PRATIBIMB
TRANSCENDING BARRIERS

Series of Reflections on Soft Skills & Human Behavior

First Series: The Fine Art of Articulation – Learning to Present
Dear Friends,

Greetings to all of you!

I am pleased and proud to present yet another initiative by the ICSI towards development of personal and professional excellence of our members. We are happy to release the first chapter of an e-book titled ‘Pratibimb-Transcending Barriers’ being created for our members and students.

There is a simple Zen story which I would like to share with you

A Cup of Tea

Nan-in, a Japanese master during the Meiji era (1868-1912), received a university professor who came to inquire about Zen. As was customary, the master served his brilliant guest a cup of tea, while listening to the learned Professor air his views on everything he had studied and all that he knew.

The master poured his visitor’s cup full and then kept on pouring. The professor watched the overflow until he no longer could restrain himself. “It is overfull. No more will go in!”

“Like this cup,” the Master said, “You are full of your own opinions and speculations. How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup?”

The ebook is on Behavioural Training as well as soft skills.
It is authored by CS Tanu Srivastava, who is a Company Secretary herself but changed tracks as she stumbled inadvertently into the field of training and the infinite boundaries to the development of the human mind. With each chapter, she encapsulates her experiences and learnings and presents them in an informal, conversational style with easy to recall and practical tips. There are anecdotes, movie clips and speeches along with links to additional reading materials to make it a truly comprehensive one stop learning for you.

While we may have been exposed to these topics many times during the course of our professional lives, I request three things from you:

**First, empty your tea cup.**

**Second, as you go through the pages of this ebook, you may find yourself mirrored there. Do take a chance to reflect.**

I don’t know how many of you would recall Newton’s third law of Motion which you studied in high school but I know for sure, if you got on a bicycle, even after 10 years of having ridden it last, you will still remember how to ride.

Learning can be informative or transformative. Research says Adults retain

- 10% of what they **READ**
- 20% of what they **HEAR**
- 30% of what they **SEE**
- 50% of what they **SEE & HEAR (Audio &Visuals)**
- 70% of what they **SAY** and
- 90% of what they **DO**

**Third, for this ebook to be a source of transformative learning, you need to DO – follow the practical tips and apply them to your personal and professional realm.**

We will be uploading a chapter, every 10 days on fields which bear specific relevance to us.

Presenting the first chapter to you – “The Fine Art of Articulation – Learning to Present”

Look forward to your feedback.

Warm regards,

**CS Mamta Binani**

*President, ICSI*
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“The human brain starts working the moment you are born and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.” – George Jessel

It must have been the year 2006. It is a lazy afternoon at CCGRT-ICSI, (The Centre for Corporate Governance, Research and Training) Navi Mumbai. The heat is overpowering but we are in the cool confines of a conference room. I have been invited to speak and share my experiences on the Quality initiatives of the Secretarial Department of the Company, where I had worked. For an event which happened almost 10 years back I have a vivid recollection in bits and parts. For one -a part of me is so proud to see my name there on the dais. Giving talks, had no mention in my dreams. Never thought I would face an audience – but there I was. With two horror stories before this attempt at facing a crowd.

Ironically, before this, I had presented in the year 1996, when I was interning with a leading multi-national and had to present to the board of directors. And before that – it must have been the year 1987, high school debate when I had felt bold enough to voice my views on the Roop Kanwar Sati case.

SO as I write – I am realising – three isolated instances, one in each decade, in various stages of my life where I have faced crowds and with disastrous results.

Let me go back to the first.

The high school debate. I am up on the stage, in front of what looks like the whole school. My friends were there in the first few rows cheering me on. In my mind, my voice was so loud in my ears. Practically booming. And I stood there for what seemed like hours, talking away. They very kindly told me later, that I was mumbling. And I had barely managed a few minutes. Well. Apparently I had mumbled my way through. Someone at the back of the hall even thought I was crying.

As they say – there are three kinds of presentations – the one that you plan to give, the one that you think you gave and the one that you actually gave.

The second Story

I sail out of school, good grades, zero speaking skills and land in college. I keep to the sidelines. I was willing to write – but I wasn’t getting up there to speak. No way.

Years later, having done my CS and CWA, I started working with a multi-national and we did some wonderful work in the secretarial department, which my immediate bosses thought of presenting to the Board of Directors. Guess who got chosen to present.

THE JOURNEY OF THE NOT SO INTREPID TRAVELLER – LEARNING TO PRESENT
The fine Art of Articulation

So when you are brand new, the splendour of a Board room awes you. There’s even a different smell to these places. After you walk for a long time down the corridors of power you get shown in. Funny things that the mind remembers – the room was very minimalistically done up in black and white. Your heels clicked and boomed though the entire organisation and there you stand – facing the top brass. With your back to a huge screen and one of these in front of you.

Over head projectors. You have to put your slides in and speak. For those of you who were born in the later years – here’s a picture. There was only one problem.

As I was putting my slides in, my hands were shaking horribly and under the light of the projector – was captured in fully glory and displayed on the screen behind. Everything else was also shaking.

My knees too wobbled and my voice was quivering. I have no recollection of what happened except that they were the sweetest bunch of gentlemen possible. Who didn’t reveal even by a look or a smile as to the spectacle unfolding.

It finished, I bolted out and found a café and had a huge chocolate shake with ice-cream and chocolate sauce, nuts and a cherry on top. Years later, I read somewhere, chocolate always makes you feel better. I must have got some temporary relief because it took me 10 years to face a crowd again.

Cut to 2006. The third story. That presentation was a game changer. Post lunch sessions have to be the most painful to sit through I am sure. The CCGRT feeds you very well, the air conditioners work full blast and the seats are padded and comfortable. So replete with a good meal, two gentlemen – RIGHT in the front – slept! With my feel good factor at seeing my name, I had started my talk. I droned on. With enough text on my slides to fill a book, I think I read them out. Being a little challenged technologically, the slides and what I was saying didn’t match obviously. They couldn’t have helped but sleep.. I was mortified. I couldn’t wait to finish through and vanish in thin air. I never wanted to come back. I was also angry with them for calling me in the first place!!

“The easiest way to stay awake during an after-dinner (lunch) speech is to deliver it”
LIFE BEGINS AT THE END OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

But something changed that day. I was flipping through facebook, collecting quotes as usual and I chanced upon this one. This exact same one.

And I really got thinking. I had taken a break in my career as I had got married and been blessed with near triplets (well.. twins in one year and another baby a year later) and the husband had changed jobs and moved cities and I was happily leading a life of idle bliss. Nothing to challenge to me other than to ensure that all three survived their childhood with a mother who was more engrossed in reading and they made it to school in time and were well fed.

But I really thought. How comfortable I was and how like a vegetable too. All those years, when my father had run around to ensure that I finished my CS and CWA simultaneously, plus all my hard work because we know – those papers are murderous to pass- and here I was. Totally in my own comfortable space.

That talk was a game changer. The humiliation I had felt – made me want to go back and change things. I wanted to do it differently now. Giving talks was becoming a part of my dreams I wanted change. I was tired of running away.

SO, in the years after 2007, I collided head on with my fears.

I attended a few workshops on speaking. As with any of these, the greatest advantage is that you are in a safe place. Everybody is like you and you aren’t being judged. And I realised, I wasn’t so bad as long as I was being me. And not trying to be some great speaker. Let us face it. We aren’t Obama, or Steve Jobs or Amitabh Bachchan but they also aren’t me. There was just one of me. And when I faced a crowd, I learnt to enjoy being myself. My presentation-- and this was a huge learning for me – was my baby. I could create it any which way I wanted. There are
The fine Art of Articulation

no rules. As long as there was a rapport with the audience and they were convinced, my work was done.

Today, I talk – out of choice. For a living, for the most part – trying to encourage others to overcome their phobias!! And no – I am no authority – not even remotely on the subject. But what I do know – is what it feels like. In a world, which seems to talk effortlessly – we are NOT alone.

There is even a name for it......!!

Ironically and I am quoting Dale Carnegie, the author of the book “The Quick and Easy Way to Effective Speaking” …this fear of public speaking is the world’s third greatest fear, almost like this fear of death.

A lot Like this video from the movie “Tanu weds Manu returns” when the gentleman in question is made to step in impromptu for his friend and speak on a topic on which he is clueless - anything to get out of the situation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVl45MUJcnU

I asked a number of people for their stories.

My brother. Managing Director today for a multi-national and based abroad. Probably presents on a daily basis today, effortlessly. His first presentation was to 300 vendors at a leading five star hotel. He stepped in for someone apparently. He told me, he just read it, stuttering. “I sweated my way through.” His exact words. Looks like it runs in the family. Today, he speaks with such panache. It is amazing to listen. When he went to the US, after college, he enrolled for a
program called Toastmasters, a forum for people to develop their speaking skills. Toastmasters is there worldwide and definitely worth joining, just for practice and feedback.

Yet another friend, who worked for the media for 20 odd years. She is fantastic at her job, can clinch a sale effortlessly and heads a huge team. But she won’t present. Her team presents, she steps in and out.

Similar story, with another friend who runs a hugely successful business. Deals with international clients. Can be trusted to point out all the negatives in any deal, with a very sharp eye for detail but getting him to present? NO way!

A gentleman dining at my house last weekend, A Vice-President today and also a Company Secretary. In his own words – studied in a Hindi medium school. Language was such a barrier that he became an introvert to the point of not turning up for college. Even attending English classes didn’t help. He took up a job to start with, to gradually start getting used to English and today apparently, if you give him a mike to speak, you can’t get it back.

Similar stories everywhere Very few would be born with this skill, the rest just have to work on it and it’s no rocket science.

No amount of reading about how to give great presentations can help till you actually start presenting and start learning from each one.

So the only way out is - to just jump in.

Even if you weren’t one of those whose childhood was full of performances to the cheering of neighbourhood mommies and whose college life was a lot like mine – spent trying to merge into the background, there is still hope.

Through the next few chapters, we’ll look at all the ways and tools to overcome this fear, design our talks and presentations well, get some practical tips and work towards developing your own style. And who knows – you might just start loving it!
PUBLIC SPEAKING / PRESENTATION SKILLS

To begin with what exactly are we talking about? Public Speaking or Presentation skills? Are they one and the same thing? Yes and NO.

Both public speaking and presentation skills are critical skills for professionals to master.

Presentation skills would be more of a subset of Public speaking because like the former it does involve speaking to the Public, but would be on a more specialised topic, may not involve the full range of gestures and voice modulation and will involve some visual aids to make it more dynamic. Presentations need more co-ordination between the spoken and visual elements. So for the purpose of this book – I am going to use them interchangeably.

Why do we need to learn these skills?

We, human beings have an inherent need to be heard. Even the ones who hate presenting the most, will always wish for a magic wand that would swish away their fears. Presenting gives visibility to your ideas and to you. And as you rise up the Corporate ladder, it’s the need of the hour. So there is no wishing it away. You want to make a mark? You got to be seen and you got to be heard.

Speech is a very compelling medium. What you want to say can be sent in an email and a power point too but when we stand present it, our passion comes through in our voice and it is easier to convince.

Close your eyes for a bit and reflect – The worst presenter you have ever seen? And just how did you feel then? Don’t you want to do something to help them out of their misery?

HOW NOT TO PRESENT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENOvAGQ5UIU

This one irritates the hell out of me. He danced all over the room. Read out each one of his boring slides, which he went to manually change from the key and generally turned his audience into one watching a ping pong match. They just kept swinging their heads left or right not being able to give their complete attention anywhere.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=69JZD60eR6s

Yet another one! A spoof on the mistakes we do!
RECORD YOUR SELF- INTRODUCTION

Stand in front of a mirror, think of a way to introduce yourself. Something good about you and something unique. Get someone to record you or record yourself. Now play it back.

- Did you like it? What did you like? Make a note. And what are the things that you didn’t like?
- How were you standing? Straight/hunched/legs apart or crossed?
- Where were your hands?
- Did you have a smile on your face?
- Where were you looking?

Now think back to your presentation skills. See how you would rate yourself.

PRE-TEST

ASSESS YOUR CURRENT PRESENTATION SKILLS

To be a more effective presenter, it is useful to examine your present skills. The following evaluation can help determine the areas on which to focus to increase your competency. Read the statement and then circle the number that best describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I thoroughly analyze my audience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I determine some basic objectives before planning a presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I write down some main ideas first, in order to build a presentation around them</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I incorporate both a preview and review of the main ideas as may presentation is organized</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I develop an introduction that will catch the attention of my audience and still provide the necessary background information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My conclusion refers back to the introduction and, if appropriate, contains a call-to-action statement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The visual and graphics I use are carefully prepared, simple, easy to read, and have impact</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The number of visuals and graphic I use will enhance,</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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not detract, from my presentation
9. I use both energy and composure in delivering a presentation 5 4 3 2 1
10. I ensure the benefits suggested to my audience are clear and compelling 5 4 3 2 1
11. I communicate ideas with enthusiasm 5 4 3 2 1
12. I rehearse so there is a minimum focus on notes and maximum attention paid to my audience 5 4 3 2 1
13. My notes contain only “key words” so I avoid reading from a manuscript or technical paper 5 4 3 2 1
14. My presentations are rehearsed standing up and using my visuals 5 4 3 2 1
15. I prepare answers to anticipated questions, and practice responding to them 5 4 3 2 1
16. I arrange seating (if appropriate) and check audio-visual equipment in advance of the presentation 5 4 3 2 1
17. I maintain good eye contact with the audience at all times 5 4 3 2 1
18. My gestures are natural and not constrained by anxiety 5 4 3 2 1
19. My voice is strong and clear and is not a monotone 5 4 3 2 1

TOTAL SCORE

- If you scored between 80-95, you are an accomplished speaker who simply needs to maintain basic skills through practice.
- If your total score was between 60-80, you have the potential to become a highly effective presenter.
- If your score was between 40-60, use the tips here to work your presentations better
- If you scored between 30 and 40, you should show dramatic improvement with practice.
- If your total was below 30, roll up your sleeves and dig in. It may not be easy - but you can make excellent progress if you try.
- At the conclusion of this program, take this evaluation again and compare your scores. You should be pleased with the progress you have made.

I hope that was a realistic self assessment. Many a time we don’t realise how we sound or how we come across. Like the time I felt my voice was booming in my ears but I was actually mumbling. That is where a video and audio recording helps in a reality check.
“YOU ARE THE MESSAGE” –ROGER AILES

Observe yourself, when you are with people you are comfortable with. In the office corridors, when you are chatting with your colleagues. You may be leaning against the wall, totally comfortable, using your hands to gesture and emphasize as you speak. Your voice is excited and animated as you put your views across. That is the real you... and in the words of Roger Ailes – “You are the message.” It’s not your power point or your presentation. It is you and undeniably all of you.

From the moment you stand up to present an impression has already been cast about you in the minds of your audience. Apparently it takes only 7 seconds to cast the first impression and w r t presenting it really matters a lot. Almost impossible to undo.

Dr. ALBERT MEHRABIAN’S COMMUNICATION MODEL

There was a research done by a noted psychologist, Dr. Albert Mehrabian in 1980s on what factors made people trust others or what led to a lack of trust. This was something of a landmark and often cited in all cases of non-verbal communication.

According to him, there are only three ways we communicate in a face to face setting. One is through words – VERBAL. The other is through our voice – VOCAL which makes up for our tone, volume and inflection and the third is through the way we conduct ourselves – VISUAL, which is you – your appearance, body language and eye contact.

According to this research, whenever there is a discrepancy or non-alignment between a person’s words, vocals and visual cues, a person’s trust factor largely depends on the non-verbal cues. That is his body language and tone of his voice rather than the actual words said.

What is not right about this picture?

In my humble opinion, we need to reconsider....
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The visual and the tone of his voice do not match his words. It is because we are giving more weightage to the visual (55%) and then to the tone of his voice which we imagine would be pretty loud and angry (38%) and finally to his actual words (7%) only.

This in short is Albert Mehrabian’s theory. When faced with an inconsistency in verbal, voice and vocal – most of the time, we’ll believe the 93% non verbal element (i.e. 55% +38 per cent)

An inspiring video by Mr. Amitabh Bachchan – and reasons why we trust this man so much

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBdw8dI1nns

This man is Legend to most of us and needs no introduction.

He looks effortless in whatever he says and does. And the reasons, if you analyse – as to why he appeals to us so much are:

1. Great eye contact (he looks at us and comes across as confident)
2. Presence (good posture and meticulously turned out)
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3. Gesturing (using his hands to punctuate, displays enthusiasm
4. Facial animation
5. Vocal variety (the dips and rises in his voice)
6. No fillers (no umm, uhhs etc)
7. Humour
8. Talks naturally to us

So other than the great content that he shared – his father’s poem, **what also strikes us is that lot of things which appeal to us are non-verbal and he is almost talking to each one of us personally. Conversing. In the most natural way possible.**

And every time, someone talks to us genuinely, it stays with us.

So whether it is public speaking or presenting, there can be no inconsistencies between your vocal verbal and visual or else you present an image which cannot be trusted.

**BE SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST – ALIGN YOUR VOCAL, VERBAL AND VISUAL IMAGE.**

There can be no inconsistencies.

That is really the key. To be your true self when you are presenting. And typically what happens when we stand up to present – it is as if somebody else takes over. Our voice changes, becomes flat and stilted. We adopt some nervous mannerisms. Swing around or stand absolutely stiff. It is like a mask coming down or worse a shutter.

What we have to do is lift the mask, UNCHAIN and let your true self shine!
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3 REASONS WHY WE SPEAK

1. INFORM: Speech is a powerful medium. We use it to inform the audience about something. The tones and inflection in our voice, we can use them all to inform and convince. What is it? How is it done?

2. CONVINCING: We use speech to convince them or impress them with our ideas and vision or how we would like to do something.

3. PERSUADE OR CALL FOR ACTION: All talks and presentations need to have a ‘CALL FOR ACTION’. Why is it that you are speaking? What is the purpose? What do you want the audience to do? What actions should they take?

So at all times remember, there is a purpose to our talk.

A funny rule about present/talking – first tell them what you are going to say, then tell them and then remind them about what you have said. There is no being subtle about it. You have a point to drive in? You have a call for action? Be like a hammer. Drill it in.

1 REASON WHY THE AUDIENCE LISTENS TO YOU

WIIFM?

W – WHAT’S

I – IN

I – IT

F – FOR

M – ME?

THINK ABOUT IT. WHY SHOULD SOMEONE LISTEN TO YOU?
The fine Art of Articulation

Even in schools and colleges, where we trainers like to joke that we have a captive audience. Unless you are paying them, like our political parties do, the only reason someone will listen to us is because they hope to get something out of it. SO let us be true there and make it worth their time.

Begin by being grateful for the chance to present. You have a voice and someone wants to listen to it. It is always great to start on a humble note and thank your audience for being there.

And yes!! There’s a reason to it all. Everything falls into place. From my perspective, if I hadn’t got those three chances to speak, I wouldn’t have known that I would eventually go on and discover for myself that I actually love to speak to crowds. They like to listen to me. Sure, inside I am sweating it out and I have to prepare like a maniac but the end result – the connection, it is definitely worth it.

CREATING A FAVOURABLE IMPRESSION

There are two elements to every presentation

The content and the delivery

The content is the actual talk. The points we want to discuss, the examples to illustrate and the actions we want our audience to take. The words, the flow, the visuals. (the- what are you going to say?)

The delivery of the talk, this is the other 93 percent to prevent discrepancy. (remember Mehrabian?) this is the How of your talk.

Both are equally important. You may have an awesome delivery style and floor your audience, yet you might just leave them wondering – what was it all about?

Without content a talk goes nowhere. I remember a talk on Taxation I had attended at the CCGRT. It was conducted by someone from the Bombay Stock Exchange and I kid you not – I was floored at the depth of her knowledge, the layout of her presentation and the manner she delivered it. If you can connect with your audience over a topic like tax, you have it really going for you!!!

So there is a lot of planning and preparation that goes into a talk. And the shorter the talk, more the preparation involved.

In the words of Dale Carnegie,

“A talk is like a voyage. It must be charted. The speaker who starts nowhere, usually gets there.”
IMPORTANT SKILLS TO MASTER IN ORDER TO PERFECT DELIVERY

1. Posture
2. Movement
3. Eye Contact
4. Facial Expression
5. Gestures
6. Vocal variety
7. Pause

POSTURE :

This contributes a lot to your presence, your confidence and readiness to conduct the talk

HOW NOT TO STAND:

1. When presenting, don’t put your hands in your pockets. Ever. That smacks of being closed, arrogant and worse if you are jiggling coins in there.

2. Don’t stand on any one foot. Even if you are tired. With your hip jutting out at an angle.
3. Don’t cross your legs, or fold your hands. Don’t put your hands on your hips.

4. Don’t slouch
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Sway = makes others uncomfortable

Lordosis (chest out) = trying too hard

Kyphosis (slumping) = insecure

Forward Head = others feels personal space is being invaded

5. No arms behind the back or folded below the waist (fig Leaf)

If you are fidgeting your audience can sense your discomfort and makes them uncomfortable too.

POSTURE – GOOD IMPRESSION
1. Stand straight

2. Stand tall, with your shoulders back

3. Position your legs and feet and hip-width distance. Ladies can place their right foot forward. This is known as the ready position.

4. Keep your arms to your side. Use them to gesture as you speak. Keep it as natural as possible.

Start this way and get into your natural flow. Remember even if it feels awkward at first. Do practice it at every instance you can. Whether you are standing at the office canteen line or chatting to someone. Check yourself out in mirrors. Consciously remember, then gradually it becomes a part of you.

Keep a look out for your audience too. If they are slouching on their seats, lazing, looking elsewhere, the listening has clearly stopped before your speaking has and you need to grab their attention fast.
Other things that you are saying without saying:

**DRESS –UP**

When you grow up against a defence background, you understand the meaning of being impeccably turned out.

My father was in the Air Force and my brother-in-law in the Navy. They worshipped their uniform, to the extent that they were not allowed to even dry out in the sun for fear of losing colour. Buttons were polished and so were shoes. We grew up to a saying – ‘Shine your shoes that your face may shine.” Till date, when I see someone in front of me, I check their shoes out.

When you land up in a Corporate scenario, it pays to dress up according to the environment. Banks may be more formal in their dressing, smaller privately owned companies, media related
etc may be less conservative. Whatever the environment – Dress up. Specially when you are presenting.

Be well turned out. Your audience will appreciate a clean and presentable appearance and it is a mark of respect to them, to make an effort with your dressing.

MOVEMENT

Movement adds vigour to your presentation and vitality. Speakers who are able to work all their space to their favour are perceived as more confident. Further, movement allows you to use up all your nervous energy too.

But DON’T:

- Move to and fro (same step forward and back)
- Sway
- Move too slowly
- Move too fast (like a ping pong ball so that your audience goes dizzy keeping up with you)
- Get trapped in a small space and move back and forth on your heels.

MOVE WITH PURPOSE

- First look at one person, then move towards him, staying focused on him and talking to him only. Once you have moved, move your gaze to someone else and continue talking. This will take some practice but creates a wonderful connect.
- Move towards people within an arc, so you don’t intimidate them
- Park and stay for some time, don’t make your audience dizzy
- If you have your audience seated in a U-shape, be careful about moving into the U. Your back might be to some people and your voice will be projected away from them.

Some more practical tips

9 ways to use space in your presentation

by Olivia Mitchell

There are many benefits to movement in a presentation:

- It adds energy and variety to your presentation.
The fine Art of Articulation

- It makes you look more confident – because people who are nervous are generally frozen in one spot.
- And as an added bonus, if you move, you may start to feel more confident. That’s partly because movement will help dissipate the extra adrenalin in your system.

Movement got a bad name because of university lecturers pacing up and down. Audiences are distracted by mindless, repetitive movement. Movement should be interspersed with stillness. That way, they both have more impact.

Incorporate movement in your presentation by planning different positions on the stage (or front of the room) that you’ll present from. In the theatre, this is called “blocking”. Blocking is deciding on the position and movement of the characters as they move through the play. You can block your presentation too. Here are some ideas:

1. **State your Key Message from the Power Position**

   Your Key Message is the core of your talk. Choose one spot where you will stand and state your Key Message. It should be dead centre, and close to the audience.

   ![The Power Position](image)

2. **Map your structure on the stage**

   Using your physical space on the stage to map out your structure. It will help your audience anchor the different parts of your talk. Use these areas when you do a preview near the beginning of your presentation. Then return to that area of the stage for that part of the presentation.
3. Use a stage timeline
Where a story or explanation involves the passage of time, imagine a timeline across the stage and move along it to show the progression of time. Remember to make the past to the audience’s left – not your left.

4. Argue the pros and cons as if you were in a debate
In a debate, the people arguing for each side will stand at different sides of the stage. Although there’s only one of you, you can adopt this strategy. Stand on one side for the pros – and the other side for the cons.
5. Physically reflect the continuum of points of view

Points of view on a topic often exist along a continuum – from one extreme – to middle of the road – and out to the other extreme. Reflect this with where you stand on the stage as you describe each point of view.

6. Give each option its own spot

If you’re discussing a range of options, stand in a specific spot for each option as you describe it. When you refer back to an option later in your presentation, go back to that spot.

7. Story time

Have a general area of the stage for story-telling. When you’re telling a light-hearted story, it can be effective to move around as you’re talking. You’ll come across as chatty and conversational.
Where a story involves two or more characters in dialogue, have a specific spot where you deliver the lines of each character. Stay within the storytelling area.

8. Move close for emphasis

If you normally stay a couple of paces back from your audience, you can then exploit closeness for emphasis. Moving close to people is powerful. Even intimidating. But you can stand really close to someone, and look elsewhere. You get the powerful effect without intimidation.
9. Dance with your Slides

Adding the display of slides is a complicating factor. To keep as much flexibility as possible, I recommend placing the data show screen slightly off to the side. If the screen is in the middle, it’s easy to turn into a projectionist instead of a presenter. If it’s to the side, then you can still claim the power position. To avoid stepping into the beam of the data show, stick some duct tape on the floor as a reminder. (Note: I generally have the screen to my right because I also use a flipchart which I like to have to my left, so that when I turn around to write on the flipchart, I don’t have to move to the other side of it. I’m right-handed – if you’re left-handed, you’d flip this arrangement around).

You’ll also need to be aware of blocking the view of some parts of the audience. With this arrangement if you move slightly back and to the side, it will allow everyone in the audience to see. When they’ve seen the slide, move back closer to the audience, as you’ll lose impact standing further back for a long period of time.

When you want to draw attention to a slide, move back to your data show screen.

Explain your slides physically. Get in the beam.
The fine Art of Articulation

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

When you are not aware of it, your face reveals so much of you. Joy, anger, disgust, sadness, embarrassment, happiness all of it! Your face is an extremely important conveyor of your feelings and automatically lets your audience know.

Yes!! You!!!

ARE WE GOING TO ALLOW THIS???

I have something for you! Check this out!

Yes...as tiny as that!
Yet, once fear comes in or we get conscious, we freeze. We forget to smile, become extra serious or nervous and the mood changes. Remember, use your gestures as a catalyst for your facial expressions. Let your natural self be there presenting. You will come across as more genuine and will establish rapport easily. Of course, make sure it’s genuine and not a pasted put on one.

As a trainer, that’s my lesson. I nearly lost my first contract because I didn’t look trainer like!! Whatever that was supposed to be! But there’s no point smiling on inside if it is not visible on the outside! Reminds one of an era long gone when on national television, news was read out in a very dour and serious fashion (not that there is much to be happy about the news anyway) and on the other extreme we have Arnab today! So walk the mid path. Let your face reveal your emotions – one of the easiest ways to connect with your audience.

**EYE CONTACT**

Our eyes they say are the mirrors to our souls. They reflect what is happening within and when we hurriedly avert our eyes or refuse to engage in eye contact, the message is clear. You are either not confident or you have something to hide.

Eye contact should not be for more than 3 to 6 seconds. Too less is a negative and too much of eye contact can be intimidating.

**IN A GROUP**

Though you cannot have eye contact with everyone in a group, you can manage it very well. You can pick random people and deliver sentences, then choose someone else and complete the thought. Move from one side of the room to the other. Each time you connect with someone new, till there will be a time that you will have connected with everyone.
Eye contact makes everyone feel included and your talk will feel more like a conversation. It shrinks the room.

Try not to be like a lighthouse mere sweeping through but also stop to connect. Different cultures may have people who are uncomfortable maintaining eye contact, in which case they can also look at the foreheads- it would create the same effect.

**NOW THIS ONE**

Is true when you have people in your audience who are trying to trip you up or make you laugh or find fault with you.

Also a helpful tip, when someone has asked you a difficult question, which you have managed to answer but don’t look back at them. Don’t encourage them again!

**GESTURES**
Gestures are your hands, arms, face, eyebrows, lips, nose and everything else talking. They are a wide range and varied and at our natural best, we use many of them comfortably and unconsciously either in place of or along with our speech. Gestures can be pure expressive displays and allow us to communicate a variety of feelings and thoughts, from contempt and hostility to approval and affection.

**Gestures support and reinforce what you say**

**WHAT THEY DO FOR US**
The fine Art of Articulation

- Add energy and vitality to our talk
- Show our passion and enthusiasm – and if we aren’t passionate about what we are presenting, can’t expect the audience to be so either!
- Gestures are catalysts – the moment you use one you find your voice or tone changing or your facial expressions changing
- Gestures can display such variety and conviction – and well, we all need them in our talks because the energy they bring in can be so infectious.

A WORD OF CAUTION

I have a clear picture of this one. A geography class is in progress in school. A short haired teacher who had the habit of running both hands through her hair and using the words “We find ....”

Most sentences started like this. As you can clearly imagine – the class often forgot to listen to what she was actually speaking but kept a count of the number of times she said “We find!” In fact once, there was also a huge uproar as someone suddenly yelled “100!!!!”

- Don’t let your gestures distract from the actual content
- Realise that under stress, we tend to repeat some gestures too
- Sometimes, hold our hands behind our backs
- Or keep wringing them as if we were washing hands
- Or we keep them stuck at our sides
- Further, different gestures have different meanings in different cultures. Do research them before using or you may end up offending them.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUXtGQkJcQ0
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A good tutorial on body language and gestures

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4UEJMu0dA

How to present like Steve Jobs – His body language

PAUSE

The POWER OF PAUSE IN A SPEECH

- Helps the audience absorb and reflect
- Removes the uhhs and umms and “I mean ...” from your talk
- Makes you appear more confident
- Adds emphasis and punctuation to your speech
- Encourages others to speak
- Helps you listen.

Nervous presenters, do the opposite. They don’t pause. The words run jumbled and collide with each other in a rush to get everything of their chest. The result is counter-productive.

So understand first that you need to pause. It creates a great effect.

Secondly, whenever you find yourself repeating certain words or fillers – PAUSE

http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/pause-speech/

How to master the pause for greater effect! An excellent read.

VOICE AND VOCAL VARIETY
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This one specially has been my journey. When I first heard my voice on tape, it felt like some dead body was speaking, if they could speak. There was absolutely no voice tone or inflection. No change of pitch. Good lord! I actually thought it was somebody else!

When I was training to become a trainer, they taught us how to throw our voice around and practice some dialogues which expressed anger, or joy or surprise! After the initial shyness and feeling foolish syndrome, I have come to love this part and so do most of the participants of my programs. We actually all get out together and shout out the dialogues with fantastic gestures – just to loosen up and it is such amazing fun! And after that – when people get up to present – we see some amazing creativity. When we let our voice lose and bring in some variety to our tones, we lose all inhibitions.

TIP: Read out children’s stories loudly complete with voice changes and gestures! That’s good practice.

Record your voice daily on your phone. Send a message to yourself. Pep it up!
Get feedback from a friend

http://www.write-out-loud.com/quickeasyeffectivetipsforvocalvariety.html#pitch

Check this link for exercises on vocal tones, pitch and volume! Remember, just reading won’t do the trick. Do the exercises with someone so you can get some feedback too.

CREATING COMPELLING CONTENT

A very funny scene from the movie “3 Idiots” come to mind.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTwhTKVjINE&index=7&list=RDzLOQjk6oZ9g

This one shows how we love the use of language which sounds high brow and complicated just so that we can sound impressive. And discard the simple logic just because it sounds so simple.

This clip from the same movie shows a student explaining to the teacher the meaning of the word “Machine”. The teacher wants the technical book definition and the scene ends with him having to eat his words.

1. KNOW YOUR MATERIAL WELL, NEVER MEMORISE IT

If you are presenting, know your material well in advance. Create it and own it. Understand it. Practice it enough to know it through and through. Conversation is an art. No matter how many times we speak, no matter how well we memorise, it will always sound different.
2. KEEP IT SIMPLE

Understand that the purpose of our talk is not to impress the audience with the complexity and depth of our knowledge. It is to explain in the best and easiest way possible the purpose of our talk. Somewhere big, fancy words take away the true meaning of what we are actually trying to say.

3. WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE

If you are not aware of who your audience is, it will be highly unlikely that you will be able to satisfy their needs and expectations. Be aware whom you are presenting to. Their knowledge levels, their seniority levels, their levels of expertise and experience on the subject.

4. WHAT IS YOUR POINT OF VIEW ON THE TOPIC GIVEN TO YOU

Build your talk around this. This is your attitude, opinion or feeling about your subject which you can express with conviction. You will present the evidence and examples to support this. The stronger your conviction, the more confidently you can speak.

5. HOW WILL YOUR AUDIENCE BENEFIT?

Remember WIIFM? What’s in it for them? At least three benefits to your audience which is why you are trying to convince them.
6. WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE? WHAT IS THE CALL FOR ACTION?

What is it that you want your audience to do at the end of your talk? Some form of support from them? Some action to be taken? Ask for that.

Remember. There is no being subtle. Start with why you are presenting. Present. Then tell them why you had presented.

7. PREPARE, PRACTISE, PRESENT

We all may not have great ideas and views or brilliant products to present. But what we do have in our hands is the power to create a powerful presentation that can deliver a mark.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL POWER OF THREE IN COMMUNICATION

http://www.psychotactics.com/harness-the-psychological-power-of-3-to-improve-communication/

This is one thing which I have picked up from listening to speeches. They talk in threes. And some how that sticks in your brain.

Go down history and see as well. All popular rhetorics have honoured the rule of three ....
Example:

“Government of the people, by the people, for the people”

“Veni, vidi, vici” (I came, I saw, I conquered)

3 KEYS TO SUCCESS: PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE

Even the last three digits of your credit card on the reverse, are easy to remember because it is in threes.

Most of Steve Jobs presentations will have the reference to three...three stories, three major inventions, three features

The winning speech by Dhananjaya Hierttrachchi has...“three types of tears that a man can cry...”
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3 is powerful

3 helps you retain

When preparing your content, understand and be aware that you cannot present just about everything on the topic. Pick a point or two or maximum three to speak about. When you go too much into detail you lose your persuasiveness. And the audience loses interest.

It is best to stick to a maximum three points for easy retention of your audience.

“There are three examples I would like to share with you....”

BRAINSTORM EVERY POINT THAT YOU CAN THINK OF ON YOUR TOPIC

At the very beginning after you have a topic

STRUCTURING YOUR PRESENTATION/TALK

1. Know your Point of View
2. Start collecting every piece of fact, opinion or example, statistics or story that support your point of view
3. Arrange your thoughts in a sequence
   - Opening of the presentation
   - the body
   - Close
5. Arrange your information under each heading, whether opening, body or close.
6. Support your point of view with a very strong evidence/facts/back up
7. Three benefits to your audience
8. Call for action that you want from your audience

OPENING A SPEECH – LET US NOT MAKE IT BORING

Skip the traditional openings. Grab their attention. Forget talking about the afternoon or how wonderful the day is. Start with making your audience curious and then hold their interest.

The purpose of the Opening of a presentation is to grab the attention of your audience. There are numerous ways you can do it.

For instance if you wish to advocate measures for Road Safety, How do you create an impact?
Hard hitting numbers or statistics: 23,438 people died on the roads of.....in the last year alone. All of which could have been prevented.

A personal Story: Last Sunday as I drove down this road, I saw something which shook me to the core...

A Visual: I ask you to lean back and close your eyes. I want you to take your mind to this wonderful road you have just driven down. Imagine that you are in this flashy red car, which has it top down. You have a beautiful companion with you. The weather is cloudy and there is a cool breeze blowing against your hair. As you drive past, you rejoice in the greenery around you.

Now imagine, that as you drive, the trees are getting drier and drier. There are no leaves now on the trees lining the road. As you go further, you notice that the milestones are actually gravestones of all the people who died on this road. The white dividers are no longer white. They are splashes of red.....

A powerful visual evokes powerful emotions.

Today, I would like to share with you three easy ways in which we can ensure that Palm Beach Road is no longer called the Killer Road...

Make a powerful opening. Paint a picture. Spin a story. Get in humour where relevant. Get a quote. Create an analogy. It is your presentation. You have every right to take it where and how you want to!

I remember a presentation where they had to design products to replace keys. The presenter asked the audience, the men to put their hands in their pockets and take out their keys. He then turned to the ladies – asked them to open their bags and look for their keys. Stereotyped the women no doubt - but drew some good natured laughs!

THE BODY OF YOUR TALK

- 3 points which you want to focus on.
- Remember create pictures in their minds. Pictures are worth a thousand words.
- Enumerate your points. Firstly,
  - Secondly....
  - Thirdly.....
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- Close one section, before you go to the next.
  (We talked of ...., now let us look at....)

- Backed with evidence, examples, numbers and facts.
- Make it a little personal. Make it count.
- Keep the interest alive.
- Make the numbers come alive by comparing them to something else
  For instance, the Company created enough valves to save 400 lives in the last year alone.

THE CONCLUSION
- Your point of view
- The benefits to the Audience
- Your call for action
- Re-iterate what you have already said.

The closing of your presentation should also add to a positive impression.

Example:

Summarize: “The key points to remember are...”

Appeal to their noble self: “In the interest of the community ....”

Throw down the challenge: “It is up to you...”

Dramatize: a slide showing the final project.

  A powerful quote!

Lastly, have fun with your presentation. You have the license to make it as creative as you can!

Some brilliant presentations/Speeches

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x7qPAY9JqE4

Steve Jobs introducing the IPhone.

Please note the slides.

His catch line. “Apple reinvents the phone”.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFPwDe22CoY

The speech that made Obama President - Analysed
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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgyI5vbTnNs

Dhanajaya Hiettrachchi – I see something.

The Winning speech of the Toastmasters Championship, 2014.

The clever use of props and the catch line – “I see something”. Brilliant humour!!! One of my favourite speeches.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gO6cFMRqXqU

A truly motivating and inspiring Speech from Steve Jobs at the commencement Address at Stanford. “STAY HUNGRY, STAY PERSONAL” The power of three. Three stories. Connecting the dots.

USING VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids enhance our presentation. They can be Power Point presentations, props, models, flip-charts or products too. You can use them in combination as well.

ADVANTAGES:

- They enhance your presentation
- Add drama, colour and vibrance
- Helpful to make complex data easy to understand
- Useful to show sequence
- Improves listener retention (10% of what is read is remembered, 20 % of what is heard is remembered and 50% of what is seen is remembered!)

DRAWBACKS:

- Don’t let the visual aids distract from your presentation. You are the message. Not your Power Point
- Don’t use them to illustrate ideas that are easy to explain
- Don’t use them as notes

HELPFUL TIPS:

- Use only one concept per visual. Avoid clutter. Aim for clarity
- Size: use big fonts, big pictures, big graphs
- Graphics: visual retention is higher. Use charts, graphs and pictures to help listeners grasp appoint and to remember
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- Colour: use colour to highlight. Use light backgrounds with dark fonts or dark backgrounds with light fonts. Use contrasting colours to draw attention to important points
- Finalize: proof-read, spell check and test readability from the distance your listeners will see the slides

Dos: FOR A POWERPOINT

- 6 x 6 by rule (not more than 6 lines and not more than 6 words per line)
- Font size 32
- Make data visual

DON’T DO THIS

- Here is the first bullet item for this screen
- The next bullet item - it has far more to say
- This bullet item was hard to fit in this space
- This bullet item was very important to include
- Now it’s time to see this very important bullet
- Pretty soon the screen is filled with text
- And the audience has to work too hard
- Interest in the speaker’s presentation may be lost

In the real world, you might need to add more data to your Power Point. You may have to provide a copy of your presentation to the audience as a take-away. You can prepare two copies – one more detailed which you can give to the audience as a handout.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2-ntLGOyHw4

Steve Jobs – keynote for iphone analysed.

HANDOUTS:

- Handouts supplement a presentation by providing additional information and summaries. They provide supplementary data, worksheets, outlines or questionnaires.
- Design them well because they carry your reputation
- Inform at the beginning if you will be giving handouts and if they are intended to replace note taking
- Time the distribution of the handouts right
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- Wait till they are distributed and the audience has looked through before you begin. You don’t want to compete with your own handout.

MANAGING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: AUDIENCE INTERACTION

A lot of people are fearful of audience interaction as they worry they may be asked a question to which they may not know the answer to but in my opinion, a participative and interactive audience is the ultimate compliment. (At least, they didn’t sleep!)

So fear not, look for ways to increase your audience participation

- Ask questions
- Invite questions
- Invite opinions
- Ask them to get into small groups and brainstorm and report back
- Ask for volunteers

http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/audience/asking-questions-audience/

How to ask questions of your audience – wonderful tips

MANAGING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

This is the road to building rapport with your audience
As you get more comfortable answering questions, your presentation will become more like a conversation and your true self will emerge

Helps you gain more power and establish confidence
You will gain an insight into the heart and mind of your audience

It will help you understand how well your audience has understood your points and that is valuable feedback for next time.
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What if they are no questions???

Here is what you say. In this scenario, the kind of questions I am typically asked are...... that should set the ball rolling. In case still you get no questions, then it would be safe to assume that you had answered them all during the course of your presentation!

What if I don’t know the answer??

It is perfectly fine to say you don’t know and you will revert to the group if it is important for all. It is better than cooking up a story.

TIPS IF YOU ARE IN A GROUP

- Answer to all even if one person has asked a question. Involve the whole group
- Be brief. Don’t start loving the sound of your voice so much that you start a new presentation
- Don’t let one or two people alone dominate the Q&A session. Encourage questions from other participants too.
- If you have any hostile participant....remember that tip. DO NOT continue to make eye contact with him after you have answered his question. DO not conclude by looking at that person. Answer the group
- You don’t need an affirmation to check if you answered appropriately. If you answered to the best of your ability – then that’s it.
- Do not say “Good Question!!!” it sounds insincere and has been over done!
- DO Not argue. Even if you win the battle, be gracious.
- In case you are faced with hostility
  - Take a pause
  - Breathe in deep
  - Answer the question
  - Instead of saying yes ...but try saying  yes...and ..another way of looking at it...
  - Stay focused. Answer the question to the group. But don’t. Repeat . DON’T LOOK BACK

Finally close your presentation once again by reiterating your point of view. The Benefits to the audience and the Call for Action.

- Thoroughly prepare what you are going to say
- Rehearse at least thrice.
- Take a video recording and analyse yourself and areas of development
- Do not memorise your speech
Be enthusiastic and vibrant and full of energy!
Be humble
Use ‘we’ instead of ‘you’
Establish rapport with your audience

BE CREATIVE!

It is the start…

As we come to the end of this first chapter on the mastering the Art of Articulation, I hope you realise that our mind has the capacity to hype up our fears a zillion times.

In the words of Edmund Hilary...

“IT IS NOT THE MOUNTAINS THAT WE HAVE TO CONQUER....BUT OURSELVES”

Believe me. It is do-able and you may just begin to love presenting as you go on to become an accomplished speaker.

There is only one way. Start with the end.

Visualise yourself presenting with eloquence and enthusiasm
See your audience participative and receptive to you
Work backwards. Develop all the skills you need
Face your fears
Develop your own unique style

Dazzle with your presentations!
Bibliography and some additional readings

Compilations from:

Dale Carnegie “High Impact Presentations”

Dale Carnegie “The quick and easy way to Effective Speaking”


http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/truth-remembers/

http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/presentation-books/five-ideas-resonate/