

## **Revisiting Great Presentations**

The curse of Microsoft Office is that it brings to companies the technical ability to engage it a wide range of business functions that, prior to the personal computer, the same business would have outsourced. One of the glaring examples of this is the business presentation. Now that companies have PowerPoint on their computers they simply create their presentations in-house – most often with the businessperson who is assigned to give the presentation also serving as the copywriter/graphic artist who creates the slide. The result? Simply horrible presentations.

Like most things that drives Tudog crazy (because they aren't being done as well as they could be – meaning they aren't as effective as they could be – meaning they aren't creating the value they could be), Tudog has some steps (6 in this case) that can be followed to improve the situation. In other words, do the 6 things included in this article and your homemade presentations won't be as horrible as they are now.

### **First Why, Then How**

Presentations are like little stories. People need to know the crime before they learn whodunit. You need to present to people why they need your product, or why you have developed a new technology, before you can tell them how they can benefit from it and how they can buy it. Always start with why, and if it's compelling enough, you'll have them on the edge of their seats waiting to hear all about the how.

### **Avoid Mysteries**

People cannot appreciate your presentation or gain from it the awareness you are hoping to generate, if you include a number of unknowns or elements that are not completely understood. Make sure you convert the unknowns to knowns either by avoiding using narrow jargon, or by translating it within the body of your presentation.

### **Know Thy Audience**

Before you present to a group learn what you can about them and gear your presentation to what you learned. There may be some special needs the audience has, or special interests. There may be a person (key decision maker) who is a big sports fan (use sports jargon) or film buff (movie quotes). Also, by learning who your audience is you can ascertain what their expectations are, and then produce and deliver a presentation that far exceeds their expectations.

### **Keep Focused**

Sometimes there are a number of different points we want to make in the course of a single presentation. This is okay so long as the order of the points are logical, each new turn of topic is properly identified, and the focus for each set of points is clear and properly maintained.

### **Involve the Audience**

There is a difference between a lecture and a presentation. A lecture is a situation in which one person has knowledge (the lecturer) that a group of people (the audience)

wishes to know. A business presentation is a different scenario. In a business presentation a person has some information (the presenter) that he wishes to communicate to others (the audience) in the hope that he can generate their interest and encourage them to become customers. In this scenario it is best to keep the audience as involved as possible so that they can feel a part of the presentation, and therefore by extension, a part of what is being presented.

### **Know Your Stuff**

Nothing kills a great presentation like a question that has no answer. Make sure, if you're going to give a presentation, that you know the answers to the questions that will be asked. It is best, of course, to anticipate all the questions and answer them in the body of your presentation. However, if one gets by, make sure when it is asked by an audience member, you are able to provide an answer that is satisfactory.

Presentations are part of your company's marketing and they are a way that you communicate your company's message, its image, its approach to professionalism, and its concern for its customers. These critical functions should be enough to convince companies that their presentations should be created professionally. Until that happens, follow these six steps, and your presentations will be somewhat improved.