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Responses to Eyak...

After reading your piece in the Summer newsletter about dying languages, I thought you might like this extract from Salman Rushdie's 1987 book 'Jaguar Smile', an account of his trip to Nicaragua. At one point he is visiting the country's Caribbean coast and comes across an aid worker with a story about the local language:

Cathy Gee, a US citizen working with a local development agency was telling me about the death of the Rama language...There were only twenty-three people alive who could still speak it; the other Ramas had already lost their tongue. A French linguist had spent months with the ageing twenty-three, to record the structure and phonetics of the language before it disappeared. "She came up against quite a problem," Cathy told me. "Most of the old Ramas had lost their teeth, so they couldn't pronounce some of the words properly." False teeth were much too expensive to be an option. Dental costs could therefore deliver the final blow to a tiny, dying language.

Reading the FT on the 16th August, I came across an article showing that languages such as Eyak are not the only ones having problems. Some lie closer to home. The foreign ministers for both France and Germany have been protesting to the European Commission against a proposal to leave all internal documents in their original language, saying that such a plan 'could only favour monolingualism in the EU, which is unacceptable to our two countries.' Apparently the number of internal Commission documents originally written in English is increasing by about 3 percent a year, and at the moment all documents are translated into other languages (675,000 pages of English translated last year). Interestingly, the protest letter was written in French and German only, and the proposal that they are protesting about is written in French only - as far as I know, there are no plans to translate these!

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'DAISY' – HOW TO BE MEMORABLE

How often have you sat in a presentation and not understood the message that they have been trying to get across to you? How often have you heard expressions like "We must be more flexible and proactive" and wondered what exactly it means? Alastair Grant explains how 'Daisy' can help people understand such abstract statements.

PUSHMI-PULLYU

Do you want to be seen as a 'dancing animal with two heads' or would you rather be a 'revenue generator'? Ewan Pearson describes how being on the Pull side of a Pushmi-Pullyu can dramatically increase your business development skills.

THE EVENTS INDUSTRY GETS REAL!

If you think of professionally produced corporate events as little more than showbusiness - often involving more 'show' than 'business' - you are not alone. Our event management friends at Vivace uncover the six major hurdles that you should set a production company in order to find someone who can put the business back into showbusiness.



Daisy - How to be remembered

Open Courses with The Industrial Society

These courses are a good opportunity for individuals who need coaching and would benefit from being in a group with people outside their organisation.

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This senior level workshop is designed to help participants improve their style and method of presentation.

This is a two-day course followed by an on-line 'Virtual Refresher' 2001: November 1-2 & 15-16, December 3-4, 2002: January 7-8, February 6-7, March 5-6 & 21-22, April 3-4, May 14-15, June 6-7

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You have a very important presentation to make with a key message to get across to your audience. It is essential that they understand this message and remember it the next day. However, when preparing your message it starts off as something like "We must be more flexible and proactive" or, "We will empower our team" or, "Our plan will enhance synergy and motivate our group to be more focused on the bottom line" or, "We will produce a standard of customer service better than our customer expects" All good stuff, but such sentiments by themselves, are seldom inspiring or remembered even the next day.

So, how do you ensure that your audience understands what you are trying to say and, better still, remembers your message the next day?

The answer is **'DAISY'**.

'Daisy' is one step on a conceptual ladder produced by Professor Hayakawa back in the 1960s called the ladder of abstraction. Starting at the bottom of this ladder, we have the simple idea of a black and white cow called 'Daisy'. No doubt you have an image of her in your mind already. Now if you add more Daisies, we have to use a more abstract term - 'Cows' but again the picture in our minds is quite clear. Moving one step higher, we add other types of animals to the group and again have to redefine our term as 'Livestock'. It is at this stage that the images in people's minds begin to differ. Now, if we add

crops to this picture, we have to become more abstract again and describe it as a 'Mixed Farm'. Moving up to the final level and completing this picture, the easiest way to describe everything within it is to become extremely abstract and call it a "Wealth Creation Unit". By this stage, everyone's

image is different and quite a lot of people lost it completely!

This last expression 'Wealth Creation Unit' is much like the messages I outlined at the beginning of this article, abstract and not easily understood. It is the shortest way to describe the whole picture, but unless explained it does not create the same or a memorable image in everyone's mind. To do this, you need to link to 'Daisy' and work your way back up. In other words use examples, analogies and case studies to turn abstract statements into images that we in the audience can 'see' clearly.



So the trick is to produce a 'Daisy' that the listener can visualise in their minds. For example, some of you will know my story of the coke can. It starts like this: "Imagine a coke can in your hand. It is not very strong - you can flex the sides of the can - did you know that the skin of our aircraft is only 4 times the thickness of this coke can?" The story continues from there. You may need to follow this with: "Now what this means

to you is" or preceded by "Let me paint this picture . . ." By doing this, your audience is able to create an image that they will understand and remember. Once that has happened, the message will sink home and you have achieved one of your main goals

- memorable messages.

Alastair Grant



Pushmi - Pulllyu

A dancing animal with two heads is quite a good description of how most people see salesmen! Highly valued in North America as revenue generators in revenue hungry businesses, business developers are mysteriously distrusted here in Europe. Whether that's fair or unfair, all professionals especially the senior management now have to be able to persuade clients to hire their firm against stiff competition, we are nearly all business developers now. Those of you who fit this description might like a few tips.

The art / science / magic / smoke and mirrors of professional business development has changed

significantly over the last decade. This is mainly because clients have become more sophisticated. They no longer wish to be sold to with fancy techniques, bravado and slick or glib presentations. They want sellers to listen carefully while they explain their business problems and needs, then and only then to offer sensible value-added solutions. So the skill set has shifted dramatically from speaking skills towards listening and questioning skills. The results are that business developers have had to radically retrain, and that those of us with two ears and one mouth may finally use them in that proportion! The research on how to win busi-

ness shows that we are - on average - good at expressing our feelings, wants, desires, and needs. It also shows we are weak at building trust, rapport and common ground, asking open questions, and listening actively to the answers. The first skill set is called 'Push' techniques, the latter 'Pull' techniques. Unsurprisingly, the focus of our coaching is on developing client 'Pull' skills. Much of the craze for NLP (neurolinguistic programming) in the late 1990s was to develop the pull skill of rapport-building, although ideas such as Mirror/Matching (where you copy your client's body language, tone and words) have lost some credibility since.

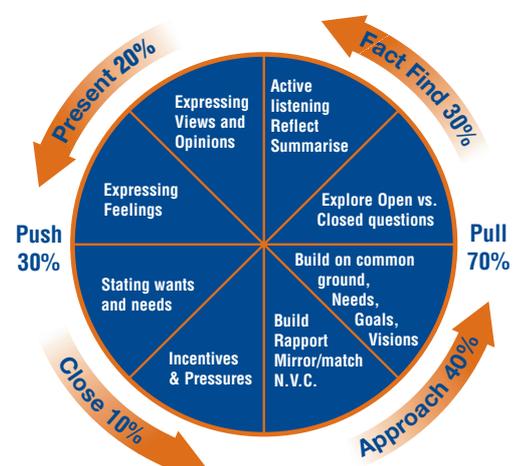
This list of 'Pull' techniques contains some fairly obvious but nonetheless valuable and difficult to implement ideas:

- Build rapport by making friends, 'speaking their language' and being honest.
- Build on common ground by finding out your client's interests and no-go areas.
- Ask questions majoring on the open type (what, why, where, when, who and how) and using key words – but not any negative ones – in your summary or subsequent probing questions. Move to more closed questions later.
- Learn to listen more actively. A good game is to find a colleague; Both of you talk at the same time for one timed minute, then take turns to tell your colleague as much as you can about what they said to you.

Do all this, and to take from Dr Dolittle again, your 'Dab-Dab' skills may become more 'Too-Too'. You will enjoy developing your business more, and you will be more successful.

The diagram here shows the different approaches, along with the % weighting of their importance in effective professional selling. The best approach is to devote more effort (70%) to pull techniques, and to focus on these more at the early stages. I have always felt that business develop-

ment courses that focus on 'closing techniques' are misguided. Our experience suggests that if you get the early steps right, the client will make a purchasing decision - and give you the appropriate signal - before you even think about a closing question. This will lead to much more after-sales commitment and a happier long-term adviser-client relationship.



Ewan Pearson



The events industry gets **real!**

If you think of professionally produced corporate events as little more than showbusiness - often involving more 'show' than 'business' - you are not alone. As with any creative discipline, it can be all too easy for production processes to obscure strategic objectives, and all too difficult for clients to measure 'bang-per-buck' with any real accuracy. Throw in the logistical complications of live audiences and the inherent risks of live, non-editable speaker appearances, and it's little wonder that marketing or internal communications professionals are often tempted by video, print or web-based alternatives - especially when prevailing economic conditions are less than ideal.

But whatever the economic outlook, face-to-face communication is not going to go away. As a means of informing and motivating key customers, front-line staff and other tightly-defined, high-value target audiences, it still has no rival - which is why a fresh, creative, professionally-produced event can still be the best way of ensuring the optimum return on your communication investment.

Production values

The question is, "how should you

go about choosing the right professional?" According to a survey of commissioning clients run by Vivace earlier this year, there are six major hurdles a production company has to clear:

First, it has to show that it can deliver on its promises. In the bid to win your business, an obvious temptation is to put forward a creative solution that cannot be sustained by the available budget or completed within the timescales. You should therefore ask for evidence of previous projects delivered within similar parameters to yours, and obtain references from the clients concerned.

Second, it has to be clear about costs. Budgets and cost breakdowns should be presented in an easily comprehensible format, showing exactly where and how your money is being spent.

Third, it must provide clear and consistent lines of client communication - ideally, a single point of contact, both in the period leading up to the event and on site, and a guaranteed, prompt response to any questions you may have.

Fourth, it must draw up a comprehensive schedule for the project as

a whole and for any significant sub-project with in it, e.g. an accompanying video or website, so that client and agency know what the key milestones are, and whether they're being met.

Fifth, perhaps more obviously, the value-for-money candidate has to demonstrate that it can deliver creative thinking and fresh, innovative solutions that catch your audiences' imagination and get your messages across.

And finally, leading on from that, it must demonstrate on every page of its proposal that it has met all the conditions of your brief, and not simply ignored the bits for which it does not have an off-the-shelf solution.

Just as most organisations recognise the value of live events, even with tight budgets, so most production companies recognise the economic realities their clients currently face. Apply these six tests, and you'll soon find someone who can put the business back into showbusiness.

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We are a leading European Consultancy with Associates around the world. We specialise in the spoken communication areas of presentation, selling, negotiation, media and telephone skills. Our principle focus is assisting top to middle management in these areas. We offer our advice both

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Our philosophy is simple: "For you to be yourself at your best, even in the toughest situations".



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