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# “speak up special”

## “London wins the closest bidding race by just 4 votes”



By Ewan Pearson, Alastair Grant & Sarah Cot-

Well London won! Here are our thoughts on why London did so well with its very highly complimented bid presentation. Humbly we also want to test our advice.

Singapore, 6<sup>th</sup> July. The IOC hold their fourth and final voting round. Moscow, New York and Madrid were out. After a nail-biting wait, London wins the 2012 Games by 54 votes to Paris's 50. The closest result in the history of the Olympics. It was a fantastic and unexpected win after four campaigns over 20 years. London was lying third a year ago, second to Paris before the Evaluation Committee's visit in February and after their report in June, equal first.

Although, as Lord Coe put it, still on the shoulder of the French. We were privileged to have coached some key presenters including Seb Coe and Keith Mills early on, so came close enough to the fire to feel some of its heat.

London's 45 minutes had 4 films, Tony Blair on video and 6 live presenters, lead by Seb Coe who spoke twice. 12 slots in all. Our advice for any long team presentation is to adopt key team dynamic principles. Do our principles stand the test of this highly successful presentation?

- Everyone makes a unique and valuable contribution, in their own style
- Leaders should be seen to be leading, usually by going first and last
- The time share between speakers should not be distorted
- For longer slots use several speaker changes to keep audience attention

- Do and say nothing to get eliminated – minimise all the risks
- Tailor to your audience

The Scotsman Craig Reddie, the President of the BOA, followed Princess Anne. Craig's French start really impressed the IOC, based in French-speaking Lausanne. Sean Connery speaking French and you'd be close. His tone was calm but passionate and considerate to the many native French speakers present.

Highly inspirational videos focused on two key themes – the Magic of London, and bringing children into sport. Seb held the baton from the longest and built from the strong support for the Games including 1908 and 1948.

He moved to the 'key children into sport' theme "we can no longer take it for granted". This got the most positive response, bringing sev-

eral IOC members to tears. Seb was followed by Denise Lewis, Ken Livingstone, then Tony Blair (in French then English), then Tessa Jowell, and Seb closed with his own story from child to gold medallist and the link to the sporting legacy the games would offer today's children. Seb showed very strong leadership in both his slots.

Our role was early in the process in teaching key presenters 'how to do it'. We also coached other London 2012 presenters who spoke at the earlier events where London caught up with the leaders.

First we coached crafting good formal public speeches; second, coaching effective delivery - meaning with passion and conviction, with clarity, honesty and sincerity.



Seb delivering his 2012 bid speech

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London wins bid for Olympics in 2012...

Here's a **Speak-up Special** as Ewan, Alastair and Sarah discuss the reasons that the London 2012 team presentations were so successful.



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Seb then wrote his own speech for Singapore, even sporting black and blue fingers for the week before the bid – a side-effect of a leaky fountain pen!

Our script writing and speaking advice is also worth testing:

- People converse in short phrases, so sentences should be short, say 12 words average, especially at key points
- Active tenses sound better than passive ones
- Words should be chosen for the ear not the eye. There is a magic in threes. The best speeches are personal, from the heart
- Have few key points, and be happy with repetitive emphasis
- Have differentiation especially when all seem the same
- Scripts should be written or typed large on paper, with no sentences over page ends; pages should be slid not turned
- Eye contact is most important as one finishes phrases, important at the start, incidental elsewhere
- Pace should vary, with a bias for vitality and clarity
- Vocal pitch should move up and down melodically, but the end of each key phrase should be down-pitch, and not quieter.
- The voice must convey emphasis and the appropriate emotion, the body and face must match the words and the sound of those words.

we might normally suggest in the UK, but then the audience was multinational, so a combination of slower pace and simpler phrases helped the audience to understand the words most easily. The word speed varied from 100-125 words/minute, including time for pauses. This slower pace lost vitality and passion but added gravitas, calmness and authority.

The bid's success is rightly attributed to three things: Seb Coe's leadership throughout, Tony Blair's explicit commitment in the closing stages, and the bid presentation. Remember that the London 2012 team counts over 100 members.

Congratulations to that team for their fantastic performance. Let building commence!



Seb Coe receiving the Olympic contract from Jaques Rogge

Pretty much this is what the various speakers did, especially Seb. The pace throughout was more moderate than

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