

Presentations Are Out: Sharing Your Story Is In!

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Customers are not crazy about formal presentations. They complain that presentations often seem prescriptive and downright boring. When surveyed, one of our clients said, “The last thing I need in my day is one more sales person doing a dog and pony show. What happened to the good old fashioned conversation?” Customers today want interaction. A sure-fire way to involve listeners is with a good story.

Storytelling is not something new. It has been around since Biblical times as a way to educate, inspire or promote change. Former President Ronald Reagan was a great storyteller. In fact, his aides said that if you wanted to get the President’s attention about an issue, you needed to come into the Oval Office with a good story. We strongly recommend storytelling as a way to connect with your clients on a deeper level.

Before telling any story, you must know the business point you want to make and what you want your listeners to do as a result of your story. Is it to be prepared for an emerging market, respond more quickly to customers or embrace a new opportunity? Your listeners should clearly see the point you are making and the benefits for them through your story. Any unrelated details must be eliminated. Clients do not have the time or tolerance for a long, disjointed story. Tell your story in two or three minutes tops.

Stories that are effective have a good plot and interesting characters. As you tell your story, include enough details to arouse your listeners’ interest. Be sure to tell them anecdotes that will tug on their heart strings or transport them to a different time or place. There should always be an emotional component. As you introduce your characters, make certain they are believable. Allow them come to life by giving them unique character traits.

How you tell your story is critical. Your voice needs to sound passionate and excited. You must take lots of pauses so listeners can savor what you have said. If your delivery is ineffective, your story will fall flat. By practicing ahead of time, you will be able to demonstrate the necessary conviction.

The right story at the right stage of the conversation cycle is winning. It builds your credibility and creates trust. If you are not already using a storytelling approach, consider doing so. Your listeners will more likely welcome you into their office.

We’re interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions about incorporating stories into your conversations. Judy will respond to all questions.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their presentation and telephone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.