The Human Connection®
Bring Your Presentations to Life!

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What Makes a Presentation Successful?

Is it getting everything out and not missing any of your points? Is it finding all the right words and not fumbling or messing up? Is it simply getting to the end without making a fool of yourself?

None of these have anything to do with a successful presentation. Successful presentations are the ones where the presenter genuinely connects with the audience. That’s the whole point of a live presentation – to make The Human Connection®. Otherwise, you could just send an email!

For example, in a sales presentation, after the client receives a brochure or technical proposal, they want to see and get a feel for the people behind the written word. Studies show that clients consistently look for three things when choosing a consultant:

1. Trust
2. Commitment
3. Chemistry

To build trust, convey commitment and develop chemistry in a presentation, you need to be able to speak to the needs of your audience with comfort and confidence.

The good news is that odds are if you’re reading these words you’re a human being, and as a human being, you have everything it takes to make a human connection!
That Electric Moment

You, The Presenter
• What does it mean to “Be Yourself”?  
• Take off the masks.

The Preparation Process
• Walk through the seven-step preparation process.  
• The Biggie! Your single task as you present

Body Language
• Your body is always talking.  
• Untapped weapon – a win-win-win

Presentation Graphics
• Build visuals that help.  
• Use graphics wisely.

Practice, Practice, Practice!
• Practice makes you better.  
• Practice right.

Make The Human Connection® during:
• Presentations  
• One-on-one meetings  
• Client meetings  
• Team meetings  
• Networking/social events  
• Phone calls  
• Family time

NOTES:
Why Do We Get Nervous?

It’s different for all of us, but something happens – something changes – when we stand in front of people to speak. We are afraid of:

- Failure
- Looking like a fool
- Letting down our colleagues
- Saying something stupid

Bottom line, we, as humans, want to be liked and respected by others. Unfortunately, to secure that respect, we sometimes pretend (however subtly) to be someone we’re not; that’s where the human connection begins to break down.

The most powerful thing you can do as a presenter is to just **BE YOURSELF!**

What Is a Mask?

Webster’s Definition: (1) something that disguises or conceals (2) a protective covering

What Are Your Masks?

- We all use different masks to hide behind.
- Masks may be physical, emotional or psychological.
- Write down your masks at the bottom of this page.

Mask Facts:

- They separate you from your listeners.
- They don’t make you feel better.
- They don’t deal with fear; they just hide it.
- They make for boring, lifeless presentations.

Instead of hiding, what should you do?

- Talk with individuals rather than look at other stuff or make “eye contact.”
- Talk with individuals rather than talk to your slides.
- Talk with individuals rather than read your notes.
- Make pictures with your Italian hands rather than make hamburgers or fig leaves.
- Move with a purpose rather than aimlessly wander.
- Make The Human Connection® by being vulnerable and transparent rather than protecting yourself.
You just found out you have to give a presentation. Oh no! What do you do now? Relax. There’s a linear, seven-step process you can follow to create an engaging presentation and connect with your audience every time. Here are the presenter’s tasks:

1. Research
   • Research client or audience hot buttons or “splinters” – what keeps them up at night?
   • When? Sooner than you do now! Buy time at the other end of the process for actually practicing.

2. Create an Overall Agenda
   • Every presentation you give has the same topic: whatever your audience cares about.
   • All audiences care about one thing: themselves – their needs and wants.
   • Develop your agenda based on them.

3. Create Your Story
   • First ask, “How do I feel about my subject?”
   • Find your Personal, Positive, Passion!
   • Tell the story the way only you can tell it!

4. Create Your Notes
   • Feel free to use notes – it’s just fine!
   • Don’t write/memorize a word-for-word script.
   • Boil down your notes to short road map bullets.
   • Remember: The story is in you, not in your notes.

5. Develop Your Graphics
   • Don’t shoehorn your story into an old PowerPoint show; you’ll compromise your story.
   • Develop your story first, then your graphics.
   • Your graphics are there to support your story.

6. Practice!
   • Practicing right helps you prepare to be spontaneous.
   • Getting comfortable with your story allows you to present in the moment of presentation.

And your single task in the moment of presentation is...
7. Help Your Listener!

In the moment of presentation, you have one single task: to help your audience get your message. You must put their needs ahead of your own and do whatever it takes to give them what they need.

This task has two huge payoffs:

• It builds trust. People like to be around people who put them first. Help your listeners, focus on them and their needs, and they will love you.
• It eases nerves. If you’re truly focused on your listeners, you don’t have time to worry about yourself. And, when do you get nervous? It’s when you think about yourself and what others think of you.

Your Decision Sieve

Now, it’s time to take the Help Your Listener task to a more strategic level. The whole purpose of a live presentation is to make The Human Connection®. If you funnel every decision that you make on your presentation through the sieve of “Will it help the listener?” you will always get the right answer! For instance:

• What should we talk about?
• Should we stand or sit?
• What graphics should we use?
• How should we set up the room?
• Should we physically warm up?
• What should I say?
• Should we practice?
• What should I wear?
• Should I eat breakfast?
• Should we alter the plan?

Keep asking yourself, “What will help the listener?” and you’ll be on the right track to creating and delivering a winning presentation.

The Preparation Process

Now, it’s time to take those seven tasks and put them into a preparation process that will set you up for success! See the following page for the process chart.
The Preparation Process Overview

**Presenter’s Tasks**

1. Research
2. Create team agenda
3. Create your story
4. Create your notes
5. Start graphics
6. Practice

**Preparation Milestones**

- **Kick-off Meeting**
  - Rough agenda
  - Estimated times
  - Graphics medium
- **Homework**
  - Personal Positive Passion
  - Bullets (3-5 words or icons)
  - Storyboard graphics
- **Ugly Rehearsal**
  - Seated run-through
  - No graphics
  - Discuss & adjust
  - Incorporate adjustments
  - Practice out loud with graphics
- **Less-Ugly Rehearsal**
  - Invite guests
  - Stand up
  - Incorporate adjustments
  - Keep practicing
- **Final Rehearsal**
  - Do at least once without stopping
  - Practice Q&A
- **Presentation**
  - LET IT RIP!
- **Debrief**
  - From the client
  - With the team
  - Record & apply

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Create the “You-You Show” (instead of the “We-We Show!”)

Who does your client care about? You’re right! They care about themselves. Period. If you’ve got something that can help them solve their problems, they’ll listen to you. But, it’s so easy to go in and say, “This is who we are, and this is what we do.” And, the client asks for your relevant experience, so of course you have to talk about yourself, right? The key to sharing your relevant experience is packaging. Following are two models to help you structure your story to ensure you deliver the “You-You Show” instead of the “We-We Show!” The Skeleton Team Agenda is below, and the Help Your Listener Story Structure is on the next page.

The Skeleton Team Agenda

Introduction

Speaker: Project Leader

- Starts by saying something about the client, their project and why he/she is so excited about working with them
- Introduces the firms that make up the team – how he/she put this team together
- He/She says, “But it’s not the firms that do the work, it’s the people.” He/she introduces and gets to brag about the speakers who are present in the room using the “Superlative Introduction Model.”
- Here’s the model. The leader says these four things about each person: 1) Name 2) Project title 3) Experience qualifier 4) Your personal testimony of that person’s skill or character.
- Hands it off to the Project Manager

Overview of Project and Key Issues

Speaker: Project Manager

- The PM takes ownership of the project by sharing why he/she is so excited about working on this project.
- He/She OVERVIEWS the main “what keeps them up at night” points.

The rest of the interview is organized around those key issues. For example, let’s say there are three things...

Issue #1

Speaker(s): Those people on the team who will have a hand in this issue. Try to tag team people from different firms – a great opportunity to demonstrate teamwork.

Repeat for Issues 2, 3 and so on.

Close

Speaker: Either Project Leader or Project Manager

- It’s about a 30-second “from the heart” close. Not “Why Us.” This close needs to take it to the next level.

Discussion

Speaker: PM leads Q&A (fields questions)
Help Your Listener Story Structure

Use the model below to help you structure any conversation you may have! Remember, this conversation is linear. It always works for the listener if you talk about them first and what they care about. Then, back it up with a possible solution, benefits of that solution, and proof or relevant experience showing where you’ve solved the issue before. And then, always end your conversation by bringing it back to them.
The Instrument of Communication

As the instrument of communication, you have three tools at your disposal. They are:

• Your mind
• Your body
• Your voice

Warm-ups!

Get your blood pumping with some stretching and exercise. Start by standing in “neutral” with your arms to your sides. Don’t forget to breathe!

1. Neck stretches: Make sure to find each of the four positions, feeling the stretch. Avoid randomly “rolling” your neck.
2. Shoulder lifts: Raise the shoulders to the ears; feel the tension. Hold. Release.
3. Stretch your back (gently).
4. Shake your hands! Shake! Shake! Shake!
5. Dance! Dance! Dance!

Your Body is Always Talking

Studies show that in live communication, the meaning of your message is conveyed as follows:

• 7% Verbally (the words you say)
• 38% Aurally (sounds, intonation)
• 55% Physically (body language)

Since over half of your message is communicated physically, use large, purposeful movements to help your listeners understand what you’re trying to say.

Remember, what may seem “over-the-top” to you just looks helpful to your audience. The more you engage your body, the more connected you get. You’ll feel less nervous, and your message will be clearer.

People want to work with people who are committed to them and their project. Since your body speaks louder than your words, go big! That effort demonstrates your commitment and leadership.

How we receive information

In live communication, we hear words and, for most of us, language is a left-brain function. We’ll pop that info over to our right brains and visualize what that person just said. Then, we swallow the info! That’s how we take in information. Help your listeners by making pictures for them with your body!
Using Your Graphics

Live presentations are different than the written word. You have one moment in time to communicate a message to your listeners. Often, we spoil that human connection moment with a bunch of busy graphics. PowerPoint is not a reading medium; it’s meant to provide signposts, like a road map, for the audience.

When you show a crowded slide full of bullets, data or lots of images, you are effectively telling your audience, “read this and understand it.” Meanwhile, you keep talking, asking the audience to listen to you. Your audience cannot simultaneously read the slide and listen to you; you’re putting your audience in conflict, which is not very nice – or very helpful!

To avoid this conflict, build (or animate) your slides and use a remote control, so when you say the key word or phrase, a corresponding image or bullet appears on the screen.

People like to see something and hear it at the exact same time.

Receiving information from two senses simultaneously reinforces the memory in your brain. So, build your bullet points and other graphics. For example, build:

- Organization charts
- Matrices
- Site and floor plans
- Charts and graphs
- Schedules or timelines
Some practical tips

- **Practice out loud.** You’ll never know if your story really works until you speak it aloud.
- **Practice with your props and equipment.** It will make you feel so much more comfortable on presentation day.
- **Set up your practice space and materials as close as possible to how they will be when you actually present.** Why? Because when you get there, you’ll feel like you’re at home!

Then, on the day of the presentation...

**LET IT RIP !!!**

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**NOTES:**

Practice makes you better. Period. Sometimes, we avoid it because we’re afraid, or we say, “I’m better off the cuff.” Believe it or not, real spontaneity comes from practice. But, you’ve got to learn how to practice “right.”

Practicing right is letting go of trying to find the “perfect” way to say something. It certainly isn’t repeating the same thing over and over until it’s dead and lifeless. It means identifying the main parts of your story and weaving your conversation through those pieces until you get comfortable with the “flow.” Every time you speak it, different words should come out – just like in everyday conversation.
About Some of Our Trainers

Jennifer Hebblethwaite, Senior Vice President & Champion of All Things Grace, heads up our Atlanta office. From commercial real estate to coaching Atlanta’s finest Men in Blue at the Forest Park Police Department, Jennifer is an experienced corporate trainer. She’s spent 10 years as a Teaching Artist for a Tony Award-winning theatre and has taught everything from playwriting to MBA Leadership/Communication on an undergraduate and graduate level. She is foremost a compassionate coach and trainer, but as our rogue academic, Jennifer also gets excited about things like semantics and semicolons. She leads our Gracewriting® program and is trained in Whole Brain® Thinking, which is designed to use every last brain cell. Jennifer’s teaching style is big and bold, and she can’t wait to help you help your listeners!

Carol Doscher, President & CEO (Chief Encouragement Officer) has been captivating audiences since she performed in Broadway’s “Sweeney Todd.” For this former actress turned trainer and coach, it’s not so far from the boards of Broadway to the boardrooms of America.

Since founding Graceworks in 1995, she’s trained thousands of professionals globally to make that vital human connection in sales presentations, client meetings and lectures. Featured in The New York Times and on “Bloomberg Television,” Carol also has published numerous articles on presentation and communication skills. Prior to her current work, she marketed design and construction services for many years.

Responding to the growing need for the human connection in the corporate world, Carol is a certified practitioner of Whole Brain® Thinking – a great tool to help people understand and leverage their own thinking preferences.

Graceworks in a Nutshell

Headquartered in New York with offices in Atlanta and Cleveland and trainers stationed as far west as Portland, Oregon, the Graceworks team travels globally helping corporate professionals become more effective presenters, leaders and communicators.

For us, Big Bold Choices represent vision, growth and expansion! We share this idea with you as an encouragement to hold fast to your visions and dreams.

In addition to our flagship presentation and communication training, we are excited about our Gracewriting® and leadership communication programs. People connecting with people is the heart of any business. So whether you’re writing a proposal, leading a team or giving a presentation, our goal is to free you to make The Human Connection® with colleagues, clients and associates. We customize all our in-house training and coaching to meet your goals.

Also, check out our Train-the-Coach workshops. Learn to coach The Graceworks Way®. Our fun, interactive style helps you think in new ways, brings your team together, and – most importantly – produces measurable results!

A powerful tool we use throughout our programs is Herrmann International’s Whole Brain® Thinking. By helping individuals and teams leverage their thinking preferences, we improve their problem solving, decision making, creativity, communications and teamwork.

Finally, there’s Graceworks With Kids and Graceworks Goes to College. From elementary school kids to post grads, we love helping our leaders of tomorrow make “big bold choices.”

If you have any questions, would like additional information on our training and coaching services, or just want to call and say, “hi” (please do!), you can reach us at:

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