



HINTS & TIPS ON GIVING **DYNAMIC** PRESENTATIONS

Communication Skills – Humor

Why is HUMOR important?

Have you ever sat through a “starchy” and dry presentation and been utterly bored? Was it just full of facts and figures? When we are in a relaxed frame of mind we can be more receptive to new ideas, a new product or service. And what better way to lighten up than have some humor.

So we start off our presentation with a funny story. OOPS we’ve just offended someone and the worst part is we didn’t know! Gone are the days when we could just stand up and reel off stories about anything.

The use of appropriate humor in a presentation can be invigorating and can help build rapport – the bridge that you must build in order to communicate your message effectively. If your humor reflects your message, it will help your listener remember it more clearly.

I came to America in the early 1990s from England and soon learnt the taboo subjects: Politics and Religion – well they were taboo in sales for a long time – and then it was sex and guns; the list of subjects was dwindling rapidly. And then I came to Kansas and learnt you do not mention colleges. The list was just about complete!

So what’s left? **YOURSELF!!** Instead of making fun at the expense of someone or something else, when you laugh at yourself, you’re breaking down the invisible communication barriers between you and your audience.

But how do we make fun at our self? Personal stories! When you can use personal humorous stories you break down those hidden barriers. And you dramatically reduce the risk of offending anyone by the use of INAPPROPRIATE humor.

The biggest problem with humor is that it is only humorous to SOME people and NOT ALL. What is humorous to some can be offensive to others and the problem is you won’t know until it’s too late. You didn’t get the order and you probably will never know why. How many times have you been to some function, a dinner or some other large gathering and the “SPEAKER” starts off their talk with a “set-piece-joke”? There is polite guffawing and embarrassed looks at one another and their whole effect and message is immediately put into doubt. Their CREDIBILITY is at stake. They now have to work doubly hard to try and recover. And when they are in competition and underestimate the

personal abilities of that competition, they can be dead in the water. All that preparation time. The sales time. The resources in the organization to get to that point of giving the presentation. The cost can be phenomenal. The risk of inappropriate humor is now just too great to take that risk.

Make sure your humor lets people laugh WITH you and not AT others. Don’t put people down.

So take time to look at your self. Find appropriate humorous events that the audience can relate to about the service / product you are presenting.

Keep a journal of humorous lines and expressions that you can readily access.

During your presentation, be unpredictable. Inject some appropriate humor when people are least expecting it. It will help make your message memorable.

With humor and laughter, your audience is more relaxed, but make sure it’s appropriate for your audience.

HAVE FUN! You will be a much better Presenter.

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