



speakup

Welcome to our first newsletter!

This newsletter offers our clients the chance to receive a regular update on issues in the field of spoken communication, especially presenting, professional selling, negotiating, and media interviews.

We will have - as in this issue - editorial articles about important elements of spoken communication, details of upcoming open or public courses which people may enrol on, and details of how to contact us.

Please let us know what you think. We hope you enjoy it!

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GPB Consulting

The European Presentation Consultants



Visual Aids Disease

Visual aids can significantly improve understanding and memory recall. But it is possible to present with impact with no visuals at all!

V.A.D. or "Death by PowerPoint" is a common affliction. Here's the scene: The lights dim and the word "Introduction" appears. A steady stream of slides follows each with a lovely background and lots of words that motor across filling the page. Then a graph, table, or pie chart appears - "Camembert" as Eurospeakers say. Some shows have sound too, so words arrive to the screech of brakes. Eventually the final slide says "The End".

Oh, by the way there was also a presenter, but I am not sure who.

PowerPoint et al improve on what we had before; 35mm slides were great but were costly and couldn't be changed at the last minute. The reliable OHP survives but doesn't suit large audiences. Audiences are conditioned to standard PowerPoint presentations - they look good. Copies of slides cover those momentary but common lapses in concentration.

Breaking the PowerPoint mould may run against company culture: "This person can't be bothered to prepare many visuals. That's a bad mark against them for their next appraisal".

The seductive arguments for PowerPoint-led presentations fail because the real issue is not about pictures or pixels,

nor about cleverly animated build-ups. Success is much more about these profound issues:

- Was the audience inspired and convinced by the speaker's personality?
- Will the audience retain the key points of the message for discussion later?
- How did the presenter handle what followed?

So do visuals meet these goals? They won't enhance the personality of the speaker but can easily do the opposite: A continuous stream of visuals will dominate the scene leaving the presenter in an a support/narrator role. Now if you are David Attenborough, the spectacular wildlife is the star, but a business executive has to sell facts and ideas. The visuals won't do it so well. Writing is effective in passing information and putting a clear argument but there is no immediate comeback. Rather like this article!

Visuals can help you to understand and remember messages or they can do precisely the opposite. Lots of busy slides will overload the minds. They will listen but not process ideas. The audiences' are numbed by data dump! Not only do people switch off but the key points get lost in a plethora of detail.

So what to do? Embrace new technology wholeheartedly. Learn something about it, but ensure your visual is your

servant. In particular:

- Cut back on the number of slides you use to a minimal number.
- Don't compete with a complex slide. Talk first then show.
- Avoid long lists of unmemorable words. A few used well are good road maps.
- Simplicity. Slides, that are too complex, dent the self-esteem of listeners.
- An explanatory slide can back up a verbal point well.
- Try starting and ending the show with no slides.
- **Best advice:** use strong verbal imagery. "Did you know that the skin of our aircraft is only four times the thickness of a coke can". These words will last longer in peoples minds than a picture of a coke can.
- Use appropriate 'blank' slides - the audience will listen to you!

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Shoot over their heads!

Every audience varies widely, from self-confessed "experts" to "generalists"

Have you ever known a General to say that in war? Not likely, so why do we do it (ie. talk over their heads in complexity terms) when we present? Well, it seems the main reason is that we didn't know we were. Gun sights set too high, and not checked recently.

Why do we do it? Well, it's a combination of (1) trying to be more of an expert than the experts in your audience, (2) the difficulty of talking below the level we are used to, and (3) feeling that we might be dumbing-down. In reality, the opposite is true. A good communicator is someone who can explain complexities simply, clearly and precisely, so that we all understand what they are talking about.

So let's check out where we should be aiming.

First point: Every audience varies widely, from self-confessed "experts" to "generalists" -those who know little about the subject. The presenter's task is to meet everyone's needs. Our clients' common view is "Impossible!" Well, it's not. You just need to know how it's done.

Second point: Assess each audience, then divide them

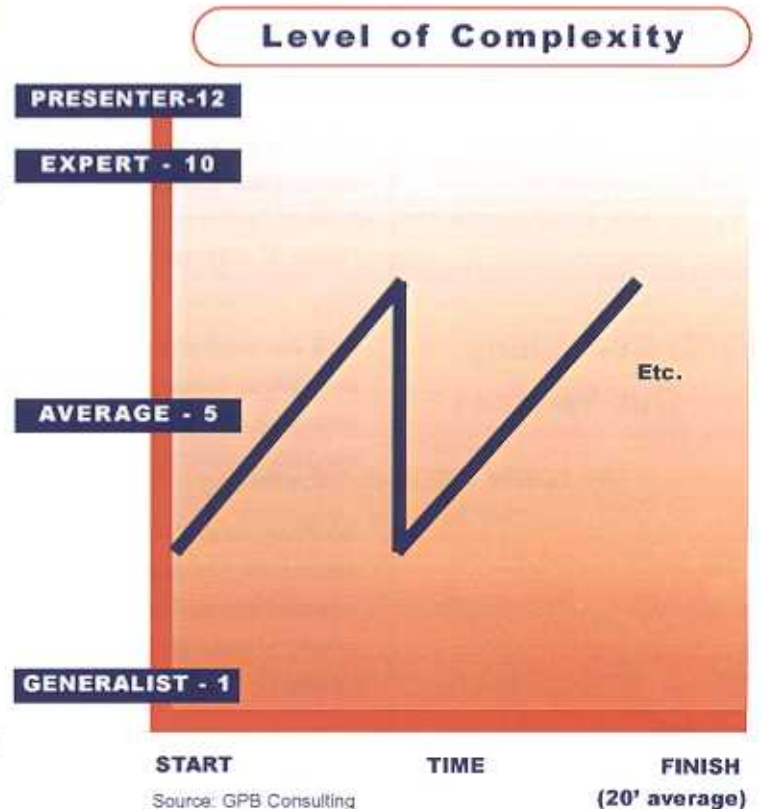
into three groups:

Above average expertise (experts), at average (Level 5) and below average (generalists).

Time is your ally: Start at Level 3, and very carefully build your story in logical links up to about Level 7 for each topic you cover. Don't miss a link as you will lose people. Return to Level 3 for each new topic. This generates the 'factory roof' profile.

This approach will satisfy each of the three groups as follows: The experts will fill in gaps and be impressed by your clear explanations, the average will have developed their understanding, and the generalists will have learnt many new things.

All targets hit!



The Industrial Society

*Interpreting
the world
of work*

As the Society enters the 21st Century, it has a new leader with a formidable reputation in the media world. The new Chief Executive, Will Hutton, is keen to ensure that the Industrial Society is a real force for influence and change.

He says: Everything we do, from training to consulting, from publishing to advocacy, is driven by a commitment to improve working life.

He is driven by a wish for the Industrial Society to become the authority around issues at work; a place where people will come to help them interpret the changing

workplace. The explosion on the Internet and its effect on everyone's working lives has recently accelerated this change.

As part of the Society's training activities, GPB Consulting runs their Advanced Presentation Skills course every month in London. GPB has been running these courses for some seven years. The courses run for 2 days with a maximum of 8 delegates in London's West End. This course would be a good way for HR and training departments to try us out, or to send only one person to a group workshop, which has other people from a broad

range of organisations attending. They are very popular, so book early! The dates of courses for the remainder of 2000 are:

20-21 June

18-19 July

15-16 August

14-15 September

5-6 October

23-24 October

6-7 November

21-22 November

7-8 December

Please call us or The Industrial Society direct on 0870 400 1000 (quoting reference FAPSKD) for further information or to book someone on a course.

GPB Consulting: Our Services

GPB Consulting is active throughout Europe, and through its associate network, around the world.

We cover the areas of presentation, selling, negotiation, new business pitching, telephone skills, and media training.

We offer our advice both as

consultants on important business issues, and as trainers in general skills development.

We work both one to one with top management and with group workshops for middle management. Workshops run for between one and four days, and are tailored to each client's requirements.

We are continually looking to develop our range of services and have recently begun to research the delivery of our services through virtual classrooms (same time, different place) on the Internet. For queries on this or any other topic, please contact us at the address below.



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