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The Essential Need to Improve Presentation Skills Within The Workplace

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The Essential Need to Improve Presentation Skills Within The Workplace

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The Problem

Do you feel angry when you're stuck in a traffic jam? Do you feel stressed when there's a long queue at the supermarket or Post Office? What is it that makes you feel so strongly? Is it because your precious life is ebbing away aimlessly?

That's how I feel. I'm a busy man and there's so much to enjoy and achieve in this short life.

A recent study by the CBI identified that the British economy wastes over £40 billion a year because of poor management and poor communication. In 2001, Microsoft commissioned a survey from 20,000 exit interviews across industry. 40% stated that their reason for leaving was poor management and poor communication. For how long will the essential skill of communication be allowed to hide behind email?

Do you believe that the standard of presentations in your workplace is satisfactory? Or do you suspect that the standard of presentations is far from satisfactory. Whatever you believe, the truth is that 90% of attendees at a presentation have switched off within the first 5 minutes.

Upon reading that, some of you may think that feedback forms and the applause given at the end of a presentation prove that your organisation is on track. But is it?

We British are too polite not to applaud and too reticent to say what we really thought about the presentation. After all, we know that a memorable presentation is neither easy to produce nor deliver.

It could be that the standard of presentation skills within your organisation come up to scratch - but just in case, try this test. As a complete surprise ask the audience to fill out a questionnaire after the presentation, with all the questions referring to material just presented. This will reveal the truth about how well your presentations are being received by the audience.

Why are presentations often so poor in the workplace and why does it matter?

Consider taking 40 people out of the workplace for a series of presentations that lasts in total 3 hours. If the average person works an 8 hour day you can calculate that this session is taking a total of 15 days or 3 weeks out of working time. That's a lot of time if it is wasted, and if you are taking senior people away from their desk that equates to several thousand pounds that your organisation has potentially thrown away. Does it make you feel angry when your time and the time of your senior manager's fritters away like this? Do you not feel motivated to act and prevent this dreadful waste?

Presentation standards do MATTER.

Let's expand on is theme; why are presentations so poor?

I'll give you 9 reasons:

1. Nerves – this affects so many people to varying degrees, but if you are solely focused on controlling your nerves you will be unable to deliver a good presentation.

Imagine trying to aim for double top in a darts match when you are shaking with fear!

2. Lack of training – for most parts of your job you are probably given reasonable training, guidance and help by more experienced colleagues. However, for some mysterious reason there are 3 things that many organisations do not do well – manage people, interview and selection skills and deliver presentations.
3. Death by PowerPoint – it is amazing that although this product has been the standard tool for use in presentations for many years, few people seem to have considered how it should be utilised to add to the speaking part of the presentation. The majority of presentations simply duplicate what the speaker is saying – would you bother to watch television if it sounded like listening to the radio combined with reading a book? Wouldn't you just choose to read the book or listen to the radio?
4. Ignoring the audience – so many people treat a presentation as though they are engaging in a conversation with a couple of friends in the pub. We've all been bored by the person who wants to monopolise the conversation and talks for 3 or 4 minutes without letting anyone else get a word in. So why don't we think about how boring a 30 minute presentation is if it sounds like someone just chatting to someone else?

5. Deadly dull data – how many of you have shunned friends or acquaintances they start droning on about something which has no interest to you? Even worse, how many you have shunned friends or acquaintances because they start droning on about something which does interest you but in a very tedious way? Does it remind you of any recent presentations that you've attended?
6. Reading to oneself – many people come to presentations as actors would to a first dress rehearsal; they simply read their notes and the audience may as well not be there. That's why theatres are full for performances and empty for rehearsals. Do you see the parallel here?
7. Lifelessness – imagine going to watch a football match where all the players strolled around for 90 minutes. You would be out of there in no time at all. The trouble is you usually have to stay and watch the whole of the lifeless presentation.
8. Conviction - if the presenter cannot generate sufficient enthusiasm in his delivery, why should the audience listen?
9. Aimlessness – would you seriously start a journey from your house to a town in another part of the country without finding out its location? Absolutely not, so why do so many presenters confuse their audiences by going off at tangents and seemingly reach conclusions that are contrary to what they have said before?

The Solution

What can be done about this debilitating situation?

This is why the College of Public Speaking was created.

Utilising the tried and trusted research of US Educational Psychologist, Albert Mehrabian, we use innovative business speaking scenarios to develop speakers capable of performing on the international stage.

The strengths of each individual are analyzed and we nurture their personal creativity and unique delivery style. Feedback is accurate, supportive and confidence building. Our speaking scenarios provide the individual with multiple opportunities to experiment with various vocal and delivery techniques.

In our presentation skills courses, you will find that we address all of the 9 points previously discussed.

We have a simple, successful and progressive approach to delivering powerful, memorable and effective presentations.

Below is a taste of what our courses provide to help overcome the 9 points described above:

1. Nerves – we show how nerves are overcome through breathing exercises and muscle relaxing techniques. We also have other innovative ways which help to reduce the fear of public speaking. It will prevent subsequent reoccurrences of this state of nervousness.
2. Lack of training – once you have left one of our courses or workshops, lack of training in presentation skills will be confined to history.
3. Death by PowerPoint – we show you how to use PowerPoint so that it adds to the speech and doesn't replicate it or replace it. There is a big clue when I talked about watching television – perhaps PowerPoint should be like watching television without the sound on and listening to the speaker is like having the radio on (as many people do for sports events). Now that does sound like a good idea!
4. Ignoring the audience – building rapport with the audience is absolutely key; we demonstrate how to grab the audience's attention from the opening statement and maintain their interest until the last moment.

5. Deadly dull data – even financial figures can sound reasonably interesting if presented in the correct way. A key aspect here is to introduce some light humour along the way and we reveal techniques to deploy to make your audience enjoy these lighter moments.
6. Reading to oneself – a real turn off and it is usually due to a complete lack of preparation. You will be shown how to engage with the audience, how to use eye contact effectively and that it doesn't require gargantuan feats of memory to avoid staring at your notes most of the time.
7. Lifelessness – good presentations require appropriate use of facial expressions, hand movements and other demonstrations of “body language”. You will be shown all of this so it becomes second nature.
8. Conviction – if you are ever called upon to give a presentation, even if you are not particularly interested in the subject matter, you must still sound enthusiastic. We demonstrate how to deliver with conviction and how to enthuse your audience.
9. Aimlessness – structure is absolutely vital in any presentation, and if you think in terms of opening, main body and conclusion you will not go far wrong. More will be revealed ...

Client Testimonials

'I learned some really useful techniques that I can apply immediately. There was an effective mix of both tools and practice opportunities. The video is a brilliant tool for immediate feedback.'

Palvinder Pooni - HR Manager - British Telecom Talent Pool

'Very good and very un-jargon-filled. Pitched exactly right for the audience.'

Desmond Shawe-Taylor - Art Historian – Buckingham Palace

'My team and I were really impressed with how quickly we could develop our existing speaking skills into a far more polished performance. I could really see the difference in my staff at the end of the training session and we all now have a greater understanding of what makes an effective speaker. With so much interaction and time to practice, we really felt the benefits I would thoroughly recommend this course from the College of Public Speaking - it should be a basic skill for all employees.'

Jason Ashwood - Detective Chief Inspector - Metropolitan Police

'Vince came in to work with a number of inexperienced speakers who were scheduled to start delivering internal training courses. By the end of the day, their confidence and delivery skills had dramatically improved and they went on to perform admirably in their training assignments.'

T. Johnson - HM Treasury

'I found the communication skills course really valuable. It not only helped increase the confidence of everyone who participated but also drew out our existing skills. By the end of the day every delegate had improved demonstrably and we all felt really motivated.'

Helen Becket - Head of Communications – Media Trust

'Thank you - very enjoyable and worthwhile.'

Andrea Simpson - Solicitor - The Land Registry

'Everyone who attended the session took something useful away with them, and will face public speaking with greater confidence in the future.'

Debbie Charles - Marketing Manager - Edwin Coe Solicitors

Lead trainers at the College of Public Speaking



As a UK National Public Speaking Champion with a background as a professional musician, Michael Ronayne has developed a profound understanding of the different aspects of speaking and public performance.

An English Literature degree at York University coupled with 4 years' studying music at the 'Franz Liszt' Academy in Weimar (East Germany) gave Michael the foundation for his unique insights into both the technical and psychological aspects of communication.

He has written and presented communication training seminars for many major UK organisations and has spoken in front of groups of people ranging from a dozen to over 2,000.

His natural ability to communicate and relate has led to great success both in Sales and in Coaching.

Michael is pictured winning the 2007 National Speech Finals of the Association of Speakers Clubs (ASC). Michael is a lead trainer at the College of Public Speaking.



For over 20 years Vince Stevenson has worked in IT Training with some of the largest finance and utility companies in the world.

Vince moved into the world of personal skills development some 5 years ago when he began to take interest in competition speaking.

Vince is a qualified teacher with years of success across the Corporate, Private and Third Sectors. In 2005, his Communications Skills Workshop was nominated for an award by the European Social Fund.

In April 2007, Vince was placed third in the National Evaluation Finals of the ASC.

Vince is a founder and lead trainer at the College of Public Speaking.

Summary

The problem of poor communication is well documented and it trickles down through an organisation in the form of ineffective chairmanship of meetings, seminars, team briefings and presentations. It contributes a net loss to British industry of £40 billion per year.

So, what will this mean when you complete one of our workshops?

In addition to creating superior presentation skills, your general communication will be more effective. You will have greater impact and gravitas and your personal credibility will be enhanced. You will have a sense of greater personal worth and greater value to your organisation.

With this greater impact your levels of confidence will rise and your leadership skills of persuasion and negotiation will improve as a natural consequence. All this helps to build more effective teams and departments that will make the entire organisation more coherent, successful and profitable. How much money will this save your company?

Accept the challenge and send your most valuable resources to some of our presentation skills courses and watch the effectiveness of your organisation grow.

The College of Public Speaking has a reputation for high quality, flexibility and value. We offer a money back guarantee on all our public courses. We also support the concept of second sourcing. This is where we believe it prudent that companies buy similar products and services from multiple suppliers. This widespread business practice ensures competition between those suppliers and it serves as an insurance policy against supplier complacency.

There are massive cost savings and derivative benefits with improved communication skills working throughout your company.

Take action and call us today whether for team, departmental or a change process across your entire organisation. The College of Public Speaking is here to help you with all of your speaking needs.