHODS

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RAINMAKING PRESENTATIONS PRINCIPLE 11— IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME, BUT ONLY IF THEY KNOW ABOUT IT.

As noted in Chapter 1, the Rainmaking Presentations System requirements call for you to actively market yourself as a speaker. You will occasionally get a call or an email requesting you to be a speaker at some conference or meeting. But it will rarely happen by serendipity. It will most likely happen because someone has received your direct mail piece, or spoken with you on the phone, or seen something you've written. Whether it's the push of actively seeking out speaking engagements or the pull of positioning yourself as an expert who happens to speak, marketing requires a sustained commitment. This chapter begins with a description of the most common types of marketing collateral for speakers. Next I distinguish between "push" and "pull" marketing with some examples of each type. I conclude with a step-by-step process to create an internal speakers bureau within your own firm.

You want your target audience to visualize you as an expert who speaks. That means developing some of the marketing materials that speakers routinely use. The most basic marketing piece for speakers is aptly called a “one-sheet.”

One-Sheet

A one-sheet is a single or double-sided piece of 8.5 × 11 glossy paper. The quality of printing available from color laser printers today means you can print as few or as many as you like without having to print a run of 1,000 from a print shop. No doubt your one-sheet will evolve along with your speaking experience, so you might want to keep the first few printings small. The one-sheet contains information about you and your expertise including a photograph, brief biography, topics, clients and contact information.

Photograph and Bio

If you already have recent photographs available from other marketing materials, you can use one of them. If not, invest in a session with a professional photographer used to working with speakers and get a variety of shots. Be clear about who owns the copyright to the photographs as the policy varies among photographers.

Keep your biography brief and to the point. Mention any significant accomplishments, but don't make this section read like your resume. Include advanced degrees, but use professional designations only if they are familiar to your target audience. If you have to explain what the designations mean, they probably aren't very useful.

Topics

Include descriptions of your speaking topics that focus on what participants can expect to take away from the presentation. Too many one-sheets focus on what the speaker will talk about, rather than what benefits the speaker will deliver to the audience. Rather than writing in long paragraph form, write in short sentences and bullet points. Use parallel structure. You'll also need to indicate how you deliver

your expertise—is it primarily through workshops, seminars or something else?

Clients

List some of your most impressive clients along with a few testimonials. The best testimonials are two to three short sentences that focus on the results you helped the client achieve. You shouldn't be looking for compliments about what a great speaker you are. If you've done a good job for clients, most are happy to provide testimonials when you ask.

Contact Information

Make it easy for someone to contact you. Include all standard contact information including telephone numbers, email address and website URL.

You'll find examples of one-sheets at www.RainmakingPresentations.com.

Video

In the old days, speakers could expect to spend thousands of dollars to create a demo video. These were meant primarily for speakers' bureaus and meeting planners. It's unlikely that the organizers for meetings you'll be speaking to will request video before you're invited to speak. If they do, a better alternative to the video demo is to create three to five short clips that can be viewed from your website or an online video hosting site such as YouTube. If possible, try to include some of the audience's reaction to your speaking for greater impact. Your goal should be to create clips five to eight minutes long that can demonstrate your expertise and uniqueness.

Push vs. Pull Marketing

I refer to "push" marketing as those activities designed to make unsolicited contact with your target market. Push marketing activities

include advertising, direct mail and telephone prospecting. Advertising your availability doesn't carry the same credibility as article and book writing. Direct mail can be effective if you have the right mailing list and can provide a good offer for the prospects' response. Telephone prospecting works to market your speeches, especially to trade and professional associations, but many professionals are reluctant to make cold calls.

Pull marketing is designed around establishing some initial contact with prospects outside a marketing arena, then providing enough attraction that the prospect seeks out further contact. Pull marketing activities include appearing in trade and industry publications, article and book writing, blogging, and distribution of knowledge-based marketing materials such as white papers, resource guides, and booklets.

Getting Noted by Journalists and Producers

One of the best ways to build your credibility is to be quoted by a journalist as an expert in your field. The first step is getting on their radar screens. One way to get noticed is by purchasing a listing in some directory journalists and producers regularly use. I'm distinguishing this from advertising because you're not advertising that you're a speaker; you're making yourself available as an expert.

The Yearbook of Experts or its companion website Expert Click (<http://www.ExpertClick.com>) is a directory/site where journalists seek out experts for comments on stories they're currently working on. Your listing includes links to your email address, website URL, calendar of events and a PDF file of your one-sheet. It also includes the ability to send 52 press releases each year. Interested journalists contact you directly for your comments on their story.

A different model to reach journalists is PR Leads (<http://www.PRLeads.com>). This model requires you to be more proactive. When you subscribe to this service, you create a profile indicating your area of expertise. Journalists send in queries identifying the type of expertise they're looking for. Based on the preferences you create on your profile, the queries are sorted and a summary is emailed to you. You can then contact the journalist directly and indicate your availability for an interview.

Best Chances for Success

I've found three keys to using these services successfully. First, get the training each service provides so you'll know how to create the most successful profile and make use of all the features. Second, when you see a query or a journalist contacts you, respond as quickly as possible. The journalist can sometimes be inundated with replies, so the sooner you offer yourself as a resource the better. Third, make certain that you only reply to queries where there's a genuine fit between your expertise and the story. Nothing aggravates journalists more easily than having to sort through off-topic pitches. You'll increase your chances of being chosen for an interview if you can demonstrate why you offer a unique perspective on the story.

Writing Articles

Writing articles for your target market is another way to build recognition, enhance your credibility and identify yourself as a speaker. I don't want to weigh in on the debate about whether it's better to pursue online publication or more traditional print publication. Both have their uses.

Online publication can provide links back to your website and thus increase your ranking in search engines. Article submission sites that make your content available to other website owners can produce wide distribution of your content quickly. Most article submission sites are free. PR Leads offers a more targeted approach for a fee.

Print publication is generally considered more prestigious and can provide reprint opportunities. The lead times are much longer, space restrictions limit how much you can write and you'll find more competition.

You can pursue article writing for your target market with a straightforward four-step plan.

1. Identify the publications read by your target market. Don't overlook regional publications with a large circulation. One of the best sources to find such publications is Ulrich's Periodicals Directory (<http://www.UlrichsWeb>

- .com), which contains information on over 300,000 periodicals worldwide.
2. Download or request by mail an editorial calendar so you can see where your expertise might fit in with what the magazine plans to cover during the next 12 months. When I look at editorial calendars, I'm looking for topics such as "marketing your practice," "growing your business" and "communication." Chances are high that I'd be able to offer an editor a useful article on one of these topics.
 3. Contact the editor and make a pitch. Describe the approximate word count of the article, what benefits it would offer to the readers, when you could deliver it and why you are qualified to write it. If you've written for other publications, mention that so the editor knows she's not dealing with a first-time author. You can find a sample query letter at www.RainmakingPresentations.com.
 4. If the editor shows interest and asks you to write the article, complete it and get it in her hands by the deadline.

Whether writing for print or online publication, one of the keys to leveraging your article is an effective resource box. This will come at the end of the article, identifying you as the author and giving readers a way to contact you. Again, focus on the results you achieve for clients rather than a simple description of what you do. Suggest ways the readers could use your services or learn more about you with a "call to action":

"Book him to speak at your organization by emailing him at Smith@ABC.com."

"For a complimentary consultation, call him at 1-800-439-XXXX."

"To learn how he increased productivity by 21 percent for one of his clients, register for his upcoming teleseminar at www.teleseminarproductive.com."

Newsletters read by your target market are also good venues for publication. Search the web using the keywords "directories of newsletters" and you'll find links to online directories that let you search for your topic areas.

When you're booked to speak to an organization, ask if they have a newsletter and offer to contribute an article. You'll be doing each other a favor. Newsletter editors are usually hungry for editorial content and being published in their newsletter will help build your credibility prior to presenting to the group.

Blogs

An increasing number of professionals are turning to blogs (short for web logs) to showcase their expertise. In addition to text, blogs can include various types of media such as audio and video clips. Business blogs are usually distinguished from personal journal entries by providing comment or analysis on some event. Blogs have the added advantage of increasing search engine rankings through providing updated or fresh content on a regular basis. One of the keys to writing a successful blog is regular updating of the content.

Practice Knowledge-Based Marketing

Let me return to the distinction between knowledge and information I introduced in Chapter 3 and apply it to the promotional materials you use to support your presentations. They could be the pieces you use to generate speaking leads or what you use for follow up after a presentation. Information-based materials include brochures, business cards and presentation folders. They contain information about you and your practice. Knowledge-based materials include articles, books, booklets and resource guides. They contain knowledge the reader can put to use. The biggest advantage knowledge-based materials have over information-based materials is that prospects actually keep and read them rather than sending them to the recycling bin. Let me give you some examples of knowledge-based materials I've successfully used myself.

The first is a resource guide I developed to help people use visual aids more effectively. The format is a four-color, four-page, folded glossy paper. It contains advice about when to use different graphs, how to construct them and how to avoid the most common problems with electronic slide shows. Five years after I first began distributing

them, I went back to a client's office to find it posted on a wall. That's keeping top of mind awareness!

The second is a 20-page booklet that fits inside a #10 envelope. It contains 135 tips to improve business presentations. I give a few of them away at presentations, and offer to send one to anyone who'd like to leave their business card. They're inexpensive to produce, have a long shelf life and keep my name in front of prospects.

The third is a special report titled "Rainmaking Secrets Made Simple: Discover How Presentations can Establish Client Relationships, Increase Sales and Eliminate the Pain of Marketing." It's available both in printed form and as a PDF download from my website. When someone downloads it, they periodically receive a series of autoresponders with additional tips and resources.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are another form of knowledge-based marketing. It's a familiar format in the online world as people seek ever more encapsulated knowledge about particular issues or processes. Their power lies in the fact that you define the paradigm of what's important. Here are some examples that would work well for different professional services firms.

"FAQs about Applying for a Trademark"

"FAQs about Opening an Individual 401K"

"FAQs about Small Business Tax Deductions"

"FAQs about Working with a Financial Planner"

"FAQs about Choosing a Management Consultant"

Write FAQs to provide a logical answer to the question posed and generic enough not to appear self-serving.

Forming Your Own Speakers' Bureau

Although many assume that an internal speakers' bureau is pull marketing, under the assumption that "if you build it, they will come," you must aggressively market it to be successful. It's a significant time investment, but has several advantages. First, you can respond quickly and decisively when you receive a request from an organization for a speaker. Second, it increases visibility in your target market. Third, it helps build the firm's credibility by showcasing the available expertise.

Setting up a speakers' bureau in your firm is a five-step process: (1) Decide who has ownership, (2) Identify your ideal audience, (3) Identify topics and speakers, (4) Get speakers trained, (5) Actively market the bureau.

1. Decide who has ownership.

Don't let the momentum to create a speakers' bureau languish in committee meetings. Once the decision is made to go forward with it, assign ownership of the project. Set guidelines for training and promotion budgets. Establish timelines and implementation goals.

2. Identify your ideal audience.

Although you'll expand your search somewhat because you'll have more available expertise and a wider range of topics and markets, this step is much like the process I discussed for individual speakers looking for groups in Chapter 10. Decide what the characteristics of your target market are and seek out the groups where they meet.

3. Identify topics and speakers.

The topics you decide to offer can be developed from either the "top-down" or "ground-up" perspective. The top-down perspective leaves all decisions about topic choice to your organization. You might decide to offer a broad range of topics to widen the appeal or choose to offer a narrow range to niche your expertise. The ground-up perspective actively seeks input from your audiences as to what topics appeal to them. You can gather this input either through informal conversations with the program chairs or by using one of the web-based survey methods I discussed in Chapter 2.

The person at the top of the organizational chart in your firm isn't always a natural choice for a speaker. Someone else may have more expertise in a particular area or be a better presenter. Others may express a genuine desire to market the firm's services through speaking. Whoever volunteers, or is recruited, must be willing to make a commitment to present on a regular basis.

4. Get speakers trained.

A recurring theme throughout this book has been the concept that expertise without influence will prevent peak performance. Let me briefly recap some of the problems associated with choosing speakers based solely on their expertise.

Experts believe facts speak for themselves.

They believe that if you just lay out the information, reasonable people will all come to the same conclusion. They sometimes don't realize facts need interpretation, context and explanation to be effective. Someone unversed in investing won't understand what a good return on investment is without some explanation of risk and performance. Many times, facts can have contradictory interpretations, so it's important to guide an audience to the interpretation you wish them to have.

Experts don't like the thought of selling ideas.

Many experts find the whole notion of persuasion distasteful. But persuasion is at the very heart of healthy interpersonal relationships. Professionals who believe they have a service of genuine benefit to their prospects should feel a sense of obligation to persuade them to become clients. Persuasion is only a tool. Whether it's employed ethically depends on how a person uses it.

Experts sometimes focus on the message at the expense of the listeners.

The most successful communication focuses on the listener rather than the speaker or the message. Message-centered communication tends to be very technical, contains lots of information and revolves around the activity of communication rather than results. It's important to consider the frame of reference, background and knowledge so you can adapt your message to specific listeners.

Experts often think you can persuade someone solely with the stick of logic.

People are persuaded through different means including logic, emotion and credibility. Experts often focus heavily on data and statistics even though an individual may be more persuaded by emotion, narrative or case studies. Simply throwing more data at that individual won't be any more effective. The poet Samuel Butler wrote, "*He that complies against his will is of the same opinion still.*" Piling logic on

someone may gain you the appearance of agreement, but it probably won't get you buy-in.

5. Actively Market the Bureau

A speakers' bureau won't provide much marketing momentum unless groups are actually utilizing it. To use it, they have to know it's available. Once you have everything in place, begin with press releases to the appropriate media, announcing the formation and availability of your bureau. Design a direct mail campaign. Postcards work best because there's a much higher probability that people will see the information. Mention the bureau in everyone's email signature. Make sure it's prominent on your firm's website as well. You can compile a PDF document of your speakers' one-sheets, which I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, and make it available for downloading.



Rainmaking Presentations Techniques—

Marketing Materials and Methods.

- Your presentation is an effective marketing tool only when your target market knows of your availability as a speaker.
- Your one-sheet should exemplify the principles of good copywriting. Get advice from a professional who has worked with speakers.
- Make writing a habit. Compile a list of articles of different lengths—300, 700 or 1,000 words. Develop the mindset of being a resource for editors looking for content.
- Blogs stand a much better chance of sustained readership if you update them daily and invite comments.
- Each piece of promotional material you produce should contain educational content.



Web Resources

Connecting with journalists

- Radio-TV Interview Report (<http://www.rtvir.com>)
- PR Leads (<http://www.PRleads.com>)
- Yearbook of Experts (<http://www.Expertclick.com>)

Finding Publications

- <http://www.UlrichsWeb.com>

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TOOLKIT SECTIONS

ELIMINATING INTERFERENCE

Application:

Think about the last three or four presentations you attended. What were some of the sources of each type of interference? After listing a few, suggest ways each of these sources of interference could have been managed or eliminated.

Semantic Interference:

Source	Solution

Channel Interference:

Source	Solution

Situational Interference:

Source	Solution

PRESENTATION ACTION PLANNER

Provide as much information as possible for each question. Careful planning will lead to better results.

Message Profile

1. Why are you giving the presentation? (Is it assigned by a superior, a request from an outside organization, or initiated by you?)
2. What is the objective of the presentation? Are you going to explain, report, demonstrate, influence beliefs/attitudes, influence behavior?
3. What is the strategic goal of the presentation? (Be as detailed as possible in stating what you want the audience to understand or act upon as a result of the presentation.) State your strategic goal in a single sentence.
4. What are the key messages of the presentation? (In a single, declarative sentence, what will you say?)
5. What proof points will help you provide clarity and believability for each key message?
6. How long will the presentation be? How can you modularize it?

Audience Profile

7. How many people will be in the audience?
8. What are their positions/titles?
9. Why are they attending the presentation (voluntary or mandatory)?
10. What benefits does your presentation offer the audience? Which can you use? Resource: No P.A.I.N. = No Gain Benefits Generator

11. Below are some ways to build establish proximity with the audience.

group membership	landmarks	jargon
movies	tv shows	books
songs	foods	brands
news	events	situations

12. How will audience *demographics* (age range, gender mix, race, religion, education) help you in planning your presentation?
13. What are the *psychographics* of the audience?
- A. How much do they know about the topic?
- B. What are the audience expectations for the presentation?
- C. Are there any audience beliefs, attitudes or values that will present challenges?
14. Do you have any prior history with the audience?
15. What questions from the audience would permit you to demonstrate your mastery of the subject?
16. What are the three most difficult questions members of the audience could ask?
17. What are their possible objections? How will you respond to them?
18. What activities can you use to involve the audience?

Presenter Profile

19. What do you want the audience to know about you?
20. Who will introduce you?
21. How much do you know about the topic?
22. How much more do you need to know before the presentation?
23. What resources can you draw on?
24. What credibility do you have with your audience?
25. How will you build more credibility?

Logistics Profile

26. Can you be easily seen and heard by everyone in the audience?
27. Who is the contact person for logistics matters?

28. What is the date/time/venue of the presentation?
29. What special equipment is needed? (overhead projector, multi-media projector, VCR, microphone)
30. Is your hardware/software/video format compatible with what will be available at the venue?
31. What is the seating arrangement?
32. Are your visuals large enough to be seen easily by everyone in the audience?
33. What control do you have over the lighting?
34. If you are distributing some type of printed information, do you have enough copies? Who will distribute it? When? If distributing multiple pieces, are they in the correct order?

EXAMPLE OUTLINE FORM

Strategic Goal:

To persuade my audience to buy our customer relationship management software.

Key Messages:

You should buy our software because of ease of use, integration with other popular programs, and excellent technical support.

Introduction

Attention Getting Material:

Did you know that research shows on average, that you must make contact with a prospect seven times before that person will buy from you?

Just as an example, let's say you have 100 prospects, and I know that's a very low figure for most of you. That means 700 different messages at just the initial stages of the process.

I don't know about you, but I have trouble keeping track of a dozen or so birthdays and anniversary dates.

Benefits to Audience:

Wouldn't it be great if you had a personal assistant who could instantly remind you of any important date, tell you within a few seconds the last message you sent to anyone of 10,000 people and communicate on a regular basis with anyone you identified?

That's exactly what our new CRM software does!

Reveal Topic / Preview Main Points:

I'm going to focus on three reasons using this new software has meant increasing sales.

Body

- I. First, you can spend your time on business development instead of on learning software.
 - A. Our software is designed to be user friendly and intuitive.
 - i. It's user friendly because it contains contextual help menus at every step.
 - ii. It's intuitive because it uses easily recognized icons and follows the navigational logic of many popular office programs.
 - iii. That means you don't have to spend time learning a completely new system. You're already familiar with most of the features!

(Transition: Not only will you recognize navigation features and icons, but you can still use it with many popular programs and office suites.)

- II. A key goal in designing this software was integration. That means you're not starting from scratch.
 - A. One advantage of integration is that you can use existing file formats and export/import them from/to our software.
 - i. You save time because you don't have to rebuild entire databases.
 - ii. You save money because you can keep using much of the software you already have,
 - B. A second key advantage is that during the roll-out phase, you won't have compatibility issues with field offices and international offices that are currently using different systems.

(Transition: Frankly, our software is so easy to use, I doubt you'll ever have to contact technical support, but if you do, you'll appreciate how responsive we are.)

- III. Our technical support team is fast, effective and speaks your language.
 - A. Our goal is to resolve all customer queries within four hours of receiving them. In fact, our track record is much better. For the past seven quarters, all customer queries have been resolved in under 90 minutes. Our team under promises and over delivers.

- B. The real test is the feedback we get from customers just like you. In our last five quarterly surveys, the technical support team received an overall approval rating of 96 percent. We're proud of that, but we keep striving to do better.
- C. One of the things that makes us different is our commitment to communicate with customers in a language they understand. Each member of our customer support team is required to take 16 hours of training in translating technical information for non-technical customers. You can tell it really sets us apart.

Conclusion

Intellectual Reinforcement:

I've shown you how easy this software is to use, how it plays well with others and that if you ever call tech support, it's a call you can actually look forward to.

Psychological Closure:

You don't have to have a great memory to excel in sales, but you must have a systematic way to remember and contact prospects. Our software takes the drudgery out of organization so you can focus on what you do best—creating relationships.

Behavioral Roadmap:

We are eager to create a relationship with you. The resource guide I'm handing out now contains the name of the account representative in your area. They'll contact you within the next three days to offer you a customized on-site demonstration. The question really boils down to this: Would you rather spend your time organizing mounds of information or making sales? If the answer is making sales, this is definitely the software for you.

THOUGHT PATTERNS

Thought patterns provide a way to arrange the information in the presentation. A pattern takes discrete units and groups them in a way that provides something greater than the individual parts.

Within a presentation, the thought pattern takes discrete units of information such as statistics, examples, narratives, statements and arguments and provides a way to arrange them so that they are synergistically bound together—that is, each element benefits from the presence of the others. What started as information has evolved into knowledge. One of the five organizational frameworks below will provide a way to arrange information in the presentation.

Topical

—Divides a whole into parts

Divisional

Example: “The two most important aspects of successful business plans are competitive research and detailed financing.”

Mnemonic

Example: “Used properly, statistics will help you A.C.E. your presentation.”

Attractive
Contextual
Economical

FAQ

Example: “The most important issues in choosing a law firm are reputation, reliability and results”

Proportional

Example: “The leading causes of death among Americans 45–64 are:

1. Cancer
2. Heart Disease
3. Accidents
4. Cerebrovascular Disease
5. Diabetes Mellitus

Sequential—

Divides a subject by placing it in chronological order.

Historical

Example: “Great imperial powers have included the Roman Empire, the British Empire and the American Empire.”

Instructional

Example: “The seven steps in developing a presentation are to strategize, analyze, organize, vitalize, verbalize, visualize and dramatize.”

Educational

Example: “The two stages in photosynthesis are the light cycle and the dark cycle.”

Psychological Progression

Example: “You can persuade your audience to act through the steps of listen, feel, see, believe and act.”

Consequential

—Divides a subject into cause and effect.

Causal

Example: “Four consequences of global warming are loss of the arctic ice mass, flooding in coastal areas, a shift in ecosystems and increased ozone levels.”

Theory and Practice

Example: “Dollar cost averaging in the purchase of mutual funds will lead to a greater rate of return.”

Principle and Effect

Example: “In ketosis, carbohydrate-depleted metabolisms rely on ketones from stored fat or proteins to supply energy needs.”

Oppositional

—Divides a subject into opposite parts.

Problem Solution

Example: “We can solve the problem of low employee moral by offering increased benefits and flexible scheduling.”

Issues/Actions

Example: “You can reduce operating expenses through a detailed audit of your bills.”

Advantages/Disadvantages or Pro/Con

Example: “Macintosh users enjoy a more stable operating system and a more intuitive interface, but they have to put up with higher prices and more limited availability.”

Fallacy/Fact

Example: “Although you may believe that high-efficiency lighting isn’t worth the money, it will save you more than it costs within just a few years.”

Spatial

—Divides a subject by spatial relationships.

Orientation

Example: “The most important elements in good delivery involve eye contact, voice and body movements.”

Location

Example: “Top gold producing regions in the United States include Alaska, California and Nevada.”

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