

Great Presentations...for Life!

By following the *Great Presentations...for Life* method, you will:

- absolutely 'nail' your **next** presentation
- acquire the skills, techniques and confidence required to 'nail' all your **future** presentations

As the saying goes: *"Give a person a fish, and you feed them for a day. Teach a person how to fish, and you feed them for a lifetime."* After you have been through the process once, you should never need presentation skills training again – although you are always welcome to return for an occasional 'refresher'!

We will simply take the next presentation challenge that you face, and apply the *Great Presentations...for Life* method with a coach to guide you through the three basic steps – Understand, Prepare, Rehearse:

Step 1 : UNDERSTAND

At this stage, we are really trying to get to grips with the result you are trying to achieve – are you pitching for new business, passing on information, trying to motivate a group or perhaps just angling for an invitation back next year? All perfectly valid objectives, but each requiring a different approach.

And that approach will depend as well on your understanding of the audience in front of you. What are they looking for? Will they understand you – both in terms of language and content? How should you adapt your style?

You will also need to understand the environment in which you will be presenting. A speech from a lectern in front of hundreds of people will require a different approach from a webinar to small groups around the world. Of course, many of the principles of presenting are the same for every situation, but you will need to understand how to adapt at the edges for the particular circumstances.

And finally, you will have to begin to understand your own capabilities. Not good at telling jokes? Don't try to be funny. Really uncomfortable speaking without notes? Don't try to speak off-the-cuff. If you try to be something you are not, the audience will soon find you out.

Step 2 : PREPARE

Closely linked to the question of the 'result' is the development of a 'story' to tell. We're not talking here about the anecdotes you are going to use to illustrate points (although these are very important), but rather about the way in which your presentation will flow, taking the audience through a series of stages, be they chronological or conceptual, engaging them every step of the way until they have understood and shared your message. This is often called a 'story board'. You can use Powerpoint to help you (and it can!). But the important thing is to have clear in your mind the key points of your presentation and their order – what is the 'flow'?

Once this is in place, it is time to be creative in selecting the examples and anecdotes to support each of those key points, to ensure that both the opening and the closing are focussed and powerful, and to consider any supporting materials that may help you and your audience on your way.

And then the real fun begins...

Step 3 : REHEARSE

Armed with your well structured and prepared materials, you will 'perform' in front of your coach to make sure that it all works together and to iron out any inconsistencies in the story. Of course, throughout this process, we will also be looking at all those elements of delivery that really bring a presentation to life: body language and gestures, eye contact, smiling, tone and pace of voice, use of silence, shocks, surprises and rhetorical questions. Above all, we will be looking at ways to stimulate the interest of the audience through interaction. I promise it is possible - even with the largest audiences.

We will spend time getting the opening of your story just right, as well as checking that the closing has real impact. Above all, we will constantly be checking that everything you say or do is:

- a) consistent with the result you are trying to achieve
- b) compatible with the audience in front of you, and
- c) in tune with your own personal delivery style

This process works every time. Once you have been through the *Great Presentations...for Life* experience from beginning to end (typically three sessions with your coach), you will have the confidence to apply exactly the same principles whenever and wherever you are called upon to make a presentation in the future.

We must never forget that it is a privilege that others come to hear us speak – if nothing else, imagine that an audience of 100 delegates listening to you for an hour is worth a fortune in man-days lost to their organisations – so it is our duty to take these opportunities very seriously and really put on the best performance we can, every time. It can also be great fun...

TESTIMONIALS

"Chris has a remarkable talent for bringing ideas to life, making the connection between the message and the audience. With his help, I have been able to transform routine presentations of apparently unexciting concepts into real performances that engage, inform and entertain the audience.

Agnes Quashie, Partner, PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal LLP

"I was due to give a speech at an evening the firm was hosting for headhunters. Public speaking is not one of my strengths, but I prepared a script and then rehearsed it a few times with Chris as my coach. The difference between my first practice performance and the speech I eventually gave was dramatic. With Chris's help the speech came to life, I gained a huge amount of confidence and actually enjoyed the experience!"

Julia Sherlock, Chief Administrative Officer, Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP

"Chris has quite simply transformed the way I look at preparing for conference speeches. Having been engaged to speak at an international conference I wanted to ensure my presentation was the best it could be. By making me focus on the outcome I was trying to achieve and the audience in front of me, he assisted in taking me to a new level of performance. I continue to use Chris to help develop presentations and in particular value the creativity and structure he brings. It really helps in bringing the subject matter to life."

Dominic Cain, Head of Client Services, Southwark Council