

***WINNING BUSINESS
PRESENTATIONS™***

MINI-COURSE

PART FIVE

by

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Winning Business Presentations™ 7 Part Mini-Course

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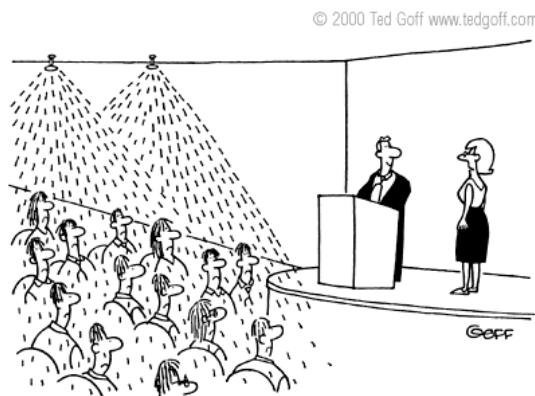
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Welcome to **Part Five** of your **Winning Business Presentations™** Mini-course.

If you have been doing the **Action Challenges** I'm sure you are already seeing a difference in your results. It would be great to hear what's been happening for you so do please email me at info@cathdaley.com and let me know because I love success stories!

Part Five is all about **The Number 1 Presentation Success Killer** and how you can avoid it.

Take a look at this.....



"You're not allowed to use the sprinkler system to keep your audience awake."

I'm sure, like me, you have been in several situations like the one above, where you would have almost welcomed getting wet as a bit of light relief!!

So can you guess what **The Number 1 Presentation Success Killer** is from this cartoon?

That's right it's **BEING BORING!!!!** And I know that might seem like I'm stating the obvious again but it's still **one of the main reasons** that people are switched off.

Now let me say that I don't think that most people set out to be boring on purpose (although I've come across a few who have – and guess what? They didn't get any business - surprise ,surprise!)

If you think back to when you were at school the worst lessons were probably those that were the most boring and the best were really interesting and engaged you in some way.

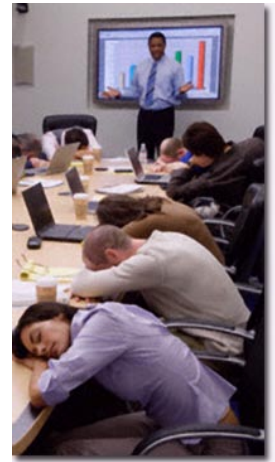
Well it's exactly the same with presenting.

As I've already mentioned 97% of managers report that they find it hard to stay awake in presentations. And if the presentation is to a prospect, client, investor, your boss, shareholders - whatever the audience - can you afford to take the chance of needing the sprinkler?

So if people don't set out to give a boring presentation how come so many of them are?

If you type "boring" into a thesaurus just some alternatives you get are

monotonous, dreary, uninteresting, dull, tedious, dry, insipid, wearisome, mind numbing and I'm sure you can add several others of your own.



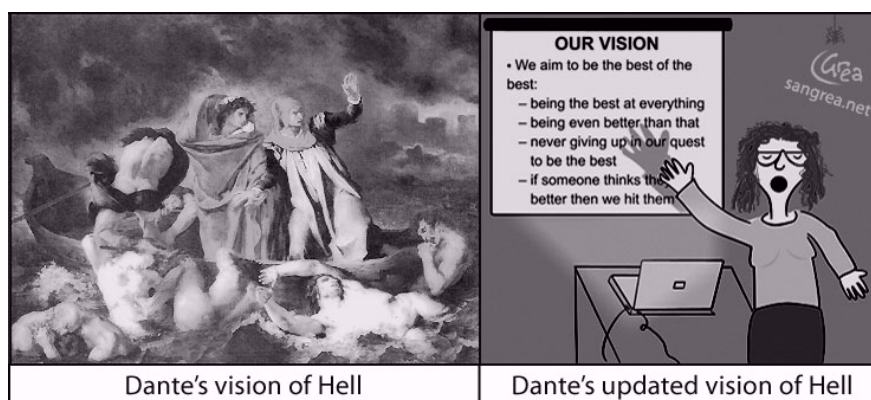
Most people just don't realise that all they need to do is a *little bit of tweaking* to make it more interesting.

Problem is firstly, they don't know they're boring.

Secondly, even if they do, they don't know what the tweaks are.

Sometimes they think they do - - - let's make the PowerPoint brighter and more whizzy! ---and they can spend thousands of pounds on getting "cutting edge slides" but the thing is having 72 of them in a 25 min presentation is *tedious*. I actually had to sit through one like that recently. I admit I was bored to tears but I took it as an opportunity to observe the audience. It was definitely mind numbing if the slumped bodies and closed eyes of the people around me were anything to go by and the "presenters" didn't seem to notice!

Because no matter how fantastic the slides look, you get into what I call "audience overload" and they switch off because there is a limit to how much visual information the brain can take in a short period of time.



Everyone jokes about "Death by PowerPoint" and how bad it is but why do so many businesses still do it regardless?

That doesn't mean to say I'm against using PowerPoint - I'm definitely not. It can be a very powerful tool used in the right way and I often use it in my trainings and presentations but PowerPoint by itself will not transform a boring presentation into an interesting one and that's a mistake that many businesses make.

There are lots of tweaks you can make to make it an outstanding presentation and two of the easiest ones to start with, which will have an immediate impact, are

1. Reducing the amount of information you provide

2. Pitching it at the right level for your audience

Now these may sound obvious but a surprisingly small number of "presenters" actually apply them.

1. Reducing the amount of information you provide

Just like the 72 slides in 25 minutes, one of the most prevalent reasons for being boring is trying to deliver too much information in the time available.

Have you ever drifted off in the middle of listening to somebody and then realised that you've just missed the last few things that were said? And then pretended you'd been paying attention all along, particularly if it was in an important meeting..... it happens all the time.

The reason is the brain has a limited time-span for concentration, particularly if you are just listening *passively* to a presentation – and this limits the amount that can be absorbed meaningfully. (By the way this is greatly increased if there is an activity involved).

So talking for more than about 20 – 25 minutes, with no audience participation, is counter-productive and means that most of your presentation won't register with your audience anyway. Bombarding the listeners with too much information is ineffective and you won't get the results you want.

One of the first things I do when working with a bid team is to look at how we can reduce the amount of information in the presentation, without reducing the impact (but actually increasing it!)

Providing too much information often stems from what we talked about in *Part Three* – it being about the presenter rather than the audience. When you flip that and start to approach it from the point of view of what your audience needs to get, it automatically reduces the amount of information you present.

2. Pitching it at the right level for your audience

I loved maths when I was at school and in high school we had a maths teacher called Mrs. Ryan. Why do I still remember her? Because I didn't really learn much maths in her lessons and it was a bit of a wasted year. Her approach was either to give us work to do that was too easy and the lessons were boring, or she would write stuff on the blackboard. When we didn't get it straight away she just gave us more (?), regardless of whether or not we understood it. She would never answer questions and so those lessons were boring too. Maybe you can relate to that because it might not be maths, but I think everyone has their own version of Mrs. Ryan.



And so when I became a teacher I was determined not to be like her and I learned very early on that you have to begin from where the youngsters *are* and not where you *think* they are (because you can't start teaching particle physics to youngsters who don't know what an atom is!) and you can't pretend you know something when you don't because they'll quickly suss you out.

This equally ***applies in business too*** and so many "presenters" get it wrong, which results in reduced sales and lost contracts.

To give you an example

I went to a conference a while ago and the first speaker was talking about how to use your voice when presenting. It was interesting and enjoyable up to the point where he started to talk about something outside his particular area of expertise. He started talking about using NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) and it was obvious from what he was saying that his knowledge was at a basic level and that's okbut they say that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing and what he hadn't bothered to find out was that every person in the audience was actually a qualified NLP trainer. Some of what he was saying was actually incorrect but he was claiming to be an expert when his audience knew a lot more than he did.

The result? People in the audience felt insulted, some felt angry and patronised and many began to question his authenticity. As the person sitting next to me said "if what he says about NLP is wrong then maybe he's blagging the rest as well!"

The guy had products to sell at the back of the room but the result was that as well as the immediate effect of losing hundreds of pounds in potential sales, the perhaps more harmful consequence was that his professional reputation was affected.

And all because he didn't take the time to find out about his audience so that he could pitch to them at the right level.

You have to start from where your audience ***is***, rather than where *you think they are*.

So if you are going to speak as part of a sales presentation or pitch, or at a networking event, it is really important to find out about your intended audience - what their level of knowledge is, how experienced they are, their background and so on because without this information it can go so wrong and you can lose a contract or miss out on business just like the voice coach did.

Your Fifth Action Challenge:

This challenge is to choose one or more of the following options and put it into practice in the next week....

Make sure that you are interested in and enthusiastic about what you are “presenting”.

Now this may sound a bit odd, but if you are making the same presentation again and again, e.g. at networking meetings or to prospective clients, it can become boring for you and “*If you are bored, you will be boring*” which means that this will rub off on your audience and they’ll be bored too. Find something new and different each time you present. This keeps it more interesting for you and your audience too.

.....think of a “presentation” you give frequently (it could be an elevator speech, a 60 second networking slot, your opening lines when you meet a new client) and find three new different angles, or three different facts that you can include to tweak it without changing the overall content so that you now have three different versions and then ring the changes and notice what happens.

Avoid “audience overload” by reducing the amount of information you provide.

This takes a bit of practice so begin with a short presentation you usually give and pick out three key bits of information you want your audience to get. Then concentrate on giving those three key points in five different ways.

Find out about your audience.

We can often become so caught up in what you want to talk about that you forget about the audience. So whoever your audience is - a prospective client, a procurement panel, a group at a networking event - take some time to find out about them – where they are in terms of knowledge and experience of what you are going to present about- and then start from that level.

..... and in that way you’ll avoid the Number 1 Presentation Success Killer when you present.

Until next time,

Kind regards,

Cath

In Part Six we look at what the best presenters **always** do....

The 6 Ps of Outstanding Presenting