

# COACH *Notes*



Volume II, No. 8

Newsletter

## Presentations That Persuade and Motivate

Almost everyone feels a bit nervous about delivering a presentation before a group. Some people claim they'd rather undergo a root canal than manage the anxiety associated with giving a speech.

Follow some basic guidelines for preparation and delivery, and you can transform your nervousness into positive energy that achieves the results you desire.

Giving effective presentations is not something you want to delegate or avoid. Sooner or later, you'll be called upon to make a presentation to an audience—perhaps your direct reports, other managers, your superiors, customers and/or industry colleagues. Managers who can deliver successful speeches have greater opportunities for career advancement.

Don't rely on your innate intelligence or charm! Intuition can carry you through many phases of your career, but leaving presentations to chance — or simply winging them — is risky. Your career's trajectory could be on the line.

The secrets to successful presentations are simple, based on common sense. Many people, however, fail to employ them.

### Step One: Purpose

What's the purpose of your presentation? There are many reasons to make a speech or announcement, and you need to clearly define your goal. Do you have to deliver bad news to your department? Do you require a decision from your superiors on a problematic business situation? Do you have a solution and want to convince people? Are you trying to sell a solution or product?

Most presenters try to persuade their audience to buy into specific ideas. They must sufficiently inspire and motivate listeners to take action or give the green light to act on suggested solutions.

Speeches like these are more crucial than, and

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*"Turning potential into performance"*

*David Herdlinger, Herdlinger Associates*

### Dreamers Welcome

*At Herdlinger Associates, I encourage people to dream. And the positive results have been astounding!*

*When individuals pursue their dreams, their lives percolate with purpose, passion, success, and fulfillment.*

*As a coach, I don't try to make my clients' dreams come true. That's their privilege...and responsibility.*

*My role — and my joy — is to stand by their side to encourage, guide, challenge, and cheer them on.*

*Are your dreams big enough? Let me help you unleash your potential and accomplish more than you ever dreamed possible.*

*...David Herdlinger*

HERDLINGER ASSOCIATES has helped thousands of professionals at all levels in all types of organizations achieve extraordinary success and satisfaction.

We serve clients in North America, Europe, and Asia, ranging in size from individuals and very small businesses to corporations with annual sales in excess of \$40 billion.

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[www.TheCoach.biz](http://www.TheCoach.biz)

P.O. Box 20389  
St. Simons Island, GA 31522  
912.634.9300  
877.626.2960 (toll-free)  
[David@TheCoach.biz](mailto:David@TheCoach.biz)

require more finesse than, those made to sell a product or report quarterly earnings.

The business environment is changing rapidly: New technologies are upending old business models, customer tastes change without warning, new competitors pop up, and global companies are rewriting the rules of commerce. Presentations that persuade or motivate are more important than ever before.

Managers must frequently accomplish their goals by collaborating with others over whom they have no formal authority. This requires the power of persuasion. You cannot present “just the facts, ma’am” and assume they’ll speak for themselves.

You need to lead your audience through the decision-making process so members can go through it with you. Unless they believe they “own” the decision, they won’t act upon it.

It’s critical to avoid spelling everything out for them. Let them “see” what the problems are and which decisions are needed. They will then be happy to engage in finding solutions and be enthusiastic about acting on them.

## Step Two: Know Your Audience

Your audience is not merely composed of the people you’ll face when you deliver your speech. It also includes those who may be influenced or affected by your proposal. Before you think about what to say, you must determine who your audience is and what they’ll need from you to buy into your argument.

How much do they already know about what you’ll be saying? How are they used to hearing or seeing arguments? Are they analytical, or do they rely on intuition? Be sure to address both learning styles.

Finally, make sure you’re selling the *benefits* of your solution – not the *features*. For example, if your new program benefits the company by saving time and money, this is what you should emphasize. It will appeal to your audience much more than any discussion of actual program features. Always focus on your audience’s interests.

## Step Three: Structure Your Presentation

Most of the time, it’s wise to open with a story that reveals a picture of the problem at hand. Stories engage people, especially if they’re personal and real. They create an authentic connection and

grab people’s attention. Remember: Your first 30 seconds are the most crucial. Some studies indicate you have even less time to make a positive impression that persuades and convinces.

**The Problem:** Follow up your story with an honest analysis of the problem, and back it up with research statistics. The Internet makes this part of your task easy, but be cautious about spending too much time on stats.

**The Solution:** Next, present the solution. This is the “good stuff,” as people want to know relief is in sight. Spell out the benefits to your audience.

**Action:** Provide steps people can take immediately, which allows them to begin garnering some of the benefits you’ve been describing. This may be as simple as a list that identifies possibilities and opportunities within their department.

## Strengthening Your Presentation

If you use slides or PowerPoint graphics, don’t become overly attached to them. They should supplement your talk and illustrate key points, not deliver the presentation for you. Don’t use graphics that contain every word you say, and never read directly off the screen.

Limit text to subheadings, which should be large enough to read from the back of the room. Don’t talk to the screen instead of your audience. And always be prepared for the possibility of a power or technological failure; bring handouts and have an alternative way to deliver your speech in case there’s no screen.

## Managing Anxiety

Some experts suggest memorizing the first 60 seconds of your speech. If you do this, make sure it sounds natural and authentic. Because you’re likely to open with a personal story, introduce yourself and explain why your topic is so important to you. This makes the first 60 seconds sound natural, even if you memorize your text.

Don’t draw attention to your nervousness by telling your audience about it. You can share your feelings, but not your anxieties. Your goal is to present yourself authentically, as a real human being.

Don’t fidget or fiddle with your hair, clothes or body parts. Practice your speech in front of a mirror as often as you can, and minimize nervous tics by standing behind a podium, if necessary. Practice drawing a deep breath for instant relaxation.