Presentation Skills

We all have to do presentations: in business meetings, to pitch for work, to enthuse staff teams or to placate funders. But if we're honest, most of the presentations we have to endure are simply dull. They are little more than the speaker's notes transcribed onto a PowerPoint slide deck and projected on the wall. This course will equip you with tried and tested techniques to make your presentations stand out and have real impact.

This course will give you a new approach to preparing and delivering a presentation. We start by examining the theory of how we communicate and how we identify and understand our audience. Then we use the concepts of the message house and storyboarding to develop a series of simple but effective techniques to make your presentations engaging and entertaining. The day is a mixture of theory, exercises and practical presentations, with each participant given the time and support they need.

The Content

Participants experience and practice a wide range of techniques proven to engage and maintain audience attention. These include the use of creative thought techniques to inject originality and freshness to the planning process; methods to evaluate a presentation well before the event; researching the audience, and framing a talk to ensure key points are accepted in an atmosphere in which confrontation and controversy are minimalised.

The course is based on a variety of techniques; from those employed by the Greek orators through to present day speakers. We explore the concept that the best speakers think more about their audience than themselves; and in particular understand the power of story, metaphor and analogy.

Elements of the Day

Communication theory and models

Understanding what is going on when we communicate is vital. Having a clear model in your mind of how to communicate and prioritise key narrative messages ensures that the presentation can be specifically targeted and so gain traction with the target audience. The message house model is simple and works; allowing the presenter to have a clear narrative arc throughout the presentation.

Storyboards

A storyboard is by far the best way to plan out your presentation, adding different styles and stories as necessary. It allows the presenter to take a strategic view of the presentation, and avoids the dreaded "death by PowerPoint"

Powerpoint slides

How to make the best use of a slide deck. Participants will end the day with a clear understanding of how a PowerPoint file can both add and detract from their presentation. We emphasise throughout the day that a slide deck is not your presentation; it is a useful tool to support your presentation.   A series of hints and tips will be given to enliven and minimise the use of PowerPoints.

Outcomes:

By the end of the course attendees will be able to:

- Plan and test a presentation using the storyboard technique
- Differentiate between germane and superfluous content
- Research and tailor talks to specific audiences
- Start and finish a presentation memorably
- Use story, metaphor and analogy to make messages truly stick
- Use visual aids sparingly and for specific purposes

Trainers:

Mark Wall was a senior communicator in the NHS for almost ten years and now runs his own successful communications business. He has extensive experience of presenting to a wide variety of audiences for a broad range of purposes. As well as his professional experience across the public sector he is a published author, a regular contributor to local media and a prize winning stand-up comedian.

Dr Nick Napper has been teaching professionals to present and speak for over 30 years. Attendance on his courses leads to participants having a profound understanding of how to communicate with an audience, and ensures everyone leaves devoid of any desire to read to adults from text on a screen (and knows the science behind why not).

Nick also specialises in techniques which allow those who have experienced nerves in the past to lose their self-awareness and genuinely enjoy delivering a presentation.