

## **How to Give an Unforgettable Presentation(Failure is not an option)**

“When reading your correspondence the reader must say “Wow” in the first third of the page”

“When listening to your presentation the listener must say “Wow” within the first 3 minutes”

Most of us are not naturally gifted speakers and need some assistance to make an impact. The following will make your presentation unforgettable-

Super prepare for an important presentation, particularly rehearse your opening so it comes out strong & clear

Sometimes some comment on why you are qualified to talk on this topic is appropriate

At the beginning tell them what you are going to do and how you will do it.

Research the topic thoroughly

Throw in a bit of humour

Have an interesting anecdote that touches the emotions of my audience. The following is something that got me a lot of applause with a Canadian audience on a talk about safety

### **\$ 100 note**

Hold up an Australian \$ 100 note(worth about \$95 Canadian)

“Who would like me to give you this \$ 100 note?”

Show of hands

Crumple it up

Who would like me to give you this \$ 100 note?

Show of hands

Stand on it and grind it into the ground

Who would like me to give you this \$ 100 note?

Show of hands

That right, it still has value despite what has been done to it and many people want it

YOU are like this \$ 100 note, throughout your life trying to improve safety there will be many people who put you down and try to grind you into the dirt

Remember that YOU, like the \$ 100 note still have value despite what others have tried to do to you and many people will want you.”

Note The storey above is adaptable to a wide range of situations with a bit of thought and adaptation

Know your audience, know their needs and fill those needs

Have a strong opening and conclusion

Make a conscious effort to slow down your speech to slightly slower than normal conversation

Use a few Power-Points but not “Death by Power-Point”. Make the size of the font readable down the back of the room. A lot of people get annoyed if you stand in front of them and read out what they can easily see on the screen. A bit of clip art and colour helps to liven up the power-points. Leave your power-points on screen long enough to be read.

Try to build in a range of activities for the participants that reinforce your message. A controversial question for discussion is sometimes useful

Rehearse your presentation sufficiently that you do not have to refer to your notes too often, you thus maintain eye contact with your audience.

Make it fun not hard work

Treat your audience with respect

Do not try to cram too much information into too short a time frame, people will become overloaded & give up. Concentrate on the MUST KNOWS

Have learning objectives and plan to meet those objectives

Avoid lecture style presentations where you read from your notes unless the presentation is very short, suggest a maximum of 5 minutes. Instead prepare speakers notes ( big enough for you to read them in poor light) with key points and talk to the key points, this will require a bit of rehearsal. Alternatively use the key points on your power point presentation as your notes, pays to have the hard copy notes as a back up just in case for a number of reasons that could crop up when you rely on technology, you cannot use the power-points.

Sometimes a “Where to from here” is appropriate at the end

If time permits encourage questions

Always pilot your presentation and react to comments

The idea is for the audience to get lost in the topic, give them word pictures they can relate to

Give something of yourself eg. a personal storey, to build rapport with the audience

Focus on audience needs and use words appropriate to those needs

Always identify the range of the audience and target your presentation appropriately

Identify the purpose of the presentation and the one, single message you want to transmit. Paint a picture to give the message

A good approach is to make a point and then tell a storey about that point or tell a storey to make a point. Indigenous people are good storey tellers and this is a powerful technique.

Use pauses and silence to emphasise points

Have links between sections so audience can see where you are going

If you have practical exercises that require participants to give feedback have a roving microphone person.

Check out the venue beforehand in case any adjustments to your presentation are required.

Try to get the audience close to you.

### **The Use of Humour**

Laughter is the best medicine!

Much is written about the benefits of humour, you can look it up on the internet if you like. I will not mention this here as I am sure you will have a good intuitive idea of what I am talking about.

In the days when I used to work in the mining industry I remember being in a meeting in Rockhampton about a series of personal damage occurrences (“Accidents”) that had occurred. Two representatives of the company that manufactured the equipment involved were in attendance along with a number of industry Safety Advisers. The manufacturer representatives would not acknowledge that the design of their equipment was a factor and were spinning us their company line about how safe their equipment was. Tempers progressively got more frayed and we were getting nowhere. My workmate Terry Condon came out with a classic, humorous one-liner that defused the tension and set the scene for meaningful progress.

That was the first time I have seen humour used in a meaningful way in business. I watched Terry in action after this and noted his frequent effective use of humour.

Humour can be used effectively in formal and informal presentations and in general interaction in business and non-business life.

Avoid humour that focuses on religion, politics, race, class, sex, age, physical appearance. To use any of these will run the risk of upsetting someone. I hear you asking what the hell else is there that I can use? The only safe butt of your humour is yourself! You can also use mythical people whose characteristics you do not describe.

There are joke books you can buy but storeys from daily life are more acceptable.

Be funny early and often.

Introduce the humour in the general flow of your conversation.

For a major presentation rehearse and listen to yourself on a tape recorder.

Like many things in life humour follows the 6 P rule-Prior Preparation Prevents Piss-Poor Performance.

If giving a major presentation have a small pilot first and respond to the comments you receive.

Try to use humour that relates to things others see as an annoyance.

Know your audience and try to relate to them.

Quotations from famous people are often sources of humour, you can search these on the internet, Laurie Lawrence’s web-site has a lot of quotations.

Stretching the truth is forgivable.

Do not take yourself too seriously.

You can use a storey to illustrate a point.

The Readers Digest and t.v. comedy shows are good sources of material. It also helps you to observe how the professionals use humour.

Poking fun at the establishment may be an appropriate and inoffensive way of using humour.

Appropriate self-disclosure can be an effective way of enhancing communications and interpersonal relationships. I was introduced to and practised appropriate self-disclosure in a Psychology subject. You will find in a new relationship if you reveal a little bit of you (provided it is appropriate) the other party will reveal a little bit of them (provided it is appropriate), if you then reveal a little bit more of you (provided it is appropriate) they will reveal a little bit more of them (provided it is appropriate), and so the cycle goes on. This is very simple, incredibly effective and I use it all the time to build relationships. Of course if you really hang all your dirty washing out it will probably stuff up the process.

Telling a humorous storey about yourself can be a great way of starting the appropriate self-disclosure process.

Being an OHS professional I attend a number of safety conferences and courses, these are inevitably dull, dry and boring affairs. It is a pity things are taken so seriously! Perhaps the same thing happens in your speciality? If you are a presenter who uses effective humour, presents well and has a relevant message you will be invited back.