

THE JOURNAL RECORD

Sales Moves: How lousy are you? You probably don't even know!

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Having spent the last 55 years watching local television commercials, and the last 30 years listening to speeches at meetings, training sessions and thousands of sales pitches, I have noticed the one thing (almost all) presenters and speakers have in common is lousy presentation skills.

BIG QUESTION: How important are presentation skills? Maybe a better question is: How important are your presentation skills?

BIGGER QUESTIONS: How excellent are your presentation skills on a scale of 1-100? Do people want to listen to you? Or do they have to listen to you?

BIGGEST QUESTIONS: How are you improving your speaking and presentation skills? What are you doing to increase your ability to persuade and convince? How transferable is your message? Are people moved to take action after you present?

These questions not only beg answers, but they are a report card on, and a window to, your present situation.

Funny, if you got a bad report card in grade school, high school or college, your parents would have made you study harder, take remedial classes, do more homework and even get a tutor.

Now that your business cards are printed and you're out of school, you have ignored the success strategy that made you a better and more successful student. And now is the time superior presentation skills really count. If you improve your speaking skills at work, you can easily measure the outcome and results – in money.

Here's a short list of why presenters and presentations fail:

- Lousy choice of words.
- Lousy vocal variety.
- Lousy gesturing.
- Lousy body language.
- Lousy smiles.
- Lousy sincerity.
- Lousy choice of structure.
- Lousy passion stemming from a poor belief system.

There are many other sale-killing elements in a presentation. At the top of the list are lousy, boring and crowded PowerPoint slides. (Maybe like the ones you have?)

There are a few other points of understanding that create a negative atmosphere during a talk or presentation:

- Condescending hand gestures.
- Inability to relax.
- Having to read or memorize from your head, rather than giving your presentation from your heart.

OK, that's the bad news. Here's the remedy!

The key points of a great presentation are:

- Knowing what you want to say.
- Believing what you say.
- Being believable and convincing.
- Being compelling in how you say it.
- Providing valuable information.
- Providing useable information.
- Providing timely information.
- Presenting non-e-mailable information.
- Being completely prepared and rehearsed.

DUH: If you're not that good, let others speak for you. Why does every car commercial have a bad announcer or an equally bad owner, giving the hype about how low the price is, how great the deal is or how much you'll save? Why not let five customers talk for 1- seconds each?

In my Little Green Book of Getting Your Way I state that joining Toastmasters should be mandatory, and that a Dale Carnegie course should be offered by every company. Those are starting points to becoming more professional.

Here's the STRATEGY: Make your message transferable. The audience, whether it's one or 1,000, must say to themselves, "I get it, I agree with it, I think I can do it, I'm willing to try it," or, "I get it, I like it, I understand why I need or want it, my risk tolerance is low, I'm willing to buy it."

Here's the SECRET: Record yourself. If you make a video recording of your presentation and watch it twice, you will see for yourself just how good or bad you are. Personally I have found this to be the only way to determine your strengths and flaws. It's also your opportunity to make an improvement game plan.

Many sales professionals and corporate executives are suffering from poor presentation skills, and it is costing them sales, loyalty, morale and reputation. If you're looking to excel, great speaking and presentation skills are the weapons of mass introduction.

If you would like a few more presentation strategies for sales managers, go to www.gitomer.com and enter the word PRESENT in the GitBit box.

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