

## **Must-Do Tips No 6: Presenting With Power**

No doubt, many of your professionals have experienced, at first hand, the disappointment of working very hard on a tender or bid, only to see their chances disappear at the fronting up, "do us a presentation" stage; or received a less than positive response from guests at a seminar as they click on their fortieth Powerpoint slide in 10 minutes...

Just as many have probably received some advice on what (not) to do in such situations. This month we offer three routes to better presenting that have made a significant difference to professionals with whom we have worked.

### ***Tip 1 - "Umm" & the Power of the Pause***

How to stop those irritating interjections ("umm, err, you know, basically" etc.) that seemingly you can't help? Just PAUSE. Inexperienced or inexpert presenters feel the need to fill the verbal void at every opportunity. So they err and umm their way along to our (and their) annoyance.

But once they discover that, contrary to what they feel, pauses are not just **allowed** but **actually essential** to good presenting, then there's no stopping them. Or starting them (well not immediately anyway).

So our presentations rule here: to err is human - but to pause is divine.

### ***Tip 2 - Only Connect...***

*"It is not that the Englishman can't feel - it is that he is afraid to feel",* wrote E M Forster. As far as presenting goes, we think he was dead right. Many business people and professionals that we come across - whether Englishmen or not - don't see the expression of any emotion or passion for what they are talking about as a valid thing in a client pitch or presentation. So what do they do instead? Too often, they drone on in serious 'business-like' fashion - and we the audience nod off.

If you can express what you feel about your subject (as long as it's not a Gwyneth Paltrow At The Oscars-type experience), then almost automatically you vary the volume, pitch, pace and tone of what you are saying. You emote. And the audience tunes in to this most basic of connections.

As Forster also wrote: *"Only connect the prose and the passion and both will be exalted"*.

### ***Tip 3 - You, You, You (and Me Too)***

We were privileged to watch stand-up comedian Stewart Lee perform at this year's Edinburgh Festival. Part of his act was about satirising the presentation techniques that comedians use so well to engage their audience's attention.

**"Remember Spangles? Remember Chopper bikes?"**

Of course we do (well, I did anyway). And that's the trick isn't it? Getting the audience to identify with what you are saying to them. So find ways to do it at every opportunity. Of course, you can also do it differently. Another popular comedian Peter Kay found that his way to comic heaven was to stop trying to relate constantly to his audience's experiences and just to tell his own hilarious stories. And that works too. So you can do both. Try them.

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Best regards.

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