



Lynda Russell-Whitaker

What did the Direct Response Copywriters ever do for us?

Lynda reviews Glenn Fisher’s key themes: Know your audience, features vs. benefits and the importance of narrative.

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Direct response copywriting (i.e. writing directly to consumers) is a somewhat niche topic. If you haven’t already done so, it’s worth investing time, energy and cash into developing your firm’s skills in this area. Let’s face it, most of us are ‘in the business’ of selling something to someone at any given time of the day: products, services, ideas et al. At the very least, there are a number of sound and effective techniques in direct response copywriting that are likely to be very useful in other areas of your business communication. Email marketing is probably the most obvious direct parallel, but the principles employed by seasoned copywriters in this industry are more widely applicable.



It is important to know your audience

one of the highest priorities before attempting to bash out your slide deck, preparing your speech for the upcoming business conference you’re attending (probably virtually), or writing the report for the next meeting of the Board of Directors?

Without having a pretty good idea of who we are addressing, and what is likely to motivate them to read your document, or listen to your talk, how can we accurately inform, educate and persuade them to take that action? That’s where researching our market audience is so crucial. Not just the broad brushstrokes, but the finer details. Asking the pertinent questions. And listening to their answers. Observing their behaviours too. The best writers are great observers.

If you work in sales, and/or you’re a GPB client, and/or you’ve been a reader of SpeakUp! for any length of time, you’ll be well aware of Features versus Benefits (including Ewan’s article in SpeakUp! #69 ‘Incomplete Benefits’?). Chapter Six of ‘The Art of the Click’ is devoted to this topic. Early on in this chapter, Glenn Fisher writes:

‘The best writers are observers’

“It’s a copywriting concept that goes back decades. You’ll find it discussed in books by David Ogilvy³, by Eugene Schwartz⁴, as far back as Claude Hopkins⁵ too. You go to any copywriting event today and you should see it on the agenda. If you don’t, ask for your money back. Seriously.”

Glenn Fisher recently wrote ‘The Art of the Click’, an Amazon bestseller that has been shortlisted as Business Book of the year. It has many excellent tips to help you improve your copywriting skills, e.g. in order to make more sales. Three topics stood out for me as being common to almost every form of effective communication we engage in (professionally and personally):

- Knowing your audience
- Features versus benefits
- The importance of narrative

Wouldn’t you say that knowing your audience as much as possible has to be

What did Direct Response Copywriters ever do for us? (cont...)

He continues...

"In fact, if you only ever learn one thing about copywriting... learn the importance of using benefits over features."

This is more than distinguishing between a feature and a benefit. Fisher writes about *turning* features into benefits. The benefits that really persuade us that we want something are not merely practical; what truly drives us to make a purchase is often far less tangible. It's about how something makes us feel at a deeper level; the 'Pathos' element of Aristotle's Three Appeals⁶. This is what Fisher seems to be tapping into when he talks about taking benefits to another level by **charging** them with an 'emotional narrative'.

Having just collected a new Apple MacBook Pro this morning, I can testify to that intangible emotional benefit. Those of us who are loyal to the brand (sometimes grudgingly, admittedly) are not simply ticking the boxes of the sleek interfaces feature, and benefits of faster processing and easy action keyboards. There are some excellent PC laptops out there that do just as good a job on that front. We 'Apple Fanboys' are subscribing to something more ephemeral, and perhaps a little more exclusive. And that's really what we're paying the higher price for, isn't it?

The more we know our audience, the more in touch we will be with the benefits that appeal to them, and any potential objections they might raise.

Veteran direct marketer, Drayton Bird, does this brilliantly. His marketing emails are some of the most entertaining and persuasive I've ever read. He has worked in the industry for decades and sold a few hundred thousand copies of books on the subject.

In his book '*51 Helpful Marketing Ideas*', Bird encourages us to appeal to people's hearts, assuring us that their minds will follow:

"Underneath every corporate suit beats an all-too-human heart, full of human emotions. Make your appeal to that, and let logic take second place."

It's a compelling argument from someone behind many a successful marketing campaign over the years. In his book, '*Sales Letters that Sell*', he advises us to:

"Methodically write down all the sensible reasons why anyone should do what you want them to do; and all the excuses they might give you as to why they shouldn't. Every one of these should be covered in the copy (and the pictures, for that matter)."

"Once you have covered all the relevant benefits, and overcome all the likely objections, you will have more or less the right content to get the sale."

Conveying this kind of empathy in your writing is very potent. And great stories are very persuasive, whoever is doing the telling, whether it's a Monty Python sketch or Direct Response Copywriters...

By Lynda Russell-Whitaker



Aristotle came up with '*The Three Appeals*', and a few others⁶...

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Alastair Grant

Does social media affect persuasion?

Alastair looks at the use of Logos, Pathos and Ethos and discusses the affect of social media on persuasion.

Aristotle developed his Three Appeals to persuasion some 2,400 years ago. Pathos, Logos and Ethos translate in into emotional appeal, logical argument and ethical trust. Aristotle postulated that these appeals are best used in equal combination to communicate most persuasively. But with social media becoming more prominent, it's worth asking how this balance might be affected.

In the 1970s, two American Professors Petty and Cacioppo, (P&C), advanced Aristotle's ideas with The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of persuasion. They proposed two major routes to persuasion: the Central Route and the Peripheral Route. Under the Central Route, persuasion will likely result from a clear and well-argued message. An example might be Alastair Darling's largely unemotive but logical arguments for why Scotland should stay in the Union. But P&C have more to say. They argue that for the Central Route to succeed, there are two important hurdles to jump.



"Social media makes it harder to put over reasoned and rational arguments" - Alastair Grant

Firstly, the listener must be motivated to listen to what is being said, to process potentially complex information. Secondly, the listener must have the ability (from their existing knowledge) to understand what is being said. P&C go on to say that if the Central Route is successful, then the effects will be more firmly lodged for a longer period than the Peripheral Route. They also found that a lack of ability to understand or a lack of motivation meant that the listener decided using peripheral factors such as the speaker's attractiveness.

President Trump scores well on emotional appeal to some, but logical argument appears to be given scant attention. As for ethical trust, well, I will let you form your own opinions..

In the Scottish Referendum the emotional appeal of Alex Salmond was out-pointed by "dry as a bone" Alastair Darling with his logic-based arguments. The main one was that the Scots would be worse off financially if they decided to go independent.

With Brexit, I would argue that most of us applied an emotional response, whether a Remainer or Leaver. Logical argument seemed to take a back seat, but why? Probably because the issues were far more complex and more difficult to understand. So, voters were more persuaded by the emotional attractiveness of people like Boris Johnson and Nigel Farage. The logical arguments of Michael Heseltine and Dominic Grieve failed to resonate in a febrile atmosphere.

We see Donald Trump, a charismatic speaker to some, outgunning more reasoned speakers. Truth is swept aside such that we get used to apparent falsehood. We also see efforts by hostile actors to influence opinion by hacking, providing multiple stories to discredit or confuse. The Skripol poisoning is an example. The Russians actively and widely practice *Maskirovka* (military deception) using Social Media and other channels.

It seems that people are becoming ever more polarised in their views on many issues, not just politics. Why is this? I suggest that it is the huge influence of social media such as

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Does social media affect persuasion? (cont...)

Twitter, Snapchat, TikTok, WeChat, Facebook, and WhatsApp. People spend more time communicating electronically than in the past. This in turn means they source much less from the regulated media (Press, Radio, TV). Social media is characterised by quite short bursts of information to closed groups of receivers. Rational argument has no room when texting a short comment. Attention spans are reduced. On many social media feeds, anonymous senders can be found posting highly emotional comments that may be untrue or lack any balance. Some readers, suitably enraged by the outrageous remark, reply in kind. An escalation in showing contempt is enhanced and turbo charged in some cases by *Maskirovka*.

In the military, where I came from, we were schooled in the art of 'Appreciating the Situation'. We had to look at facts and then produce deductions. A *So What* process. This was designed to keep us focused on a logical path to decision making and to avoid fitting arguments to what we thought was the solution, or as was called 'Situating the Appreciation'. It was using Logos to drive the show and factoring out Pathos-type gut feelings.

How does this fit the business scene? Business decisions seem mainly based on reasoned argument, but we also know that persuading the listener to follow the logic is harder now than in the past: shorter attention spans, more use of emotive words in text, emails and the rest. How might we advise our clients to overcome this? Here are a number of ideas:

Handling complex arguments. Getting an audience to listen and understand a complex argument has always been a challenge. The answer is the same:

- Catch their attention at the outset so they feel compelled to listen or are curious to know what is coming.
- Provide clear and verifiable evidence of facts.

- Use mini-summaries along the route so that if some have lost their way then the mini-summary is a time when they can catch up.
- Use verbal imagery, anecdotes, similes and examples which help to plug some seemingly abstract concept into the listeners mind.
- Use simple Anglo-Saxon based language without jargon-filled vacuous phrases.
- Use PowerPoint only to add value.

There is also a need to help those reporting to you to think creatively and logically. Edward de Bono's '*Six Thinking Hats*' has become even more relevant today with the impact of social media on how we think. De Bono encourages us to think in different ways. So, wearing a metaphorical *Red Hat* allows us to be emotive and express strong subjective feelings about a topic. We get it off our chest even though we know we must then adjust our inflamed thoughts in a more pragmatic style. A *Black Hat* allows us to be negative. Play the role of Devil's Advocate. A *Green Hat* encourages creativity, A *Yellow Hat* means think positively – the opposite from the *Black Hat*. In running a meeting or discussion,

attendees should be encouraged to share opinions wearing different hats. But try to start with a *White Hat* which is about facts and data, and finally wear a *Blue Hat* for summary and action. Social Media has made many of us default to *Red Hat* thinking.

To counterargue, Social Media makes it harder to put over arguments based on logical deduction and truthful data. It has made many of us less likely to take the effort to understand detail. So, in turn this means a fierce focus on communicating clearly and briefly and to debunk robustly falsehood. But it also means an educative process of encouraging managers to think objectively in the way we in the military were taught without red ink being sprawled over our faulty thinking!

By Alastair Grant

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Richard Keith

Learning to like your likeability

Richard discusses ‘likeability’ and the need to for it to be genuine.

For many of us, the demonstrating of our competence is central to our act of persuasive communication that we undertake. Isn't that what our counterparties really need to know? Whether presenting, pitching to a potential client or communicating with an investor, the main thing we are trying to get across is that we are (very!) good at what we do, no?

Well, yes but there's more. Whilst demonstrating competence is key, there are other elements that your audience will take into consideration when you are attempting to persuade them of something.



A real smile goes a long way²

Trustworthiness is crucial, as Des later describes in this journal; but along with that, we believe that *likeability* is also an important factor. (Trust and likeability are distinctly related, but more on that later.)

Robert Cialdini famously unpacked the principal of “liking” when it comes to influencing people. In his book *Influence: the Psychology of Persuasion*¹ he details how we are more likely to be persuaded by people we like, and even divided this up into different facets of likability. For example, we are more likely to be persuaded by people who are physically attractive (that is, we like how they look), or people who pay us compliments or even people whom we perceive to be similar to us in various ways.

“When we get the sense that someone isn't being genuine we can feel manipulated rather than persuaded”.

Then there are the obvious and well-known things that we can do to be more likeable. For example, smiling (appropriately and authentically), open gestures and displaying a genuine interest in your counterparty.

But beyond that, what does likeability really mean in the world of professional communication? When we speak of likeability, we don't mean that you need to become best friends with your audience so that you can share summer holidays together in a cottage on the coast. Rather, we believe that you must have the capacity to build a genuine rapport with your counterparties, based on real respect, not the faux-respect more commonly associated with fear or obligation. If you think of your own professional experience, the most productive working relationship with colleagues or clients probably had this element at their centre.

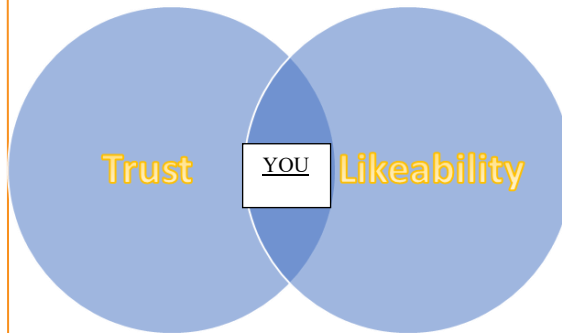
From the above definition, one thing should be clear. We may indeed have different “likes” for we are all different people; but when it comes to interacting with others, we like people who we *believe are genuine*. Authenticity in any interaction is a big driver of the real respect at the core of likeability. When we get the sense that someone isn't being genuine we can feel manipulated rather than persuaded. This can be an issue in pitching, for instance: whilst a

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Learning to like your likeability (cont...)

team trying to win a piece of work may say one thing - perhaps something along the lines of “*We want to help you solve your problems and mitigate the problems of the future*”, their voice and



Trust and liability

visual communication may be conveying something else - possibly something like “*I don't care particularly about this piece of work*” or worse “*I WANT YOUR MONEY*”. If the audience feel any sort of insincerity from the team pitching, it can lead to a clear dislike for the speakers, and severely reduce the chances of winning the work.

This is where the Venn diagrams of trust and likeability overlap. We are more likely to trust people who we feel are genuine with us, in part because we like their authenticity; and we like people who we feel are genuine with us, in part because we trust their authenticity. If we send people mixed messages - that is, we display discongruent communication - then we risk becoming less trusted and liked.

We at GPB long ago coined the phrase, “*Yourself at your best...even in the toughest situations*”, and this is exactly how you can become more likeable. Being the best version of you, but undeniably, authentically *you*, is a very likeable quality because we respect it. You at your best means you are confident without being arrogant, relaxed without being unprofessional, and pleasant without lacking authority.

Ah, authority. The mystical element of gravitas that we so desperately want,

but can feel so elusive. Often we have advised clients on the need for likeability in persuasion, and often we are told in return that to do so would sacrifice authority. Does that have to be the case?

Here it is all about balance and flexing your communication. Really great communicators know that you cannot demonstrate your likeability, trustworthiness and competence at exactly the same time all the time; they know, rather, that successful persuasive communication should *balance these overall*.

If you think of the entirety of your 20 minute pitch or presentation, and the Q&A that follows, it becomes easier to understand that the overall impression that the audience takes away must be the sum of the component parts - your likeability, trustworthiness, competence, along with your authority and dynamism, all underpinned by authenticity.

Being very good at your job is important; and helping people understand how good you are is also important. But don't feel you have to sacrifice genuine likeability in your communication, it may be more valuable in achieving your goals than you think.

By Richard Keith

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Superior Force



Ewan Pearson

If two forces are equal and opposite, nothing moves; irresistible force meets immovable object. To develop skills, motivation must exceed inertia.

During lockdown, lots of people have binged on box sets. We're no exception: my family watched every Star Wars movie, even the ones we don't like! It got me thinking about that hackneyed line "*Use the Force, Luke*". Luke seemed to have a lot of trouble training himself to do so. The same it seems applies to us mortals, when it comes to learning to become better at using our voices, at doing the right things with our faces and gestures, and speaking the best set of words.

To understand this better we'll need a bit of school-level Physics, most of which I have long forgotten and had to look up. Newton's First Law says colloquially that something won't move (or change speed) unless you shove it. His Second Law famously says " $F=MA$ ", where Force (newtons) = Mass (kg) x Acceleration (m/s²). So, Force is described here as accelerating things, e.g. from stationary to a decent pace forwards. Thereafter, apparently, no Force is required to maintain speed, but that assumes we're in a vacuum, and we're not. There is the force of resistance, which can stop things from starting, and will slow things down after they have got going unless 'something' overcomes the resistance. So, we also need to mention Power (watts) = Energy (joules)/Time elapsed (seconds). In Physics, Power is a measure of strength, e.g. of an engine to pull or push an object through wind resistance or up a hill, or here of a person to overcome a psychological obstacle.



Force is required to start moving forwards and to overcome the inertia

How does this darned Physics apply to you and GPB?

Simples! We coach and advise people to develop their skills and knowledge and thus competence and persuasiveness. This requires them to have *Force* to start moving forwards and specifically to overcome the inertia to getting started, and then to have *Power* to keep things moving against the resistance to change, which can be large or small. I have had several conversations over the past six months with coachees about just this.

Here, the sources of *Inertia* include a lack of time and a personality type that is resistance to change, fear of being foolish and of failure, and simply not knowing what to do. The sources of *Force* that we see include a key event (e.g. an IPO, fundraising roadshow, pitch or a wedding), or your boss telling or asking you to do it.

Best of all is the *Force* of self-motivation, that comes from an internal drive to improve oneself, possibly with a pay rise and/or ego boost at the end of it. Anticipation of such change, and making the change, can induce high states of nervousness and stress, some of which will be motivational, others destructive.

Then we need *Power*, to keep going against the headwind. It seems to me that this comes from the same sources as the *Force*, but as it's later in time, it can be high or low, as can its opposing *Force*, and the latter will produce a reversion to the pre-condition (aka 'going backwards').

This *Force* can be huge, even clinically

Advice squeezed straight from the experts



Superior Force (cont...)

identified as 'glossophobia', the fear of public speaking, that can be triggered even months ahead of a known key event with serious mental health and sleep deprivation consequences.

We are often asked how to become a more confident speaker, and deal with nerves and stress when presenting, which is anecdotally known as one of the scariest work activities. Having to give a 'difficult' speech will cause a big increase in Cortisol levels, and more hesitation¹. Heart Rate and Speech Rate are known to rise significantly, Disfluencies such as 'umm' and 'err' and repetition too.

The superficial answer is that this *Confidence* comes from (a) knowing you've got a great *Story* to tell (which comes from good content creation), plus (b) *Practicing* until you know you can tell it well (aka rehearsals), (c) *Attitude* (a positive mental one) and (d) *Motivation* (see also *Force* and *Power* above) to do the hard graft to get all of that done.

Or, for the mathematicians, $C = S + P + A + M$. Yes, Confidence comes from SPAM! (other good tinned meats are also available).

I want to focus more on *Power* here. Put most simply, a presenter has to find "a power to push forwards that is felt to be much stronger than the power of the nerves pushing them back, and thus overcome the psychological obstacle". It's easy to say but where does this forwards power come from?

In our experience, it is unique to each person, and often is a power they need our help to uncover. Our key questions for this include 'why *you?*' and 'why are you *really* doing this presentation?' If there is a common theme in answers it is that there is a 'bigger cause' that has required them to speak on this topic to this audience at this

time. Here are two examples:

Firstly, a young woman who had already interviewed twice for a promotion as a radiologist and had been so nervous that she could not hold it together. For her third and final chance at promotion she came to us nearly a year before the key interview and presentation. We found her Power came from her desire to share more widely her expertise in spotting breast cancer diagnoses earlier, in order to save lives and reduce serious operations. We got to her have this front of mind when preparing and on the key days, and we were delighted to hear that she got the job. Many women with earlier breast cancer diagnoses can be grateful that she found the Power to defeat her nerves.



Story, practice, attitude and motivation

Secondly, a young man who had both his wedding speech and then a high probability of a major shareholder conference speech to give. We found the Power for his wedding to be in his love for his fiancée and therefore the desire to ensure he started married life in just the right way. For the conference it was the sharing of a business strategy that was both admired and profitable compared with peers, that others could benefit from. The result? He gave a knockout wedding speech and is now happily married. The conference? That was cancelled (for now) due to Covid-19, but he may be back on stage in 2021...

These examples, among many we have seen, show what's possible, but to put it most simply, the Power driving you to do these stressful things has to easily exceed the Forces pushing you back. Time to call Luke....

By Ewan Pearson

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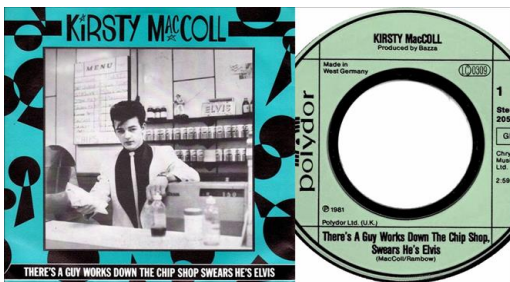


Desmond Harney

Would I Lie to You?

Des explores some ways in which communication can help either to establish or diminish Trust

In 1981 Kirsty MacColl sang about deceit, plaintively reproaching her sweetheart: *"I can't help feeling that, somehow, you don't mean anything you say at all."*¹¹ She mirrors how we all judge other people's levels of (dis)honesty - by their words and actions. Centuries earlier the first Poet Laureate, John Dryden, claimed *'Truth is the foundation of all knowledge, and the cement of all societies'*⁷¹.



Kirsty MacColl's debut hit single featured lying 'Chip Shop Elvis'⁷¹

But, if it's difficult to believe anything a liar says, what should we make of research which suggests most of us lie at least once or twice a day - though normally with positive intent². How can any of us ever be trusted? The fabled Boy Who Cried Wolf wasn't believed when it finally mattered most. He got eaten by said wolf, teaching us all a valuable moral lesson: nobody believes (or likes) a liar. So if Kirsty's chip shop 'Elvis' offered advice about defeating a global virus pandemic, we probably wouldn't pay him much attention. We're not aware that he possesses specialist subject matter expertise, and even if we were, we'd suspect him of dishonesty anyway.

Expertise and honesty are important considerations for us all. If we want to persuade people to think differently or take a particular course of action, it's critical that we first establish our credentials and credibility, to help them to trust us. That's true in politics, in workplaces and in life in general. It's GPB advice based on c. 2,400 years of thinking and research. Aristotle believed establishing trustworthiness is a foundation upon which

all persuasive communication is built³. His views are now supported by modern research which reconfirms that successfully appealing to Ethos (establishing you can be trusted and relied upon) is an essential prerequisite for effective persuasion⁴.

Other aspects of communication also help develop an audience's trust. These include the words you choose, the way you say them, how you look when you say them, and whether these things all consistently match your other words and actions - and people's overall perceptions of your character. Can we really believe you will deliver?

Truthfulness is essential for establishing long-term Trust. We mislead people in the short-term at our peril. If we're not thoroughly believed, persuading others to think or act our way will be difficult, regardless of our carefully reasoned arguments. We also need to genuinely believe in our own words and ideas. Otherwise, we risk revealing give-away signs - or "tells"- about the truth. Professor Emeritus Paul Ekman, now at Univ. of California, claims that gestures and facial expressions, particularly 'micro-expressions'⁵, help to reveal our lies.



Publicity for the TV panel show which makes deceit a comic art form¹².

The proverb *'Fool me once, shame on thee; fool me twice, shame on me'* means we should learn to read others better, sometimes the hard way.

We all continually assess whether or not we like and trust people. If we hope to influence others, this makes it vital we ensure the impression they

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Would I Lie to You? (cont...)

form of us is a positive one. A poor first impression might leave your audience forever wondering whether you can really be believed at all - and trusted to get things done.

Perhaps Dryden was wrong, or his 'cement' of social cohesion failed somewhere along the way, as these days we're unsurprised that even a placid Thought For The Day BBC Radio 4 presenter can blithely state: "*it's rare to hear public figures apologise for their mistakes, or take appropriate responsibility for errors of judgment*"⁶, without exciting controversy or outrage.

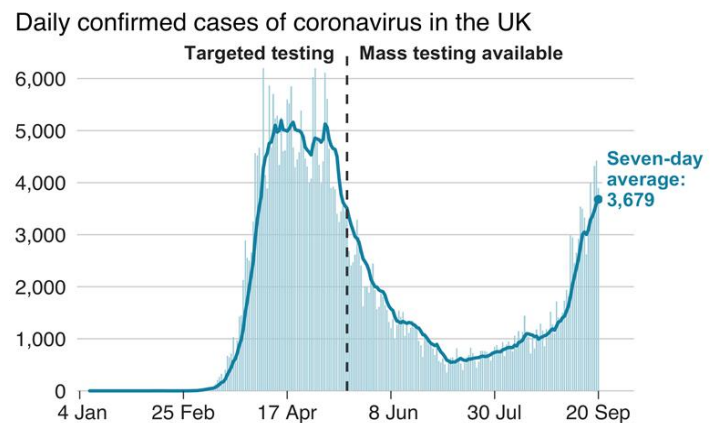
It's now commonplace to suggest that politicians, in particular, don't routinely tell the truth². Or, at least, not the whole truth⁶. That's a significant factor in why so few establish lasting credibility and trust. Yet we might not even be entirely sure why it is we don't trust them.

Senior politicians are routinely coached, rehearsed and scripted. Yet this can create issues, as well as sometimes solving their short-term difficulties. Spin Doctors advise them what questions to avoid answering. Sometimes they provide specific phrases to use, and to avoid. This might help control the message, but rarely helps create overall positive impressions. Terrified of saying (though apparently not necessarily of doing!) the wrong things, politicians normally avoid answering tough interview questions, instead responding to imaginary ones they would rather have been asked.

They're sometimes also coached to use a limited, repetitive, sterile, glib vocabulary, which further erodes

Trust, as does the appearance of being slickly rehearsed.

Humans generally prefer spontaneity, honest answers and admissions. We want to form positive impressions of interesting, real people; 'warts and all'. In a recent pair of short, consecutive interviews⁷, however, Matt Hancock (UK Secretary of State for Health and Social Care) demonstrated this robotic narrowing of vocabulary. Using a few carefully memorised phrases repeatedly, in line



Source: Gov.uk dashboard, updated to 20 Sep 09:00 BST
A "Broadly Flat" trend?¹³

BBC

with his planned, defensive Key Messages (e.g.: "Vast Majority" - 6 times; "Operational Challenges" - 5 times) his delivery was jarring and seemed unnatural. Mr. Hancock is used here purely as a topical and representative example. He is very far from being a lone culprit.

There are ways of developing trust and positive impressions, beyond simply telling the truth

In those same interviews, Hancock also described as "broadly flat" what could already be recognised as the recurrence of a steep,

upward Covid-19 infection trend. If you choose points on a timeline deviously enough, many negative trends can be disingenuously described as being broadly flat. Just two weeks later, 13.5 million Britons were under renewed local lockdown restrictions, with more to follow soon after.

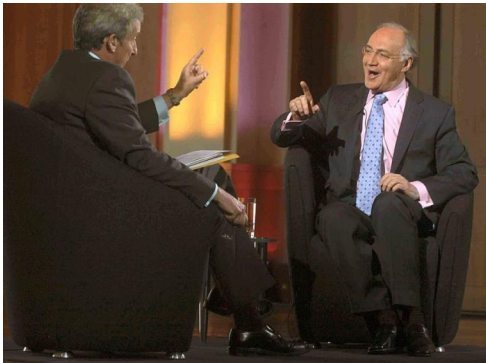
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Would I Lie to You? (cont...)

Oops! Political advisers seem unaware that, when their chip shop Elvis makes misleading claims, they risk alienating audiences. Who might henceforth discount the likelihood that anything else they say is true.

Kier Starmer, the latest 'new' leader of the UK's Labour party, suffering a credibility crisis of its own, recently admitted (astutely and honestly) in an interview, "First, we need to rebuild Trust"⁸. Luckily for him, there are ways of successfully developing trust and positive impressions, beyond simply



Paxman and Howard getting to The Point, in happier times.¹⁴

telling the truth. For example, handling tough questions well can build your credibility. And that's something we can all practice. This normally includes actually remembering to answer all parts of the questions asked, where possible. As suggested earlier, however, many politicians experience great difficulty doing this.

By contrast, in a live 1997 interview, Home Secretary Michael Howard famously refused twelve times to answer a simple question. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his party leadership bid soon floundered. The UK might very well be a rather different place now, if only he had felt more comfortable handling just one awkward question.

Presenter Jeremy Paxman admitted much later that he'd persisted with this "rude" farce of questioning after discovering his next scheduled interview on the show had fallen through⁹. Demonstrating it's not just politicians who are economical with the truth. The erosion of Trust can be

a slippery and dangerous downwards slope for us all.

One final example I'll share is that of a fictionalised historical statesman: Shakespeare's Mark Antony. The Roman General, politician, and (later) Triumvir, Consul and lover of Cleopatra claims, misleadingly, '*I come to bury Caesar, NOT to praise him*'¹⁰. Kirsty McColl would surely have commented, whilst raising a suspicious eyebrow: '*...But he's a liar / And I'm not sure about you*'¹¹. After all, would you 'lend him YOUR ears' - and expect to ever get them back again?

By Desmond Harney

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Advice *squeezed*
straight from the
experts





Mata Richard! A new chapter opens...

また近いうちにお会いしましょう*



The GPB team would like to say a special thank you to Richard Keith, who will be moving to Japan with his family very soon. Richard, we would like to recognise your continued hard work and dedication over the years. On one hand we are sad to see you go, although we are happy for you, and glad that you will be holding the torch in Japan for GPB.

Thank you for everything!

We wish you the best of luck (or 最高の運 in Japanese—pronounced ‘Saikō no

un’) and we hope that you and your family thoroughly enjoy the experience!

From The GPB Team.

Sayōnara | **Jā** | **Mata chikaiuchini o ai shimashou***
(goodbye) | (bye) | (see you soon*; we hope that’s what it says!)

GPB is trading normally and successfully

We would not normally spend column inches here telling you about us, but the unique situation merits a word or two here. We started coaching online - with our client Hewlett Packard providing the ‘tech’ - in 2000, running VCs or “Virtual Classrooms”. That’s also the year we published our first of these “Speak Up” Journals. The VC idea was ahead of its time, but Zoom, Teams and Google Meetings are all remarkably similar to this and so very familiar to us.

During the pandemic, our staff have been working well and safely from home, and the transition to that was very smooth. A few early client events were cancelled, but we’ve now replaced those with plenty of 1-1 two-hour coaching sessions and we have also been working with client teams on key presentations such as AGMs, and fund-raising for our Private Equity and Infrastructure clients. Clients are enquiring more and more about blended and post lockdown coaching, and our online group workshops.

We have also published an Infosheet on effective Online Communication, and this can be viewed as a short guide at our website, and a more detailed handout can be downloaded as a pdf. Please visit www.gpb.eu and see the Press and Articles column on the right for these.

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