



We Are All TV Presenters

by Poll Moussoulides, Director – Voice Coach Training

At a recent TV Presenting Course that we ran in Dublin, Ireland, it became very clear to me why most 'presentation skills' type courses fall short of achieving the results they should be getting - those results being a more confident, persuasive and eloquent speaker. In fact most of them miss the point completely! They fail to acknowledge the most important area of presenting - the voice.

A Speaker needs a voice! The spoken words must be the result of the 3 'P's - Planning, Preparation & Performing (or Putting into Practise, if the word 'performing' frightens you!) Each have equal importance, and with a bit of persistence you will be amazed at how little time is required when you give each section it's own value.

You see, an audience is not concerned with the Planning and Preparation, they only see and hear the Performance. The small window of opportunity that exists for you to speak, is what will motivate, inspire or persuade the listener to trust and believe in you. In a television programme the Presenter is the link between the 'energy' of the programme and the audience. Our screens are littered with examples of nonsense television with good Presenters and great subject matter with poor Presenters. Rarely do we see the best of content combined with the best Presenter performance, and when we do we over-ride all logic, cynicism and doubt and allow ourselves to be wholeheartedly taken into the speaker's (or programme's) world.

I have seen large, medium and small corporations spend fortunes on brochures, board rooms, PR - in fact all the things that make up the 'corporate image', and then fall flat on their faces when the 'corporate voice' - the voice that the customer hears - does not deliver the professionalism of the product, ethos or track record of the organisation. It amazes me how little vocal training many sales teams are given to help them maximise the small window of opportunity they have when in front of customers. The way I see it is: no sales = no business. Why take the risk of not ensuring your sales teams' voices are the very best they can be?

So when I read or hear about courses that do not include at least a third of voice work delivered by voice specialists in their 'presentation skills' training, I realise that these people have no idea about courses they run, and have no idea how much value customers, clients and colleagues give to the vocal sound when making decisions. Call these courses 'effective use of PowerPoint', 'content structures that help people understand', 'relax and de-stress' or 'how to sharpen your pencil' - whatever - but do not call them 'Presentation Skills' if no serious time is given to the mechanics, physiology, psychology and delivery practises of the voice and vocal impact. This is like calling a course 'Formula 1 Motor Racing Skills', showing people maps of some race tracks, explaining the importance of

driver focus, demonstrating how to change the engine oil and then, bizarrely, not giving them a F1 car with a skilled Instructor to guide them through their newly acquired skills!

(By the way Videoing participants and gratuitously pointing out the blatantly obvious doesn't count! We are more interested in the cause, not the symptoms and we purposely ban video cameras from the first few days of our trainings. This ensures we guarantee long lasting change where the person no longer displays vocal and physical 'oddities'. When our participants understand and are comfortable with their natural delivery styles and they can successfully combine this with their expert information, only then do we bring out the cameras as a means to achieve maximum effectiveness of the desired message.)

We all know the philosophical question - "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" It demonstrates the dictum of 'Esse est percipi - ' To be is to be perceived. This can be very easily transferred to a sales, motivation, education or coaching environment. How often has a presentation 'fallen in the forest', and no one has heard it, acts on it, or even cares about it?!

In our 'Secrets of Confident & Effective Speakers' courses we continuously make the point that a listener doesn't really care about the Presenters 'stuff' (their slides, sore throats, traffic jams, faulty projector, deadlines...). An audience cares about what the Presenter says, how they say it, and most importantly how this makes the audience feel. This is what convinces them to believe, to follow, and to buy!

So the next time you watch a TV programme, and you see a TV Presenter, realise that this 30 / 60 minute slot is the section on which you will judge the show, and not on the unseen weeks planning and preparation that has preceded the performance. To be at your best you must give equal time to rehearsing (or putting into practise) the skills of delivery. Only this gives you the best possible chance to do maximum justice to your integrity, ethos or product. This brings you and your message into the listeners present, and activates their response receptors. Planning, Preparation AND Performing. Does Your Performing do justice to your Planning and Preparation? Whether we like it or not, we are all TV Presenters!

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