

# All present and correct?

Karl Hartey continues his series on maximising the value you get from client seminars by explaining how to get the best out of yourself on the day



**YOU'VE ORGANISED THE EVENT, people have turned up and they are waiting for the main attraction – you. So how do you ensure your presentation is a success?**

The first task is to engage the audience – and that means looking them in the eye.

Clearly, in a big room with 50 or 100 faces turned your way, you cannot expect to have a simultaneous intimate chat with every person. But look for the 'smiley eyes' in the different parts of the room – you'll know them when you see them – and move your line of vision from

## Be at your ease with the seven Es:

- 1 **Energy** - make sure that you have plenty. Don't drink the night before, get some exercise and try to sleep long and well.
- 2 **Excitement** – put excitement and verve into the talk. Be evidently pleased to be doing what you are doing.
- 3 **Entertainment** – make it entertaining. Enjoy yourself. Introduce humour, but don't be a comedian.
- 4 **Emotion** – describe real situations where you have helped clients and demonstrate the satisfaction you derive from a job well done.
- 5 **Enthusiasm** – be enthusiastic, do not be dull or boring, do not be wooden. Ask someone to critique your talk or video yourself in rehearsal. Don't be embarrassed or shy because that will suggest a lack of confidence in your message. Negativity is infectious.
- 6 **Education** – educate your clients so they feel they have learnt something – and that they want you to be their adviser.
- 7 **Ending** – build to a climax. Decide what you want to achieve in your talk and finish with a flourish. Make sure the audience knows this stage of the proceedings is over, and leave them impressed and eager for more.

one to the other so it appears that you are talking to everyone.

An option is autocue, where you read from glass screens placed either side of your lectern. Do not lean towards them and make sure you use both as this allows you to look around the room.

If you read from your lectern you might find yourself with your head down, doggedly following your script and making little eye contact. This can alienate the audience. My preference is to 'hold the floor' – have nothing between you and your guests. This shows confidence and it allows you to interact with the audience.

Walking can also help dissipate nervous energy and get rid of any quavering in your voice. Don't be afraid to use gestures. Become a 'whole body' speaker, using your arms and facial expressions to full effect – and ensure there is tonal variation in your voice.

You have to know your stuff, however, and you have to practise. But a good talk will always come from the heart.

The presentation should be split into two halves of around 45 minutes each. The first half should contain a short introduction by somebody else. You can then begin. Keep to the allotted time and then break for refreshments. Start back 15 minutes later for the second session. Leave 15 minutes for questions, then break for lunch or afternoon tea.

At this point, ensure that you (and your best people) mix and socialise as much as possible. Sometimes, with large groups, you will struggle to meet everyone, but try at least to say hello. You're not there to dispense advice and devise solutions – that comes later. Simply try to make everyone feel they have been noticed and that you are appreciative of their presence.

If you have 60 couples and one hour, it only gives you one minute each. But that should be enough – if it is clear that you are merely saying hello, most people will avoid detaining you. Do not neglect people: the one you neglect may be the one with the largest cheque. Be

interested and be interesting. Make sure you have people and processes in place that allow guests to book appointments.

Hand out a feedback sheet or include one in your pack (and draw attention to it). A good tactic is to ask people to fill it in during a break so that you can have a prize draw on the day – perhaps with a bottle of champagne. The information you gather will provide rich material for your subsequent marketing effort.

Make sure you thank people for coming and don't let them go without a pack. Tell them you'll be in touch soon, and encourage as many as possible to make an appointment there and then. We usually make five to 10 appointments at the end of each presentation.

The day after the presentation, write to non-attendees – there will be some, for all manner of reasons. Generally, you can expect a drop rate of between 10% to 15%. Write to them out of courtesy, offering them an individual meeting or an invite to the next presentation.

This done, you can go to work on the feedback sheets. Identify people who want a meeting. These are the hot leads, and those pieces of paper are potentially worth more than their weight in gold. These are your priority, so act without delay. Other people have maybe ticked for further information. These are not-so-hot because they had the opportunity to tick the appointment box but chose not to. They are important and deserve your attention, but not at the expense of your hot leads.

With hot prospects, telephone to ask for a meeting. Try to fit them around your schedule, but be accommodating by offering different times: Tuesday at 10 or Thursday at 4?

It is preferable for clients to come to you. If a client makes the effort to come to you, it means they are serious. Soccer teams either play at home or away and, generally, most are more successful at home. So capitalise on the strength of your office, your brand, your service. Make sure the office looks right, feels right, tastes right and smells right. That is the way to win your home games.



## PowerPoint to the People

If you use PowerPoint, do not use too many slides. This is a recipe for Death by PowerPoint. Slides should be an aid, not reading material. I have seen presenters look at the slides and leave their audience to look at the back of their head. Clients can read for themselves. But remember also that, if someone is giving some of their attention to a slide, they are giving less of it to you. You should always be the main focus of attention.

You will need a powerful laptop that can run a comprehensive Powerpoint system. You will also need a back-up in case it goes wrong. You will need an LCD projector with a strong light to ensure clarity. If you back project using a reversible projector, the projector is hidden away with

all of the other equipment, wires, cords and other stuff. Screen changes are done by mouse or laser fob, which you can also use as a highlighter.

As far as sound is concerned, use a lapel microphone to help your voice in the larger rooms. Do not use a hand held microphone, as you will already have a key fob in one hand, and it will restrict your movement.

Make sure you test everything – the slides, the kit, the connections, the electricity supply, the availability of the back-up, the presence of someone who knows how to work the rig. Do not rely on the hotel but use your own gear – it will be worth it. Get to know your equipment and have a full dress rehearsal. Remember: perfect preparation prevents poor performance.

Next month's article will focus on the follow-up to the seminar