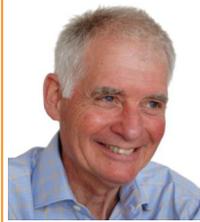




Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
from everybody at
Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd



Alastair Grant

Note bashing or tweaking

Anybody who sings in a choir will know the rigour of note bashing – again and again you sing a part to accurately hit the right notes. It can become tedious but it is an essential part of driving up the quality and precision of the choir.

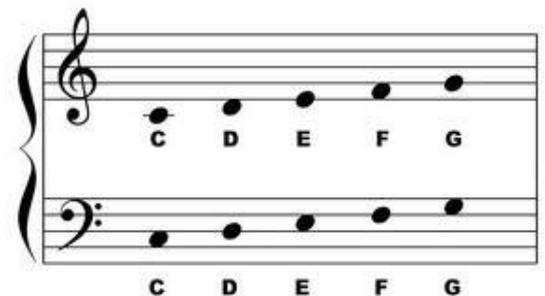
Applying this to delivery of a presentation looks a bit of a stretch but I am convinced that by making a number of tweaks you can make your spoken delivery more effective. By that I mean that you talk more convincingly. The audience is more likely to accept your ideas and will want to listen to you.

The most obvious correlation to singing is the expression in our voices. Most agree that some presenters use their voices so well that we just want to listen to them – never mind what they are saying. An example is David Attenborough's commentary on *Frozen Planet*.

More prosaically was the recent press coverage of Brodie Clark who was held responsible for immigration issues. He came over calm, measured and understated. I don't know whose version to believe but he gained in my estimation simply on hearing him. It is true that his Scottish accent is associated with honesty. Call centres often use Scottish employees for the same reason.

You shouldn't copy Attenborough or affect

a Scottish lilt, but here are some tweaks that you can do:



Tweak No. 1: Have emotional content.

Get the right balance of emotions in your voice. If you want to energise the audience with a sense of your passion or commitment then your voice needs a raised level of arousal. This means modulating your voice up and down in pitch as much as you can, especially when emphasising the key words of a point. Your increased modulation will make the story more appealing to your audience.

The listeners will catch the excitement in your voice and be revved up to hear more. But your message might be more sombre:

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Rhyme or reason

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By Ewan Pearson

Should we embrace new words or shun them? There's a prize bottle of Champagne in it for you.....

Hamburgers or Dim Sum?

By Tim Farish

Tim looks at the increasing diet of emails that we are forced to consume



Note bashing or tweaking ...continued

When the Chancellor of the Exchequer explains our economic situation he must show determination and action whilst acknowledging we are facing financial challenges. Here, less modulation is in order but stressing key words helps to convey gravitas.

A good exercise is for you or a friend to listen to your recorded voicemail message. Do you sound bored, rushed or even just plain sad? A positive tone of voice, efficient crisp delivery ending with a falling pitch makes it sound like you mean business.

Tweak No.2: Talk in packets Many of us - conditioned to talk from PowerPoint slides - become ramblers. We join separate idea streams together with a series of 'ands' & 'umms' and other verbal joiners. The audience finds it hard to work out when a key idea has reached its conclusion.

I sometimes tell my clients they are talking in sausages. That is to say a string of ideas each connected to the next one. It's important to cut them up. But it is not at all instinctive to teach ourselves to talk in packets, punctuated by pauses and engaging eye contact, as we drive the point home.



Tweak No.3: Vary word speed This is easy and has an immediate effect. Talk at your normal crisp articulate rate and then slow down as you get to each key punch line.

For example: *"We have to make some difficult decisions in the next quarter balancing the danger of volatility with the need to meet our peer group benchmark, so we must take some degree of risk".*

Tweak No. 4: Vary volume This can be a bit theatrical but the effect is still powerful. You can go louder or - less conventionally - quieter. Project your voice normally but at a key point reduce your volume so that the audience have to listen harder to hear you. You could also slow down. For example: *"The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer."*

THE BARNES CHOIR PRESENTS

Alleluia!
A BAROQUE CHRISTMAS

On Saturday, December 10th 2011 at 7.30pm
All Saints Church, East Sheen Avenue SW14 8AX

Bach - Kantate No. 140 (Sleepers wake!)
and Lobet den Herrn
Jacob Handl - Omnes de Saba venient
Palestrina - Missa Brevis and
Stella quam viderunt Magi
Schütz - The Christmas Story
and carols for choir and audience

Note bashing is a hard slog and the same applies to making these presentation tweaks work - but the result is worth it and has long-term benefits.

Our choir's winter concert is coming up. We have been working hard at rehearsing superb baroque choral music by several composers I have never heard of, but we also sing some Christmas carols to allow audience participation.

I have had plenty of experience as a presentation coach, but as a novice singer I am struggling to sing the bass line of these well-known carols as my brain only knows the unison top line - so it's back to my electronic keyboard with self-imposed note bashing. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (and Gentlewomen).

Advice *squeezed*
straight from the
experts



Rhyme or reason



Children have a fascination for rhymes. In fact, I think many people have a fascination for rhymes. I have always loved them, since I was very young, and developed a love of tongue twisters at primary school when one of my teachers, who was particularly engaging, had the entire class reciting 'Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry' and 'Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled pepper....' with great gusto.



Lynda Russell
-Whitaker

Clearly, this wasn't just for entertainment value; rhymes of all sorts play a real part in language learning. Tongue twisters serve as great exercises for the speech muscles, where nursery rhymes and their distant cousins folk songs help us to learn vocabulary and improve memory.

relevance: folklore suggests that 'Ring a Ring of Roses' was one of the visible symptoms of the bubonic plague, although the rhyme actually came much later; 'Oranges and Lemons' refers to many of the church bells in and around the City of London, and 'London Bridge is falling down' is based on a true event.

My theory is that we (and I don't only mean the English, but all human beings) have this fascination, even fondness for rhymes and tongue twisters. This theory was reinforced recently when I had an experience bordering on the surreal travelling home on the last train from a business networking event.



I shared a carriage with a group of extremely loud Londoners with accents straight out of 'The Only Way is Essex', although the train was Kent-bound, and the decibels would put any barrow boy worth his salt to shame.

Why am I telling you this? Well, as adults most of us take speech and the ability to produce well-formed sounds for granted, certainly when it comes to our mother tongue. Or perhaps it's that by and large the physical act of producing sound isn't a conscious one; indeed, it has a name, 'unconscious competence' (from Gordon Training International, 1970s).

Seemingly out of nowhere they began reciting tongue twisters, starting with 'She sells Sea Shells', continuing on to 'Red Lorry, Yellow Lorry' through to 'Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers'. It is an experience that I doubt I'll ever forget!

Perhaps it's actually something that most of us learn at such a young age that we forget how difficult it was to master in those early years. Once you start examining in-depth what goes into voice production, as I started doing more than seven years ago, you realise how truly remarkable the human voice and speech production are.

One of the more well-known of the English tongue twisters (and it was indeed the first that this motley crew recited), 'She Sells Sea Shells' isn't simply a rhyme learnt in childhood to improve enunciation of difficult consonants, but in fact a reference to a real person, Mary Anning, who was a 19th Century palaeontologist from Dorset.

Some people have particular or specific pronunciation challenges as a result of anatomical structure. For the rest of us, however, the way we pronounce words is largely due to where we were brought up, by whom and with whom, as well as who we were taught by at school.

Many of the rhymes we learnt as children - though perhaps less so for tongue twisters - were based on events of historical

Advice *squeezed*
straight from the
experts



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Rhyme or reason... continued

Which brings me back to my primary school teacher; she made those rhymes come alive by skilfully employing a number of highly effective tools.

As an adult and as a presentation coach at GPB I now know these to be: excellent pitch modulation, changing volume for emphasis, fantastic articulation (clearly she walked her talk where tongue twisters were concerned), and great timing. These all enhance the wonderful content that has its own 'natural' rhythm.

It is quite possible that you, as is the case for many of our clients, don't have English as your mother tongue. So you don't need to imagine how much more of a challenge a tongue twister like 'She Sells Sea Shells' is for a non-English native speaker to master, as an adult or as a child. Your ear hasn't had the time to become attuned to these sounds and your speech musculature hasn't practised it often enough to master it to the point where it is second nature.

By George, they'd got it, to paraphrase Mr Bernard Shaw. Why was this so satisfying? Because the 'sh' sound simply doesn't exist in the Greek language, and therefore a considerable accomplishment that they were right to be proud of – students and teacher both.

And so to the thorny subject of practice. It isn't always something we like to do. One might even call it a necessary evil, but it is really what 'mastery' is all about. Doing something repeatedly, so that it becomes second nature. If you practise anything often enough, you will master it (physical impairment notwithstanding). It is amazing what you can achieve if you take the time to practise challenging words and sounds regularly and frequently, and tongue twisters are a very effective tool for doing this.

Tongue-twisters help to exercise your pronunciation muscles and give yourself a 'warm up' before you speak. Whilst they aren't able on their own to warm up the vocal chords (humming is a great way to do that), they work very well on the articulation of the tongue, jaw, lips, mouth and cheeks.

So whether you are a professional presenter, or someone who simply wants to master the art of public speaking (in front of 5 or even 5,000 people), you could do worse than start by taking a trip down memory lane. Revisit some of those tongue twisters and rhymes you were taught as a young child. You might have some

fun during the process, and provide some good groundwork for singing over the festive season!

It's also quite possible that the neural pathway is only in its early stages of development too.

This was illustrated brilliantly by Deborah Skeemer, a friend who I met whilst living in Greece. She taught English as a foreign language in a school in Corfu and was recounting a particular lesson in her classroom. She vividly described the sense of satisfaction she derived when her entire class were practically shouting "fish" in unison at the end of the lesson!

If you're interested in developing your articulation, please visit GPB's website. I have asked for a pretty comprehensive list of tongue twisters to be added. Visit www.gpb.eu and click on the Research drop-down, item 6.

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



Happy rhetorical 'Winterval'



"Happy Christmas" is of course what I mean to say. But 'Winterval' has come to be an alternative word for some people. Winterval is an interesting, yet to my mind ugly, word. It is an example of several rhetorical tools: a new word (a neologism), a contraction (of two words into one, winter-interval), a pseudonym, as synonym, a euphemism, an alias, and an overly politically-correct alternative.

If I were writing in French, this article would be very short. In France they protect their language from change; they seem reluctant to develop new words even for new things. New words have to be approved by a committee of the great and good, which agonises over the French for new words such as laptop (*'ordinateur portable'*), mobile phone (*'telephone portable'*), and software (*'logiciels'*). This control makes sense to them as part of both their national pride and of the 'French Resistance' to invasion, only this time it is by foreign *words*. Fair enough.

But can you imagine our trusty border guards, when not on strike, raising the palm of their left hands to immigrant words and saying "No you may not come in! Go back where you came from"? Not bloomin' likely. For a start, the vast bulk of the words we use in English are foreigners to our shores. We'd be pretty dumb without them. Literally.



To give this article some sort of a boundary, I will stick to just one type of new word, contractions.

This past year, I have allowed the obsessive compulsive side of my character to distract itself away from my permanent irritation with the expanding incorrect use of apostrophes (MOT's is a firm favourite), by collecting new contracted words, two-into-ones, and by collecting a few older ones to provide some balance. I am putting them all up on our website, more as a

place to store them than anything else. You can see them at www.gpb.eu and follows the Research drop-down, item 7. Here I would like to share words with you, to say why I think they happen, to see if the sort of new words we create is influenced by the state of the nation/world, and to see if you might benefit from using a few extra new words yourselves.

For you do use many such contractions, usually without noticing. They are the established ones. There are many many of them, for example: *Kinematograph* (1892, now called film), *Brunch* (1895), *Teasmade* (1891), *Marconigram* (1902, now called radio), *Biplane* (1911), *Television* (1925), *Stagflation* (1965), and *Banoffee* (1972). So it seems they are always coming along in English, even if they don't all stand the test of time...

Why are so many created by so many (sorry, Mr Churchill)? I think the main and simple reason is that we, the English speakers of the world, like them; also our journalists are competitive writers, and are looking to amuse, to show wit, to create an impact, even perhaps to become famous.

New words can be fresh, fun, interesting, novel, problem-solvers, elegant or eloquent. Or all or none of the above.

It would take a great deal of work by me (and I would not be done in time to get this out by Christmas) to research whether or not the new words we create reflect the mood of the nation. I suspect only in part, but I am going to ask you to judge for yourselves. The world is going through a major economic crisis, so do the words that I list below reflect this?

I have listed them in the chronological order that I came upon them; some pre-date 2011.



Ewan Pearson

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



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Happy rhetorical Winterval...continued

They mostly come from newspapers; a few are from urbanidictionary.com (with thanks):

Drachmark (Drachma-Deutschmark aka the Euro)

Staycation (stay at home vacation)

Brangelina (Brad and Angelina Jolie)

Middlescence (middle-aged adolescence)

Jafraican (Jamaican African words, e.g. those from Ali G: Nang, Greezy, Butters)

Chillax (chill out and relax)

Bromance (brotherly romance)

Kidult (kid-adult)

Grandmooner (Grandparent honeymooner)

Clicktivists (clicking activists)

Metrosexual (Metropolitan heterosexual)

Sabpacking (sabbatical backpacking)

Fitocracy (Fit aristocracy, eg. Personal trainers in NY)

Smirting (Smoking and flirting)

Affluential (Affluent and influential)

Phacking (Phone hacking)

Nomophobia (no mobile phone phobia)

Moobs (man boobs)

Presenteeism (opposite of absenteeism)

Mentefacturing (mental manufacturing)

Churnalism (churned journalism)

Britagne (new name for British champagne)

Protox (professional botox)

Aquaholic (excessive water drinker)

Hackipedia (hacking Wikipedia)

Wikileaks (Wikipedia type leaks)

Twevolution (tweeting revolution)

Clangelina (Clan Brangelina –see above)

Retweet (re-tweeting as tweet)

Jeggings (jeans that are also leggings)

Sexting (sexually explicit texting)

Mankini (Man bikini as worn by Borat)

Camponomics (Camp-based economics)

Movember (Moustache in November)

Osournism (George Osbourne's realism)

Recyclopath (recycling psychopath)

Freeboobing (no bra under shirt)

Aforetexted (texted before)

Brovember (Brother's November)

Identiphobia (Identity phobia)

Scoratorium (Score moratorium ie. TV off)

Halloweenorexia (Halloween anorexia)

Skeazy (sketchy and sleazy)

Groutfiti (grout graffiti, writing in the grout)

Manolescent (Man adolescent)

Brofessional (brother professional)

Carnevoyeur (Carnivore voyeur)

Thisclose (This close, used by footballers)

Unlightening (Un-enlightening)

Dearthquake (Dearth earthquake; small tremor, but major media frenzy)

Chiptease (a half-full bag of chips)

Cinephile (Cinema lover)

Carmageddon (Car Armageddon)

Precrestination (cleaning teeth pre dental visit)

Paleolinguist (Paleontological linguist)

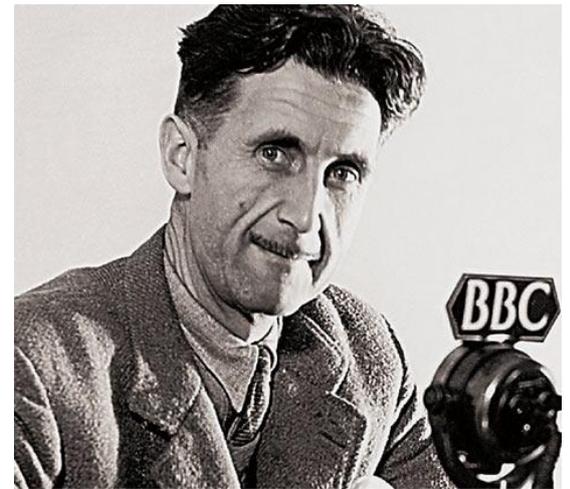
Guysmaids (guy bridesmaid at gay wedding)

Dayturnal (opposite of nocturnal)

Webrovert (web extrovert, otherwise introvert)

Merkozy (Merkel Sarkozy)

So, could you benefit from using a few of them, and even adding others to your 'patois'? Yes I think you can. One of George Orwell's 1946 rules of good writing was 'Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print'. Orwell understood the need for these new additions to our borderless language. Everyone should aspire to freshness of speaking and writing, and if you create a new word, you have surely passed that test.



George Orwell, 1946

Some of the new words on my list here and on our website should probably be used with great caution, and of course they are out now, so no longer 'new'. But they are great for attention, for memory stickiness, to show personality and, frankly, some wit.

Champagne competition

To incentivise you to put the laptop and mobile down for a few minutes between now and Christmas Day, we have a competition: I will award a prize of a bottle of Champagne (from France) for the best new word sent in by Christmas to my email: e.pearson@gpb.eu. My definition of 'best' shall apply, and it has to be *new*. The prize will be sent in January, and announced in our Spring 2012 Journal.

Advice *squeezed*
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Hamburgers or Dim Sum?



The average employee in an organisation now receives 228 emails per day. And this is increasing by about 15% per year. At that rate most office workers will soon be spending the vast majority of their time managing emails: the latest statistics already show that it is taking up 47% of our day, according to the Radicati Group, a US market research firm.

There is some good news. Not all of these emails are directly for us. According to Radicati, 99.3% of all emails are spam. Yes, of the 294 billion daily emails that were sent globally in 2010 only 1.9 billion would have made it through the Radicati Group's spam filter.

How they worked this out is beyond me but if your experience is anything like mine you get their point. Most are junk or at best part of a group email string that you could easily have been left out of. Even more frustrating, maybe you qualify for the category that gets copied in on practically everything because it covers someone's proverbial arse!

The bad news is that with the increase in technology and convenience in communication (email being the obvious example) we have undeniably got quicker at communicating, but this has come at a huge cost: efficiency.

We are not properly registering much of what's being sent to us, as there is simply too much information to digest. Put simply, we are being forced to eat huge hamburgers when a little dim sum would do.



There are clearly many factors that have caused this but the most important factor, to my mind at least, is laziness. It really is now too easy to send an email when it would have made more sense to go round

to someone's office and speak to them face-to-face. I have lost count of the times when a client has concluded that their communication problems have been down to an inability to get 'off' email and go round and deal with the 'problem' face-to-face. And when faced with the choice of ease against effort why should we be surprised?

Email has been a wonderful invention but we have become dangerously addicted and regularly overdose on it. It has contributed to a trend in modern communication where we have got used to sending far too much information, too often, to too many people.

Most people instinctively know that "less is more" yet we blindly continue to force-feed 'receivers' more than they can handle. And deep down we know it.



However, this is not an exclusively digital phenomenon. Presentation slides, brochures, websites, newsletters...all suffer from too much information yet we still continue to give receivers more.

So why is this? I believe it is a lack of responsibility combined with a lack of understanding of how people digest information.



Tim Farish

Advice *squeezed* straight from the experts



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Hamburgers or Dim Sum? ...continued

Our Services

Grant Pearson Brown Consulting Ltd is a respected adviser based in London. We enhance the performance of businesses, helping clients to excel in the use of the spoken and written word, improving the performance of individuals and teams. Over the long term our work improves the way a firm does business.

We coach and advise individuals to perform at their best in the toughest situations including: Presentations, New Business Pitches, Business Development, Negotiating, Media Interviews, Telephone Calls and Document Writing.

We also produce scientific voice, visual and content analysis reports, which are unique to GPB. We then provide voice and visual coaching, and content advice.

Our clients' needs are the only focus of our work; we listen to them and closely tailor our response to deliver first class coaching and advice. In support of this we selectively pursue new ideas and approaches, continually hone our advice and create tools such as Voice, Visual and Content Analysis, Prospect Relationship Management (PRM) and the Information Iceberg.

Put simply, most communication involves a transaction between sender and receiver. Some recent research has shown that the success of communication is 60% the responsibility of the sender.

So it's sensible for senders to ensure that the 'packets' of information are easily digested by the receiver.

But email has de-personalised communication to the extent that we are no longer able to receive real-time feedback as to how effective it has been. The default mindset appears to be to put everything into the email regardless, and receivers can read it all at their leisure.

Except that we now don't have any time for leisure as we are too busy managing our in-box! Mark Twain commented on this human failing over a century ago (he was not the first) when he said that 'I did not have enough time to write a short letter'. Indeed.

Email, as a communication form in corporate life, has increasingly become a reference library to be constantly accessed rather than an efficient and expedient form of communication.

And yet none of this should really come as a great shock. Developmentally, email is now an adolescent and is yet to have common protocols and best practice forced upon it.

That time is fast approaching and in an era of increasingly time-poor stressed-out workers, it needs to happen sooner rather than later.

So, here is an attempt to begin that process by offering some top tips to you for how to feed people dim sum instead of two pound hamburgers with all the extras.

1. Make sure that either your subject headers or your Executive Summary (see tip 2) include an action to help the reader.

Example: *Singapore client meeting cancelled 13th January (ACTION: Read and Respond ASAP)*

2. Use Executive Summaries as an introductory paragraph to the body of larger emails.

Example: *"Our Luxembourg office is expanding and needs to find new suppliers to assist with this. The main needs are in IT and ADMIN areas and the process is under way. No final decisions will be made before Q2 2012 but please email me a short-list of suggestions from each dept by 13th Jan, 2012."*

3. Use efficient structures to save time. **SEAT** is one popular structure that I've come across:

For example:

SITUATION: *Outline the context of the situation*

EXPECTATION: *Highlight any expectations that may exist*

AGENDA or ACTION: *Be clear on deliverables*

TIMELINE: *Make sure that everyone is sure of when.*

4. Don't send an email unless it is absolutely necessary. Try talking instead!

5. Only send it to those who really need to receive it.

6. Use the 'to' box for those who you want a response from, and the 'cc' box for those you don't want a response from.

Perhaps if we can all employ some of these tips, we might actually send the statistics, as measured by Radicati, in the opposite direction.

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