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Speak Up

Speech! Speech!

And, without further ado...

Speeches are supposed to be persuasive or entertaining, however serious the topic or credentialed the speaker. Warm up the atmosphere with an anecdote that fits the occasion. Anecdotes work and, with luck, get a chuckle.

Measure words carefully, especially when looking for a reaction. Slurred words make for incoherence and fetch puzzled smiles, at best. Vary your speed. The tendency is always to run phrases together. It was explained to me once that the tempo of a speech should be at the same clip as a story told to primary school infants, "Once upon a time long, long ago . . ."

What seems like a pause from hell to the speaker, is actually not noticed by the audience. Five seconds seems like a living death only when the speaker is panicked.

Stick to short sentences. Look at the audience

often, especially as you finish a phrase. Pause. Lincoln's famous 1863 dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg was all of 266 words long. The fellow who came with Lincoln spoke for over two hours and no-one remembers a word of what he said.

Avoid jokes. Jokes are instant, painful death unless your public teeth were cut in music hall or vaudeville. Humour should come wrapped in a story related to the occasion. No ethnic, religious, political or cultural shots, however muffled or seemingly benign. It may seem obvious, but it is surprising how often perfectly sensible people lapse into tactless gaffs.

Tell them what you're going to cover. Keep to three or four main points. Explain each one. Outline the conclusion. Summarise the points. Repeat the conclusion in meatier detail. Finish. Speeches like homilies are inherently limited genres. You want to scatter a little seed

among your listeners, not graft a dissertation. There's room for manoeuvre here, but the outside time for a speech that people will remember is 20 minutes for dinner, 15 minutes for lunch. Retirements are best kept to 10 minutes (you've got to leave time for the person leaving). Anything approaching 45 minutes in any forum is cruel and unusual punishment and people will hate you for it. One of the best presentations I ever heard was Patrick O'Brian, who spoke briefly, and entirely from a script. The worst was an Army general who could have taught Mrs. Malaprop a thing or two.

Lastly, a comment on demeanour: Watch out for mannerisms and rhythmical swaying - it's a real give away on nerves. You can be animated or fairly still, provided you adopt your natural style. Move your head and make eye contact with different segments of your audience. Smile.

Eric Berryman

We are a leading European Consultancy with Associates around the world. We specialise in the spoken communication areas of presentation, selling, negotiation, media and telephone skills. Our principle focus is assisting top to middle management in these areas. We

offer our advice both as consultants on important business issues, and as trainers in general skills development.

We work both one to one with top management and with group workshops for middle management.

Workshops run for between one and five days, and are tailored to each client's requirements.

Our philosophy is simple: "For you to be yourself at your best, even in the toughest situations".



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WIN A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE...

Be the first to answer the question asked by Ewan Pearson in his 'What's the Point of Power' article and we will send you a bottle of NV champagne!!



Contents

MOTOR VEHICLES, JAM JARS AND THE LANGUAGE HIERARCHY

It is easy to alienate an audience by poor word selection. Alastair Grant explains why and looks at how the language hierarchy affects both the clarity of the message and the personality of the presenter.

WHAT'S THE POINT OF POWER?

Ever been frustrated by having to press 'Page Up' or 'Page Down' fifteen times to move to a slide that someone asks you to show again? Never again! Ewan Pearson shares some PowerPoint secrets to help with all presentations.

AND WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...

Some tips for writing and delivering a public speech. With our thanks to Eric Berryman, a retired American naval officer who wrote speeches for the secretary of the US Navy, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, various CinCs, and senators. Currently, his job includes speech writing for senior officials in the US Intelligence Community.



Motor Vehicles, Jam Jars and the Language Hierarchy



“The Directive was mandated and subsequently failed to be executed”

“The order was given but nothing was done about it”

These two quotes came from a recent Alistair Cook talk on BBC Radio. His point was that Americans tend towards Latinate words but the English use Anglo Saxon more. But it also reinforces our advice on the importance of using ‘good language’ when presenting - the second quote is much more effective.

When we talk about using ‘good language’, we are not just asking you to avoid jargon, acronyms etc. Although we do advise in this area,

we also concentrate on what linguists call the ‘language hierarchy’. It affects both the clarity of the message and personality of the presenter. On the top tier are Latin or Greek based words which tend to be more formal, have more syllables (polysyllabic) and are more difficult to listen to and understand. English speakers (without realising it) often use words within this tier, masking their personality and making them more difficult to listen to. This can help to explain why sometimes a presentation isn’t good, even though the content is excellent.

Towards the lower end of the tiers we get words of Anglo-Saxon origin which tend to be less formal, have one syllable (monosyllabic), are more

punchy and memorable, and are easier on the ear. We typically talk at these lower levels during conversation.

During a presentation, it is important that both your personality and your message come across loud and clear. There is no point using words that alienate the audience. Speaking formally or in slang will usually create a language barrier between you and your audience and can be as bad, if not worse, than jargon. Therefore, try to use ‘language to listen to’, think of a presentation as a conversation with your audience and use the same words that you would use in normal conversation.

Alastair Grant

The English language is a complex mixture of many other languages. Many words come from the Anglo-Saxon, Nordic, Celtic, Roman or Greek. We can therefore find many words to describe the same thing. Here’s an example: A car is described in five very different ways.

Phrase	Level	Notes
UMPVTD	Formal	Unitised Motorised Personal Vehicular Transport Device!
Motor Vehicle	Semi-formal	OK for most people, a bit wordy and formal.
Car	Normal	The way most describe this object to others.
Motor	Colloquial	A bit vague; could mean something else, such as engine.
Jam Jar	Slang	Cockney rhyming slang. Simple meaning is very different.

‘Language hierarchy’ is a way of grouping these different types of language into tiers.



The Industrial Society Open Course Dates

As many of you know, we run courses in co-operation with The Industrial Society. These courses are a good opportunity for individuals who need coaching and would benefit from being in a group with people outside their organisation.

Our Advanced Presentation Skills course just got better with the addition of a Refresher session in our Virtual Classroom available to all those who attend. We have also launched a new 3-day course called “Pitching to Win”.

Dates for all of these courses for 2001 are:

Pitching to Win:
September 26-28,
November 5-7

Advanced Presentation Skills:
June 12-13 and 26-27,
July 9-10, August 1-2,
September 11-12,
October 4-5, November 1-2
and 15-16, December 3-4

**Please call us
on 020 8334 5755
for further information
or to book someone
on a course.**



What’s the Point of Power?

The phrases ‘Nodding Donkey’, ‘Talking Head’, ‘Death by PowerPoint’ and ‘Narrated Slide Show’ all conjure up images of people giving poor presentations where the visuals dominate the event and the speaker is lost in the background: ‘The tail wags the dog’. We have written about our philosophy on visuals before, so here we add to this by looking at the best use of PowerPoint.

The way good presenters use any relevant visuals is to support what they are saying, and to help the audience understand and remember important parts of their presentations. A key part of getting it right when using PowerPoint is to know how to use the software well. Strangely, clients who have attended PowerPoint courses tell us that what you will read here is not taught on those courses, so you heard it here first folks! All the following require access to a computer keyboard during the presentation:

The B Key
B alone - for Black - switches off the light in the projector (so does a full stop). This is most useful when blanks are desired such as at the start or end of a presentation, or in the body of a talk when

slides are not necessary. Press B again to return to the slide, N for Next slide or P for Previous slide. The W key alone makes the screen go white (so does the comma key), although this is less desirable.

Note that for foreign language keyboards, you need the first letter of the local word for Black, White, Previous and Next. The French for Black is... Noir, so watch out.

The Number Keys
Ever been frustrated by having to press ‘Page Up’ or ‘Page Down’ fifteen times to move to a slide that someone asks you to show again? Never again! First, print off the ‘Outline View’ of the slides. This gives you a sequence number for each slide. If you have created the slides properly, each slide title will be printed. Find the desired slide number from the list, then it’s simple. Type the number of the slide ‘enter’, and up it comes. e.g. ‘24, enter’ brings up slide 24. You can also use this with the B key facility, so ‘B, 24, enter’ first goes blank then to slide 24. you can also skip slides this way.

Other Keys
The ‘A’ and ‘=’ keys bring up the mouse. Press A again to remove it - very handy for those of you who find the

mouse appears when you accidentally nudge it. The dash/minus “-”, and Esc keys exit the slide show.

Warning: All but the latest versions of PowerPoint fall off the end of a show into the slide sorter view when you ask for the next slide whilst the final one is on show. Prevent this with a background slide at the end with something plain such as ‘Questions and Answers’ or a logo on it.

A little competition for you: How many ways can you find (and what are they) of bringing up the next slide on a screen? Answers by email please with your address to newsletter @gp6.com. The first correct answer received will get a bottle of NV Champagne!

Ewan Pearson

