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 make 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, what you are going to do and what your purpose is. Do you want your audience to take 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 presentation, 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 unprepared. 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. Subscription 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 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 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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REIMAGINE
THE POSSIBILITIES

Fresh off an $11 million renovation and surrounded by major Fortune 500 companies, the studios of Burbank and the corporations of Hollywood, the Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills is in the hub for all business activity.

NEW M CLUB LOUNGE with 24/7 access to additional food and beverages options, complimentary access to computers, printers, charging stations and data ports

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The renovation began in January 2016 on the Warner Center Marriott located in Woodland Hills. The $11 million renovation has enhanced several key areas of the property including updating the porte cochére, the meeting space, the guest rooms, and adding a Starbucks Cafe as well as the Asado Grill - their new flagship restaurant.

Surrounded by major Fortune 500 companies in the San Fernando Valley, the studios of Burbank and the corporations of Hollywood, the Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills is in the hub of business activity making the corporate traveler the main priority. One of the highlights of the renovation is the launch of Marriott’s new club lounge concept - the M Club Lounge. Already available at various Marriott properties throughout the country, the M Club Lounge is an elevated space designed to blend work and play and offers guests such perks like free breakfast featuring cooked-to-order omelets and waffles, free high-speed wired and wireless Internet access, lights snacks and drinks throughout the day, and a dedicated lounge host. Designed for business travelers, the M Club Lounge will offer plenty of charging stations and data ports and will feature complimentary access to computers, printers, phones, fax machine, scanner, and a copier. For those who plan on using the lounge as their office while on the road.

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and want more than snacks, the M Club Lounge will also feature a full food menu available for purchase. A bar menu consisting of wine, beer, and cocktails will also be available at the M Club Lounge for a fee. An exclusive space with premiere services where guests can work, enjoy a bite, recharge, and connect, the M Club Lounge is only available to Platinum Premier, Platinum, and Gold Elite Marriott Rewards Members, or those who stay in specially designated M Club Rooms. One guest per member will be allowed, and additional daily passes to the M Club Lounge will also be available for purchase.

The all-new M Club Rooms and suites will offer superior amenities, modern style, and 24-hour, seven days a week access to the M Club Lounge. Elegant and sophisticated, the upgraded M Club Rooms and Suites will feature a soothing contemporary color palette, high-quality furnishings, and Marriott’s signature Revive bedding packages with plush sheets, fluffy pillows, and base layers. Marriott Warner Center Woodland Hills offers 478 guest rooms and 11 suites, each with balcony and brand-new 50-inch flat screen HDTVs. Additional improvements will be made to the interior corridors and public spaces unifying the rooms, which will follow the same sophisticated color tone and decor that can be found throughout the entire property.

Another key focus of the renovation will be updating and enhancing the 30,000 square feet of meeting and event space that the Warner Center Marriott has to offer, specifically the second-floor meeting space, Hidden Hills room, and Grand Ballroom foyer. Included in the upgrade will be all new modern furnishings, contemporary decor, and enhanced built-in technology. The Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills has 25 indoor meeting rooms and a tropical outdoor poolside lounge that is perfect for up to 550 people. Conveniently located near the 101 and Ventura Freeway, and ideal for corporate celebrations, social gatherings, banquets, weddings, and receptions, the Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills offers indoor and outdoor event spaces for nearly any occasion or event.

From the moment guests reach the newly upgraded Warner Center Marriott Woodland Hills they’ll be greeted to an all-new arrival experience. Updates to the front driveway and porte cochere give the property a resort-like look, creating an immediate feel and stunning sense of arrival. Everything about the arrival experience is being enhanced including refreshed landscaping; stunning stone wrapped pillars, and a new up-lit contemporary architectural feature that will create a residential-style seating area offering a warm and inviting backdrop to use as a meeting place. Inside the lobby, a full-service Starbucks Café serves a complete menu of their specialty food and drink items, including grab-and-go snacks and sandwiches, hot and cold coffee and tea beverages, and Starbucks branded gifts.

Replacing the casual dining Breeze Grill, the new Asado Grill will offer a high-quality gourmet menu consisting of inventive cuisine like artisan pasta and salads, signature entrées like grilled fish and steaks, and juicy burgers. The new restaurant will also offer world-class wines, craft beers, and handcrafted cocktails prepared by expert mixologists, resulting in an elevated bar menu that one would not expect to find in a hotel. Curated by internationally renowned chef and restaurateur, Guy Calluaud, Asado Grill will feature classic dishes and unique takes on local favorites creating an upscale dining experience.

Visit www.warnercentermarriott.com for more information and to request rates for guest rooms and meetings.

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New Horizons Conference Center - Banquet Hall, affectionately known throughout the community as Sam’s Café, is an 11,000-square-foot facility ready for your next business or social event.

Along with video and sound capabilities, it boasts a full professional kitchen, facilities for up to 300 guests, Wi-Fi, ample complimentary parking, and affordability. It is the perfect location for wedding receptions, quinceañeras, holiday parties, service club and business meetings.

Sam’s Café is also the home of New Horizons Cookies. These famous treats can be purchased at Pavilions at 6314 Platt Avenue in West Hills and soon at other stores throughout the region. They can also be bought online by visiting New Horizons' website at www.newhorizons-sfv.org. These cookies can be shipped nationwide as corporate gifts, and shared at special events.

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Everyone wins when you book early! Book any 2017 meeting or event before December 31, 2016 at the Hilton Los Angeles North/Glendale and enjoy a 5% DISCOUNT off the master account for the company, double HHonors Points™ for the value of the program for the planner, and an afternoon ice cream break for the attendees! Be sure to use Discount Code #2017!

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