



Presenting4Success[®]

Engaging Audiences

“There is no ‘secret’ to being a successful presenter – just prepare, know your subject, and care.” - Leo Bascaglia

Engaging Audiences

iSpeak[®] prepared this workbook for use in the area of Training and Development for continuing education. It is intended that these materials will be used to assist students in the learning process during a presentation, after the presentation for review, and continued learning as a reference guide.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Table of Contents

Unit One: First Impressions	7	Corporate Storytelling	41
Best Presentation Ever	8	Storyboarding	42
What does the audience care about?	9	How to Tell a Great Story	42
Open with Attention	10	Every Leader Has a Story	44
Presentation Openings	11	Essential Stories for Leaders	45
Presentation #1 Expectations	13	Explain Yourself Stories	46
Stage First Impressions	14	Paint the Future Story	47
Essential Communication Skills	16	Customer or Product Story	48
Power of the Pause	18	Counter-Argument Stories	49
Vocal Power	19	Functions of Corporate Stories	50
Energy Factor	20	Presentation #3: Why Me Story	51
Unit Summary	22	What's Your Story?	52
Unit Two: Inspiring Audiences	23	Presentation #4 Corporate Story	53
Avoiding the Lull	24	Unit Summary	54
Colorful Items	25	Implement to Improve	55
Analogies / Metaphors / Simile	27	Continuous Self Improvement	56
Using Visual Aids	29	Satori	57
Audience Involvement	31	Kaizen	58
Asking Questions	32	21-day Habit	59
Presentation #2 Structure	33	iSpeak Courses	60
Presentation #2 Notes	34	Appendix	61
Unit Summary	35	Presentation Resources	62
Unit Three: Corporate Storytelling	37	Recommended Reading Materials	63
Functions of Stories	38	Presentation Tools	64
Story Components	40		

Unit One: First Impressions

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” – Benjamin Franklin

The ability to present well is vital to achieving advancement for yourself and for your ideas. Effective presentations provide the opportunity to communicate your ideas in an organized manner. They can inform your audience about a particular subject or influence your audience to take a particular action. Few skills in life will contribute to your success as much as presentation skills, because they are integral in all other aspects.

Presenting4Success: Mastery is the iSpeak course designed to take your current speaking abilities and push them to new limits. When you accept the fact that there will always be something for you to improve, you can begin to understand the journey of powerful and effective speaking and not the destination. True professionals recognize that they never reach the destination of great speaking.

Practicing the vocal abilities for capturing audience attention to relay the true meaning of a presentation is the best method for implementing these techniques. In this unit, you will have an opportunity to practice your delivery skills.

Unit Objectives

- Presentation process for effective presentations
- Define your Presentation Purpose
- Identify an Opportunity for Persuasion
- Connect with your Audience
- Explore the importance of first impressions when speaking
- Deliver your first presentation of the day

Exercise: Presentation Preparation

Identify the presentation situation, purpose, and audience for your upcoming presentation.

Situation

How many people: _____

Location:

You

Purpose: By the end of your presentation, what do you want the audience to know, feel, and do?

Know: _____

Feel: _____

Do: _____

Why are you the one giving this presentation? What credentials/experience do you have?

The Audience

How much do they already know about your subject? About you? What will their reaction likely be to your presentation?

What does the audience care most about?

Stage First Impressions

“We succeed only as we identify a single overriding objective, and make all other considerations bend to that one objective.” - Dwight D. Eisenhower

Whether you realize it, or not, people are watching you... We all consider what a speaker is wearing, how they carry themselves, what time they arrive, how they sit, how they stand, what they bring with them, how talkative or quiet they are, and we make decisions about that person based on those observations. When we first meet someone, we “size them up” and begin categorizing them.

Your first impression as a speaker begins long before you take the stage.

How your audience views you will determine the impact of your presentation. The influence of the speaker on the success of a presentation has been studied for thousands of years. Aristotle, in his book *Rhetoric*, spoke of the persuasion that depends on the personal character of the speaker, their credibility, competence, integrity, likeableness, and forcefulness. According to the Graduate School of Business at N.Y.U. study by Michael Solomon, Ph.D., Social Psychologist and Chairman of the Marketing Department, people make eleven decisions about you in the first seven seconds of contact.

- Educational Level
- Economic Level
- Ethnic Background
- Trustworthiness
- Level of Sophistication
- Perceived Credibility, Believability, Competence, & Honesty
- Role Identification
- Level of Success
- Political Background
- Religious Background
- Desirability

Exercise: Ways to make a fantastic first impression

List some of the ways you can control the first impression you will make on your audience.

Stage First Impression Mistakes

Each of the following should be avoided when taking the stage. They will either send a poor message or will create a “speaker’s well” that you will forever be trying to climb out of during the presentation. Remember that when you take the stage you are setting the bar for yourself.

- Apologizing** When a speaker apologizes right out of the gate, the audience will immediately begin to think about how the speaker has already let them down. Even if the audience was completely unaware of the speaker being nearly late and arriving just minutes before he / she was to begin, an apology will only draw attention to the negative and set the bar of credibility lower than you want it.
- A Plan** Speakers are entrusted with the audience’s time. When you have an audience of 100 individuals, each investing one hour of their time, the actual expense for their time alone can reach into the tens of thousands of dollars. If a speaker wastes the audience’s time by not providing to the expectations that were set, the audience will not be pleased. For a first impression, it needs to be obvious that the audience is going to get what they came for.
- Dress Code** Your audience has an expectation before you take the stage, an expectation on you, your credibility, your capabilities, your intellect and your ability to communicate. How you dress should be reflective of what the audience is expecting. Give them what they want! As a first impression, anything you can do from an appearance standpoint to confirm that you are going to deliver to the expectations will help with your performance.
- Stature** Similar to your dress code, the audience is there to see an expert. They expect that since you are on the stage and they are not, you should be able to educate, inform or entertain at an expert level. Your command of the stage will be judged by your physical stature and posture. With chin held high, shoulders slightly back and a solid movement onto the stage, the audience will see confidence.
- Energy** Depending on the situation, you may want to begin your presentation with either high or low energy. If you are kicking off a concert or a sales convention, the audience will want to see a high level of energy from you as you take the stage. If you are starting an assembly of a stockholders or a discussion on serious issues, the audience may expect a lower level of energy, but still confident and solid in delivery.

Exercise: You Take the Stage!

Now that you’ve planned your entrance, let’s see it in action!

Vocal Power

“Don’t Make Assumptions. Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings.” - Miguel Angel Ruiz

Your voice is often the most overlooked and underrated communication tool we possess in terms of getting the attention of your audience. Vocal Power is a presenter’s secret advantage for influencing and persuading audiences.

Punching Key Words

Pauses are used clear the noise away from key concepts and to let ideas sink in. Punching is used to emphasize key words. Punching a word is like putting it in bold or italicizing it. To punch a key word, you can slightly raise your volume, slow down your annunciation, and add a gesture. Punching and pausing should be used together to increase your vocal power.

Tips on using your voice include:

- Warm up** Make sure to speak out loud any names, tricky word combinations, or complex phrases before you stand to speak. Practicing increases the likelihood that these hard-to-say phrases will roll off your tongue when it counts.
- Drink** Drinking room temperature or slightly warm liquids will soothe the throat and prepare it for a work out. The worst liquids you can apply are ice cold and / or carbonated drinks.
- Let gestures help** If you typically have a flat or monotone vocal delivery, deliberately incorporate emphatic gestures when you speak key words and phrases. You will naturally emphasize and punch the words delivered simultaneously with a gesture.
- Microphones** If you have practiced your delivery without a microphone and PA system, but the actual presentation will be delivered with a PA system, the delivery may have to be toned down. Practicing with the microphone, if possible, will always be the desired form of rehearsal.
- Avoid “preaching”** When speaking to a large crowd, some speakers feel the need to raise their volume even when they are utilizing microphones and they hold that level of volume throughout the speech. This can be interpreted by the audience as if you are “preaching” to them. When the tone is brought up and down throughout the speech, it is interpreted more as a conversational tone.

Exercise: Punching

Standing at your chair, deliver a line from presentation #1 and purposefully punch a key word or phrase and add an emphatic gesture.

Energy Factor

“Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.” - Oprah Winfrey

You can’t expect an audience to be enthusiastic about something you aren’t excited about. Presentation author Doug Stanart concluded, “Your audience will have just about as much excitement about your presentation as you do, and no more.” Enthusiasm is very catchy. Most audiences will match your level of enthusiasm pound for pound.

According to the Lamalle Report on Top Executives of the 1990s, one of the most important factors in determining financial success by those earning over \$250,000 is being enthusiastic and having a positive attitude (46%).

Emotional Contagion

Did you know emotions are “catchy?” Just as we can catch a cold from another person, we can also catch their enthusiasm or negativity. It’s a concept called *emotional contagion*.

As a speaker you are intentionally or unintentionally transmitting emotions during your talk. The audience will synchronize their feelings to the feelings you are transmitting. Are you nervous? The audience will start to feel anxious, too. Enthusiastic? You’ll find the audience smiling and sitting forward.

How does this happen? The theory says that the sender (you) transmits their emotions through facial expressions, body postures, vocalizations, and story content. The receiver (audience) mimics the sender’s facial expressions in small ways (micro-expressions), and then begins to synchronize their feelings to the sender’s.

If you’ve ever experienced excitement from the crowd at a concert that seemed to feed on itself or the anger from a stadium of sports fans at a bad referee call, you’ve experienced emotional contagion.

Using It Deliberately

The audience is reading your emotional state both consciously and subconsciously. That’s why it’s important to *manage* the emotions you are transmitting. Is your presentation designed to influence your audience to adopt a new policy? Better show some enthusiasm. Are you trying to warn the team that their sales numbers are low? Better show some irritation.

The biggest problem in this area is when your emotions *don’t match* the point of your message. Let’s say you are speaking on exciting new research, but you are very nervous to speak before the crowd. Your voice quivers, you pace, and say “uh” while looking at the floor. Instead of feeling enthusiastic about your proposal, the audience leaves feeling unsure and anxious.

Exercise: Energy Mirror

Unit Summary

In this unit you learned the following:

If you want your audience to retain information and take action as a result of your presentations, creating clear mental images is critical. The best way to ensure you are delivering a vivid message is to incorporate a variety of the following methods to convey your message. Information is absorbed in direct proportion to its vividness. When you develop your next presentation, utilize some of the following suggestions for supporting materials to result in a more memorable presentation.

- To avoid a lull in attention, include colorful items. People will give more attention to items that are novel or are colorful.
- Information is absorbed in direct proportion to its vividness. When you develop your next presentation, utilize supporting materials.
- Humor can be used when you communicate to groups of individuals to invigorate your message and improve the reception of your message by the audience.
- Visual aids are another way to capture attention and help the audience retain the information you present.
- Similes, metaphors and analogies all help to explain a situation better. They will create a vivid image in the mind of the audience which also makes the presentation more memorable.
- Pauses can be used effectively to add impact to your message. Some common uses for pauses include:
 - Pause as a transition to a new topic
 - Pause to regain their attention
 - Pause to make the other person feel uncomfortable
 - Pause for emphasis
 - Pause to touch their emotions
 - Pause to allow reflection on a rhetorical question
- Vocally speakers can use their voice to change volume, inflections, intonation and pacing to add emphasis and to further captivate the audience.

Unit Two: Inspiring Audiences

“Human behavior flows from three main sources: desire, emotion, and knowledge.” – Plato

How can you capture your audience’s attention? Inspire them? Move them to action? Help them remember you above all of the other presenters? Humor and storytelling has captured the attention and imaginations of audiences for centuries. By utilizing effective and related stories, metaphors and humor audiences will retain more of the information presented for a longer period of time. Practicing your skills in humor and storytelling can improve your effectiveness in delivering presentations.

Creating suspense, interest, and attention is essential to getting your message across. This can be accomplished by effectively using pauses, vocal inflections, team presentations and transitions. In the past, you have witnessed effective presentations that are easy to follow and flow extremely well. The logical continuum of thoughts seems to flow effortlessly for the speaker and is also just as easy for the audience to follow. Transitions make that possible.

Unit Objectives

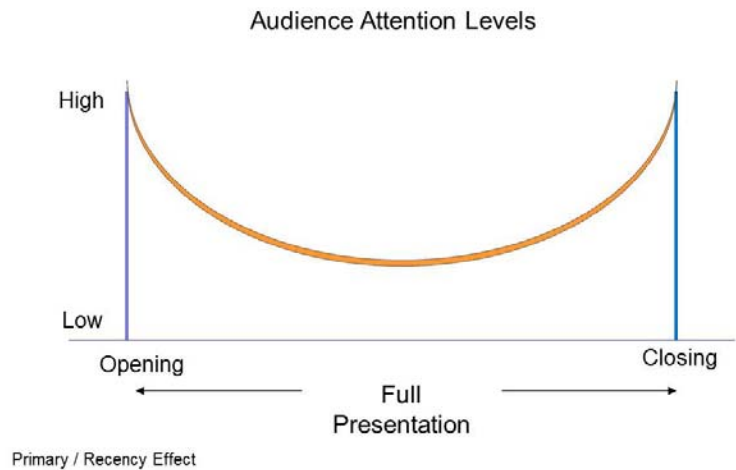
- Using colorful items to illustrate main points will keep the group engaged
- Incorporating visual aids as elaboration
- Telling Stories to engage, captivate and educate audiences
- Designing metaphors and analogies that can be used to simplify complex situations
- Examine the intricate methods for achieving your goal with proper utilization of your vocals
- Ask questions as a way to encourage involvement

Avoiding the Lull

“I have a theory about the human mind. A brain is a lot like a computer. It will only take so many facts, and then it will go on overload and blow up.” - Erma Bombeck

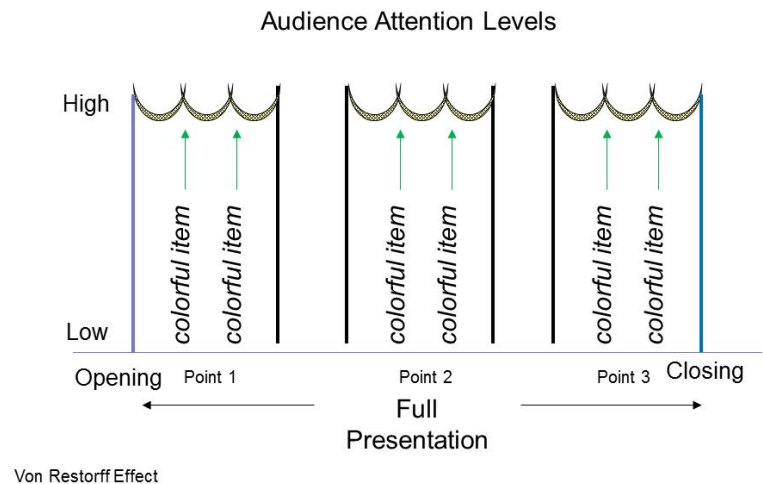
In business, we are faced with information fatigue because we are likely receiving communication from multiple channels simultaneously: texts, emails from co-workers and customers, phone calls, instant messages (or same-time communication), and people popping into our workspace unannounced. And, like it or not, most of our group communication is centered on PowerPoint. It has become the standard way to communicate in meetings. Because of this, people are experiencing overload and may tune you as a presenter out altogether.

The primary / recency effect says that we will most likely remember the first and last things spoken to us in a given time. If you are the only person presenting, that means that your opening and closing will be the most-recalled information. What if you are the second presenter from a group of three? That puts you at a distinct disadvantage because audiences are likely to remember the first and last presentations given that day.



Countering the Lull

Fortunately, research shows that there are ways you can regain the audience’s attention so that they will be more likely to remember your message. Hedwig Von Restorff was a researcher who, in 1933, coined the term “Von Restorff Effect.” She found that people will give more attention to items that are novel or are colorful. Building on this, researchers have found numerous ways to make material more memorable, using what we call *colorful items*.



Colorful Items

“A theme is a memory aid; it helps you through the presentation just as it also provides the thread of continuity for your audience.” - Dave Carey

Von Restorff Effect

When a subject was quickly shown a list of animals with one animal printed in red ink, which animal do you think each person paid attention to and remembered? However, when color was *overused*, the memory effect was lost.

One Colorful Item

Elephant
Dog
Horse
Monkey
Sheep
Chicken
Hamster

Too Many Colorful Items

Elephant
Dog
Horse
Monkey
Sheep
Chicken
Hamster

Review your content for the most important points. What would you like your audience to pay close attention to and remember when the presentation is over? These are the points that you should add *color* to.

Types of Colorful Items

Facts, statistics, and examples

Uncovering evidence that will help make your case enhances the credibility and persuasiveness of your presentation. Are you asserting that American fathers should spend more time with their children? Cite a statistic that contrasts how many hours on average an American father spends with his kids versus an Australian father.

Putting it another way: metaphors, similes, and analogies

Sometimes, to get a realistic sense of the size or logic of a topic, it's helpful to put it into other terms. When an energy company says they have 412MM BTUs underneath the ground, you might put that number in terms of Goodyear blimps... “That’s like have two Goodyear Blimps buried underneath your office building!” Or perhaps you want to show how ludicrous it is that your company has out-dated compressors. You could compare it to the car industry: “If our company were GM, we’d be making cars today that used 1970’s technology to make ignition switches!”

Stories

Stories can be true or mythical (but represent some moral or truth). You can tell a personal story or tell a story that happened to someone else. You might ask another person to give their story: in person, as a printed article, or on video (testimony).

Visual Aids

Showing is usually more powerful than telling. Think of a visual to represent or illustrate your concept: a picture or a diagram. You might go further and use a prop or model to demonstrate your concept.

Using Visual Aids

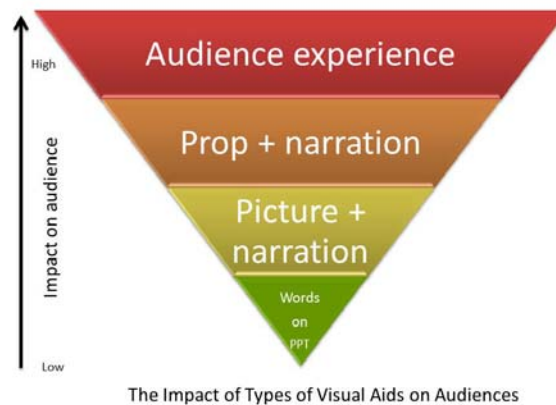
“A picture is worth a thousand words.” - Napoleon Bonaparte

A presentation with visual aids is more persuasive, as you can see from the two studies below.

- Researchers at the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Business found that presenters who used visual aids were rated by listeners as: better prepared, more professional, more persuasive, more credible and more interesting
- Statistics from the University of Minnesota show that when a speaker stands up to give a presentation and uses visual aids, the audience is 43 percent more likely to be persuaded and will pay 26 percent more for a product or service.

As much as visual aids can make you more credible, they can also quickly drop your credibility. As a warning, other studies and research show that if listeners or audience members think that visual aids are poor, their confidence in the speaker declines.

Levels of Visual Aids



Redundancy principle

Have you ever watched a foreign movie with captions in your own language at the bottom? Or, maybe you've accidentally turned on captions on your TV even though the show was in your native language. It's distracting, isn't it? It is a challenge to read the captions, listen to the dialog, and watch the actor's on the screen all at the same time. The same is true in PowerPoint.

Visual + Narration is better than Text + Narration or Text + Pictures + Narration because when you are speaking AND there is much to be read on your slides, it's redundant. People can only attend to one message at a time, and by narrating what you have written, you are opening two channels of verbal communication.

Asking Questions

“All of the top achievers I know are life-long learners... Looking for new skills, insights, and ideas. If they’re not learning, they’re not growing... not moving toward excellence.” - Denis Waitley

In her 1912 book, *“The Question as a Means of Efficiency in Instruction: A Critical Study of Classroom Practice,”* Romiett Stevens, a PhD from Columbia University, stated that approximately 80% of an instructor’s day was spent asking questions of audience members. However, you must ask good questions in order to foster the interaction between the speaker and the audience. The types of questions we ask can make all the difference between an engaging presentation and a less effective, quiet one.

Questioning Benefits

According to an old Irish saying, “Questioning is the door of knowledge.” Asking questions of your audience is an important part of creating a successful presentation. Questions stimulate thought and encourage participation. They also help you adjust the presentation to the audience’s interest, by uncovering misconceptions or biases. The benefits of asking questions include:

- **Increased Interest** - Asking questions increases and improves audience participation. Questions can come from the speaker or from a participant. Adults are interested in hearing questions from other adults, as it generally applies to a real-world situation. Participants feel they add to the presentation if they can ask and answer questions from the speaker.
- **Stimulates Thinking** – Adult learners are more alert when they are challenged to think. They pay closer attention and think more about the subject if they know that questions will be asked. Presenters who ask questions and allow audience member questions are fostering a learning environment.
- **Reveals attitudes** – When an audience member participates in the presentation, their responses show how they feel about the message and the presentation. Understanding and uncovering these attitudes are important to the speaker, as they reveal the presence or absence of motivation.
- **Permits Contribution** – Questions add to the material and content of a presentation, as audience members will have ideas about the material and how it applies to their situations. This type of contribution should be encouraged and is good for the learning environment, as it stimulates interest and adds variety.
- **Provides Reinforcement** – Audience members will remember important points of the presentation when the speaker asks questions. Asking a question about a particular point helps emphasize that idea. When the correct response is given, it reinforces the correct ideas in the audience members’ minds.
- **Checks Understanding** – Direct questioning is one of the best ways to check the understanding of ideas of audience members. This approach tells the speaker if the methods, techniques, and approach used are working. How an audience member answers a question will show exactly where the presentation was poor and what areas to focus on moving forward.

Presentation #2 Structure

Exercise: Supporting Material

Write out the key point and plan the three ways you will elaborate on it. For example, you might design an analogy, find a visual aid, or facilitate an audience activity. **YOU MAY NOT CHOOSE STORY.**

Key Point #1

Colorful Item #1

Colorful Item #2

Colorful Item #3

Unit Three: Corporate Storytelling

“There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.” - Ursula K. LeGuin

Great speakers don't just relay information, they take the audience on a journey. The speaker gets the audience to visualize an actual experience rather than just absorb data. The images are created so vividly in the mind of the audience that sometimes they can't even recall if they actually saw the picture in their mind as part of a slide presentation, or if the image was created in their mind with the assistance of a brilliant story and movement with purpose.

Some speakers may say, “But I don't have any stories to tell.” That just is not true. If you plan on speaking for business, case studies and examples from other customer situations can provide the supporting material your clients are looking for. Speakers need only start observing their lives a little closer and they will discover many stories that can be utilized in their presentations.

Stories are powerful because if we can visualize an experience from the speaker's oration, we are not only more likely to enjoy the experience, but we are more likely to remember the experience, as well.

Unit Objectives

- Learn the functions of stories
- See how corporate stories are unique
- List the six types of corporate stories
- Identify when to tell a corporate story
- Write your own stories

Functions of Stories

“Anyone can tell a story. Take some things that happen to you, dress them up, shuffle them about, add a dash of excitement, a little color, and there you have it.” - Lloyd Alexander

Some stories are only to entertain, but most stories have a purpose. Stories can:

- **Tell us who we are** – birth stories, childhood histories, family genealogies, cultural stories, and religious stories help us gain and develop our identities.
- **Explain the world** – stories that explain why something happens the way it does can give us a sense of understanding and control in our worlds. The story of Adam and Eve, Greek mythology, and histories are all ways we learn how our world works.
- **Inspire us to action** – stories of others who have put their values in action or who have taken risks can motivate us to try our own adventures as well. Stories about people living out their values can teach us how to put our values into action, too.
- **Cause us to be cautious** – cautionary tales are common, especially in childhood. The Aesop’s fable *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* is a story that teaches us not to pretend to be in trouble when we are not because when trouble truly comes, no one will believe our cries for help.

What’s a story?

A story can be fact or fiction and usually has a hero (or main character). Sometimes, the main character is a villain (as in a cautionary tale). Other components of a story are:

- Engaging opening
- Interesting plot
- Well-developed and clear structure
- Action
- Suspense
- Identifiable decision point or climax
- Satisfying ending
- Vivid use of language in word choice and imagery
- Strong themes or even a moral

Stories versus examples

If your message is *Working dads should spend more time with their children*, then you might give an example to elaborate: “For example, Working Dads in Australia spend an average of 69 minutes a day giving their full attention to their children.”

Unlike examples, stories often include emotions and specific, colorful details: “Mark Ulrich grew up in Perth, Australia as the son of a miner. Mark remembered his dad leaving for the night shift at the mine with clean, dark blue overalls and precisely cut hair. Each morning, he would return, covered head to toe in soot. It was even in his ears. After a good scrubbing, he would enter the kitchen with a smile. Despite being bone tired, Mark’s dad cooked him eggs and toast every morning before school.”

Corporate Storytelling

“A story has its purpose and its path. It must be told correctly for it to be understood.”
- Marcus Sedgwick

Storytelling with a purpose

Corporate storytelling, however, is used to achieve a business-worthy outcome. Like the stories of our childhood, organizational stories are often *prescriptive*, telling us how we should behave.

Examples of values and competencies

Stories also provide human realism to difficult-to-grasp corporate performance measures and competencies. If we can tell a story how a person has mastered a competency and the good results, we are painting a vivid picture for how our audience can achieve the same results. On the other hand, we can tell a cautionary tale of someone who failed in measuring up to a performance goal and why that person failed. We gain insight from both kinds of stories: positive and cautionary.

Quickly assessing people

Stories can also save us time as we try to assess people. We often use stories to tell us whether thither people are trustworthy, reliable, and competent:

“Jonathan got assigned to my project team. What do you know about him?”

“Oh, I worked with him on the manufacturing black belt team. He did really well with persuading the directors to adopt the new procedures. He’s a good guy. But, don’t ask him to run statistics... leave that to someone else!”

We tell mini-stories about people all the time in order to help others know if the person is trustworthy, reliable, and competent.

Really, there’s no other way we get our data about people. HR doesn’t (yet) keep a database of a trustworthiness index on each of us. Our performance records are still confidential. The only way someone who hasn’t worked with us knows if we are reliable or not is by what others say about us.

How long should a story be?

Each story within your presentation should be only long enough to make your point. Strive for around 2 minutes, with an absolute maximum of 3 minutes. Anything longer likely includes extraneous details or side issues that don't move the story ahead. Aim for a crisp rendition, leaving the audience so engaged that they want more.

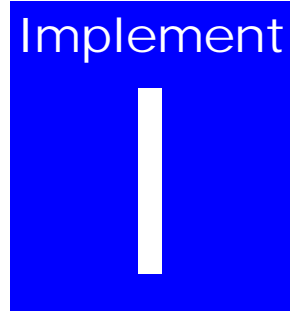
Gossip

Gossip is defined as any discussion of another person who is not present. We are often taught that gossip is wrong, and not to engage in it. Actually, malicious gossip is a small sub-category of gossip. The majority of stories we tell about other people are to determine their credibility, intentions, competence, or similarity to us.

Functions of Corporate Stories

“Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today.” - Robert McKee

Occasion	Type of story to tell
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You are new • You have a personal flaw that needs explaining • You need to build trust • You need to explain your motives • People doubt your motives • People believe you have a hidden agenda • You have genuinely good intentions and reasonable personal goals 	Explain Yourself
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group needs motivation to achieve a goal • The team is not united • The team is growing tired in their efforts • The team does believe they are important to the overall goal • The team sees their jobs as less important than others’ jobs • The team does not feel ownership in the organization 	Paint the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to bring data to life • Your group is not taking the numbers seriously (so you show them how they impact real people) • You want to show how a team’s jobs affect the end-user so that the team feels a sense of pride • You want to give an example of <i>how</i> a customer uses a product or service • You want to tell a cautionary tale about what happens when a person <i>does not</i> do things correctly 	Customer or Product
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You suspect that there will be objections to your proposal • You want to show that you are savvy and have anticipated the audience’s doubts and fears 	Counter-Argument



Implement to Improve

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”
- Johann Goethe

In life, to be a successful, you must have a plan. **Presenting4Success: Engaging Audiences** has provided you with the information and the inspiration to improve yourself towards personal success; the final two steps are up to you. You must implement what you have learned and that will lead to improvement.

While the implementation phase can be the most trying, it is also the most significant. Without implementing the new knowledge that you have gained, improvement will be impossible. To assist you in the transition from classroom to real world experience, iSpeak offers this section to record how you will implement what you have learned in this course.

