

MEETINGS & EVENTS



Communicating to a Group — Making Your Presentation Memorable

By BOB GREENFIELD

WE'VE all listened to presentations, some good, some great, some awful. What makes the great ones great or so memorable? As more and more of us are required by our jobs to give formal presentations, this is an increasingly important topic and a truly essential skill set. Every presentation is an amazing and inevitable opportunity to set yourself apart from the crowd. So, how do you ensure that you are memorable for the right reasons?

There are plenty of books about formal communication and presentations addressing proper structure, format, and providing a host of novel techniques. I'd like to focus on three simple things that any presenter can do to more effectively connect with an audience: make your point, fall in love, keep it personal.

1. Make your point.

Unless your purpose is purely entertainment, you're there to make a point (or perhaps more than one) and to ask for something. You need to be exceptionally clear about both. Surprisingly, unskilled presenters often neglect to actually make their point once they get to talking. So, what is your point? What's the one thing that must be communicated? What's the one thing you want your audience to remember? Keep in mind that your audience actually wants and needs some structure from you. Tell them what you are going to do and what your purpose is.

In addition to a central point, nearly all good presentations include an "ask". Your ask is what you invite, encourage, or challenge your audience to **do** as a result of your presentation. Do you want your audience to take an action? To make a decision? To consider a proposal or new idea? To see something through a different lens? To adopt a perspective? To agree or disagree with something? To simply come to a different understanding than they started with? Your ask is integrally related to your purpose. It is not uncommon for a presenter to give an otherwise good presentation but neglect to make their ask. Common reasons for this

include anything from fear to lack of preparation and poor structure. Whatever the reason, don't let it happen to you.

2. Fall in love with your presentation.

Does your presentation turn you on? If not, change it, quickly, before you get anywhere near your audience. If you do not like your presentation, what do you think the chances are that your audience will differ with you? It is not principally the content or what you say that engages the audience. With a live presenta-

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tion, whether in front of 500 people or just 5, the main attraction is always the presenter. That's right - you! Before the audience can buy into your message, it must first buy into the messenger. If your audience cannot easily buy into you, your message has no chance. To be compelling, you have to believe in your message. Unfortunately, if you are not sold on or excited about your presentation, that will come across much more clearly than you'd like.

It doesn't matter how ordinary or dry you think your topic is. You owe your audience your best effort

to make it interesting. Tell stories of horrendous failures or awe-inspiring successes. Offer new insights about a familiar idea. Discuss an overlooked quality of something easily taken for granted. Give a demonstration. Your local bookstore has a shelf of books full of tips and techniques for incorporating "sizzle" into your presentation. You want your audience to believe you; start by making sure you can believe yourself. The best way to do this is to turn your presentation into something you can't wait to deliver. If you want it to be fun or exciting for your audience to hear, make it fun or exciting for you to deliver.

There is a portion of stage fright or pre-presentation anxiety that comes from an irrational fear that your audience won't like you or your message. If you're feeling some of this, welcome to the human race. There is also the very rational and quite predictable anxiety that your audience won't like your presentation because it's a dog. If you're feeling some of this, get back to work. You *should* be feeling uncomfortable because you are about to break the cardinal rule for presenters...never waste your audience's time.

3. Keep it personal.

As a presenter, you cannot hide, nor should you. This doesn't stop many of us from trying. Again, a great presentation is not just about information. Otherwise you could just hand out copies of your well-written presentation and be done with it. Reading aloud a written report is the epitome of impersonal. A presentation is supposed to be personal, and your audience doesn't want to watch a perfectly programmed robot deliver a presentation utterly devoid of personality. So put your personality on full display. Any personality at all is more interesting than written or monotonously spoken words, and it certainly beats staring at your PowerPoint slides. Subscribing to and truly embracing this may not be easy, but it's worth remembering and working at. Believing that you deserve your audience's attention and that it will *want*

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to see your personality is mostly about self-acceptance and confidence. Some thoughtful preparation and consideration of what is appropriate to your audience, topic, and setting will also help.

Clearly making your point, loving your presentation, and being yourself will improve your presentation and make you more memorable. Here are three final tips that any presenter can apply:

- 1. Be imaginative.** Think outside of the proverbial box, and bring your unique spin or touch to the presentation.
- 2. Be prepared.** Audiences are just as uncomfortable as the presenter when he's bombing. Rehearse and refine your presentation until you have it nailed. Rehearse your presentation out loud. Reviewing your presentation is not rehearsing it. Regardless of what you have typed or written out, you're not going to know what's going to come out of your mouth until you hear yourself say it.
- 3. Be selfish.** Again, make it interesting for yourself. If it's not interesting to say, it's probably not going to be interesting to hear.

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Doing Meetings Entrepreneur Style

By BRAD ORTON

ONE of the advantages of being an entrepreneur is that you are free of the corporate or government bureaucracy. If you've been part of that world, you know how much time is wasted in one long meeting after another. Unfortunately, it is easy to start up the same process in your own company, or your organization. Meetings almost always take twice as long as necessary, and accomplish half as much as intended.

Still, to some extent they are essential. You have to hear from people, put out what you want them to hear, and brainstorm.

1. A meeting's productivity is inversely proportional to the number of those attending.
2. Beyond four or five attendees, the value goes down exponentially.
3. The longer the meeting has been in existence, the more people will want to attend.
4. Any meeting held more often than once a month should be scrutinized carefully.
5. Remember that you are the decision maker. The meeting can gather opinion and facts, but don't yield to leadership by committee.
6. Clearly specify the beginning and ending time of the meeting.
7. Publish an agenda before the meeting.
8. Avoid meetings entirely by getting people's opinion informally in conversations, or formally on memos.
9. The first few minutes of a meeting are the most important. People are alert and paying attention.
10. Whatever your meeting time now, cut it in half. Use the extra time to get some real work done. Tell your subordinates to do the same in their own areas.



to do. Have your gathering in a nice restaurant meeting room, or even outdoors around a campfire! Get a truly motivational speaker, or a good comedian, or some kind of entertainer to get the people involved.

If your main purpose is to get them to learn a new skill, do it right. Rather than simply listening to an instructor drone on at a chalkboard, go multi-media. Have the equipment being talked about on site, torn down, if necessary. Let them feel it, see it, hear it. Prepare written material, with plenty of graphics to go along with the talk. People's attention fades in and out. Even somebody who really wants to learn can miss an important point. Having printed material helps ensure the training sticks.

If possible, send a couple of your key employees away for a day or two. There is almost always some kind of convention or motivational seminar being held somewhere. If you can afford it, include a ticket for the spouse, and pay for the transportation! Make it clear that you are doing this because of how much you value them. You'd like a report afterwards, but treat it as a reward, one that costs you little. Your employees come back refreshed and motivated, the trip is seen as a benefit, and, the whole company gains.

Brad Orton is a freelance writer and independent business manager based in San Jose.



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MEETINGS & EVENTS

Unforgettable Events on the Waterways

THIS year, corporate event planners are even more challenged than ever. While pop culture shows us every day that there are children's birthday parties tallying \$40,000 and celebrity weddings topping the \$1,000,000 mark, corporate meeting planners are looking for more value on smaller budgets. Thankfully, there are venues that can help you make the most of your budget and throw a party to remember.

Hornblower Cruises & Events offers the combination of an unforgettable venue, freshly prepared meals and full-service event coordination with a fleet of various styled and sized yachts sailing Marina del Rey, Long Beach and Newport Beach.

The first thing event planners consider for any great party is location. At Hornblower, you trade in the traditional banquet room for the incredible changing scenery of one of California's beautiful waterways. Instead of looking at stale walls, guests are treated to views of waterfront homes, sea life, million dollar yachts and dramatic sunsets. With location, you need the right size. You don't want an intimate gathering held in a cavernous room, nor do you want your guests packed in like sardines, lining up for the cheese display. Hornblower's diverse fleet offers the yacht that's the perfect size for your group & your event needs.

Next up is the menu. At the center of any unforgettable event is the food & beverage. You may love the space, but the menu has to fit your group's needs. A subpar dining element can sabo-

tage the entire event. At Hornblower, you'll work with your sales manager to design your menu, down to the last detail. The delicious fare is then prepared fresh onboard and is certain to exceed even the most discriminating of palettes.

Do you have a small group that you would like to wine and dine? Try booking Mojo, a sleek cruiser with impeccable lounge-style furnishings. Or do you have a big crowd looking to get down on the dance floor? Book Entertainer and give your guests room to kick up their heels.

Hornblower specializes in creating memorable experiences for your group. An event coordinator will be assigned to you to ensure that all the planning goes smoothly, everything is set up just as you want and the party goes off without a hitch.

Looking for the little things to make your guests feel special? Just let your coordinator know. We can offer a red carpet and boarding glass of champagne. Or festive holiday carolers to send you off. Want to say goodbye with a smile? We can pass out warm cookies as guests disembark. There is no detail too small.

Hornblower has been in business for over 30 years and we have the experience to make every event a flawless one. From holiday parties to corporate events to all of life's celebrations, Hornblower's fleet of luxury yachts and our professional event staff will ensure that your event, no matter the budget, will be everything you expected...and more!

For more information, visit www.hornblower.com.



Location Spotlight

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A Meetings Destination Like No Other

MORE than theme parks and resort hotels, the Disneyland Resort is Southern California's most unique meetings and event destination offering a host of benefits known as the Disney Advantage. These include private group events in the theme parks, Disney Institute professional development programs, customized Disney entertainment, special theme park meeting/convention tickets, and Disney's unsurpassed creativity and service.

This is a place that combines the unmatched originality of a one-of-a-kind environment with a diverse collection of fully customizable experiences, workshops and events to bring your meeting to life.

The Disneyland Resort offers more than 180,000 square feet of flexible meeting and event space in three dedicated meeting hotels – Disney's Grand Californian Hotel and Spa and the Disneyland Hotel (both AAA four diamond award winners) and the popular Disney's Paradise Pier Hotel. Together these three award-winning properties offer more than 2,200 rooms and suites.

Meetings at Disney also opens the door for groups to participate in world-renowned Disney Institute professional development programs. These powerful educational experiences take participants into the business behind the magic to learn proven Disney strategies that are easily adaptable to other organizations. Visits to behind-the-scenes locations and presentations by Disney leaders bring to life studies of leadership, quality service, brand loyalty, people management and creativity. Disney Institute also offers keynote presentations, workshops and teambuilding programs that are ideal complements to a larger agenda, and many Disney Institute programs offer continuing-education credit.

If you've never considered the Disneyland Resort for a meeting or event, or it's been awhile since you've hosted a group at the resort, now is the time to take a look at all the new offerings this iconic destination offers.

Expansion Offers More for Groups

The multi-year expansion that's underway across the Disneyland Resort presents exciting new options for groups, whether it's new private-event spaces in the theme parks or more business friendly features in the Disneyland hotels.

"This expansion underscores Disney's commitment to the meetings industry, as we continually consider group needs when we develop new projects," said Robert Donahue, director, resort sales and services for the Disneyland Resort. "Throughout the expansion project meeting professionals will continue to see an exciting line-up of new venues and event opportunities that will be unlike anything we've offered before.

"Our goal is to provide groups with an all-encompassing meeting experience that they can only get at Disney, whether that's association meetings that deliver record-breaking attendance, high-profile corporate meetings or unforgettable incentives."

Hotel Enhancements

The last two years have brought significant enhancements to the portfolio of hotels at the Disneyland Resort. The most dramatic change is a complete re-imagining of the landmark Disneyland Hotel, which continues to be Orange County's



The iconic Disneyland Hotel offers the comfort and excellence attendees expect in a cool mid-century modern setting.



World of Color dessert party at Disney California Adventure Park

largest convention hotel.

"This is much more than a hotel refurbishment," said Donahue. "Over the last three years we created an almost entirely new Disneyland Hotel. We've introduced completely new guest rooms, recreation features and amenities, all while adding a new sophisticated overlay of Disneyland history and nostalgia. The result is a high-end hotel that emotionally connects with attendees. It's something only Disney can do, and it's a powerful setting for meetings and incentive programs alike."

Other new additions to the hotel include a scenic outdoor event lawn, luxurious new themed suites, and courtyard enhancements that include a new water-recreation area and poolside restaurant and bar.

Location Spotlight The Disneyland Resort

The hotel's two new outdoor event lawns are an ideal complement to the formal ballroom and meeting space in the hotel's 136,000-square-foot convention center. The new Frontier and Adventure Lawns provide intimate settings for events of all kinds. A permanent stage is also available.

The newest addition to the roster of elaborately themed Disneyland Hotel accommodations is the Adventureland Suite. Named after one of the most popular lands in Disneyland Park, this two-bedroom suite recalls an elegant safari lodge from the 1930s and '40s. It's filled with Disney memorabilia, special effects and surprises that make for an unforgettable stay.

Special touches abound, like a grotto in the master bathroom that uses light and

sound effects to simulate a rain forest or an African savanna. Other feature touches include a doorbell featuring tiki gods playing drums and – a first for any Disney suite – themed background music inspired by Disney attractions and movies.

The Adventureland Suite joins a family of exclusive themed suites at the Disneyland Hotel, including the Pirates of the Caribbean Suite, the Big Thunder Suite, the Fairy Tale Suite and the Mickey Mouse Penthouse. Each can serve as a hospitality venue or as unforgettable accommodations for top performers or other VIPs.

New dining locations include a new poolside quick-and-casual restaurant and bar located in the hotel's massive courtyard. The new Tangaroa Terrace restaurant and Trader Sam's - Enchanted Tiki Bar take their architectural cue from the original Tahitian Ter-

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race restaurant in Disneyland park and the Polynesian/tiki architecture that was popular during the early era of the original hotel.

The Trader Sam's name pays homage to the popular character from the Jungle Cruise attraction. With his collection of shrunken heads, Trader Sam has been the jungle's "head" salesman for decades. The new lounge recounts the story of his worldly travels, using artifacts and memorabilia he collected along the way. The bar features interactive special effects blended with classic Disney storytelling. Rounding out the tropical experience, Trader Sam's features live music performed on the patio each evening.

The hotel's popular pool complex has also been enhanced with a new slide pool, lap pool, private cabanas and hot tubs. The slide pool features two thrilling water slides and a Monorail theme. With a nod to the iconic original park signage, Disneyland is spelled out in familiar blocks atop a platform supporting the slides. For an additional fee, the new cabanas offer the ultimate in poolside luxury, with flat screen TVs, Wi-Fi, refrigerators, safes, phones and ceiling fans.

New For Groups at Disney California Adventure

Disney Imagineers are bringing "more of Walt Disney" into Disney California Adventure, as the park celebrates the hope and optimism of a California that attracted Walt to this land of opportunity in the 1920s. Meeting attendees entering the theme park's new entrance plaza will be instantly immersed in the world that inspired Walt during his early days as an animation pioneer. Other enhancements, including extensive landscaping and new retail and dining, will create an even richer environment that reinforces guests' connection with Disney's heritage.

The real advantage of this unprecedented expansion is the vast array of new event options, venues and attractions that await incentive, meeting and convention groups of every shape and size. Here's a closer look at what's available now and coming soon.

Paradise Pier

Meeting professionals familiar with Disney California Adventure know that it's ideal for private events of all types and sizes. The park offers an array of thrilling attractions and themed areas that can serve as centerpieces for private events, including the recently transformed Paradise Pier area. From all-new attractions to boardwalk style games, and a completely new, shaded dining area, Paradise Pier is an unparalleled event venue that evokes a bygone era when California's beachfront amusement piers were magnets for sun-seekers, movie stars and crowds of thrill-lovers.

Here's a closer look at the latest additions to Paradise Pier:

Disney's World of Color Nighttime Spectacular brings new nighttime excitement to Paradise Pier. This nightly panorama of awe-inspiring water effects, colorful lighting and dramatic music brings Disney animation to life with an entirely new creative and technical approach. Dedicated viewing areas are available for groups of 4,000 attendees, and show buy-outs are also available. This makes World of Color a spectacular addition for an opening or closing event.

The Little Mermaid - Ariel's Undersea Adventure combines the enduring appeal of a classic Disney "dark ride" with technological innovations to take meeting attendees

and incentive winners on personalized journeys into the scenes from the film. The underwater theme and delightful musical score set the stage for an evening of creativity and fun, providing an ideal backdrop for opening or closing receptions, dessert parties and other networking events.

Cars Land

The expansion will culminate in 2012 with an entirely new 12-acre Cars Land. Playing to America's love affair with automobiles, the new land will immerse guests in a world inspired by the hit Disney Pixar movie, Cars.

Radiator Springs Racers, a major "E-ticket" attraction, will place guests in the middle of the amazingly detailed, dimensional Cars world of Mater, Lightning

McQueen, Doc and Sally. Guests get a quick race briefing from Doc and Lightning, and then find themselves in a race around hairpin turns and steep banks.

In addition to Radiator Springs Racers, Cars Land will offer two additional immersive attractions. These will feature the Luigi and Mater characters from the movie. Cars Land will substantially extend the total area of Disney California Adventure park and provide new settings for group functions.

As Walt Disney said many years ago, "Disneyland will always be in a state of becoming." This multi-year expansion is the continuation of Walt's vision for a destination that entertains, educates and inspires. And those attributes are the keys

to a successful meeting.

While the physical place may change, the constants at the Disneyland Resort are creativity and commitment to delivering service that is without equal. Nowhere is that more true than when you book a meeting or event with the Disneyland Resort. A team of dedicated professionals are there to assist with every detail of your event - from hotel rooms and meeting space to banquet functions, entertainment and all the creative resources that you only have access to by booking Disney.

For more information about bringing a meeting, convention or group program to the Disneyland Resort, visit disneylandmeetings.com or call (714) 520-7025.

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