

Effective Presentation Skills

Putting your message across – a Case Study

The Corporate Sales presentation sets the mark for an organisation. It identifies the positioning, the strengths and the benefits that their clients will gain. Putting your presentation together and ensuring your message is cleanly and accurately conveyed is key. In our view, anyone can learn how to give confident, convincing and compelling presentations.

The tailored coaching provided by us has proven to be far more effective than the more generic courses on Presentation Skills. We focus on the individual's own style and on the objectives of a specific presentation.

This case study looks at the re-development and implementation of a corporate presentation that we carried out on behalf of a major technology services vendor. To protect the innocent, we will call them ABC.

Have you ever sat through a presentation and wished that you were somewhere else?

Or worse still, have you ever given a presentation and felt that your audience was wishing you were somewhere else!

In this age of the internet, email and tele-conferencing it is often easy to forget how powerful and important the traditional presentation can be. However, many people including senior directors and even experienced salespeople do not enjoy public speaking and miss a great opportunity to win friends and influence people.

Giving a really great presentation starts by looking at the message(s) you need to convey, and the audience to whom you are speaking. Then adding the visual aids and the public speaking skills to get that message across effectively.

This case study looks at just one of the many corporate sales presentations we have helped to create and the follow-on coaching we have provided to ensure the message hits the spot. This particular client is an ISP, we will call them ABC.

Background

At ABC they had realised that they needed to move up market to gain more large-scale corporate accounts and move away from the telephone as their standard sales media. Many of the sales people were young ambitious go-getters, who had cut their sales teeth through tele-sales. They knew their business but had little or no experience in presenting the company on a personal basis.

Their marketing department had been asked to revamp the corporate presentation; the result covered many of the facts surrounding the company and their services but lacked structure and more importantly the overall business benefits of using ABC, as a corporate ISP, were not brought out.



Having attempted to give this presentation a couple of times, it became evident to the sales management that a new punchier presentation was required, and that the sales team needed to be trained in giving the presentation.

Bringing out the Benefits

The first issue was to turn a collection of facts, in over 70 slides, into a punchy, poignant presentation. The sales manager was interviewed, to understand why people became ABC customers. This provided the information required to re-work the existing slides, adding new structure and material to bring out the true benefits of choosing ABC. At the same time we drastically reduced the number of slides to well under half the initial number. The end effect was the creation of a sales presentation rather than a corporate product catalogue.

The next stage was to reinforce the techniques of effective public speaking with the sales staff. This was achieved by running a half-day "Effective Presentations Skills" course for up to 10 people at a time. This course ended with our consultant presenting the new ABC corporate presentation.

Experience shows that there is no substitute in preparing for a presentation better than giving it. So a few days later it was the sales peoples' turn, splitting

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into pairs, they each took turns to give the presentation to our consultant and one colleague. This performance was reviewed and detailed feedback used to provide both praise and constructive criticism on their performance. This critique was both verbal and written, in order that the salespeople could review it prior to future presentations.

SOCA Management Consultants Ltd <small>"increasing your sales revenues"</small> Effective Presentation Skills	
Date of course: _____	
Delegates Name: _____	
Timing	
Opening	
Content	
Technique	
Non-verbal	
Use of visual aids	
Close	
Things to watch for	
Overall	

Through this tailored coaching, which combines both the individual's presentation technique and the content of the company's presentation, we aim to ensure that every salesperson is capable of delivering an entertaining, educational and effective sales presentation. Ensuring that their audiences fully understand the true benefits in using ABC as a supplier.

Amongst the staff were the usual mixture of those who were eager to learn a new skill, or improve on their existing techniques, and those who were far from convinced that presenting was for them. One common belief was that "giving a presentation from laptop is not the way I sell". For those people special consideration was given to show them that the slides are not the presentation and that what they say is actually the presentation. The slides provide them with the structure and supporting material to help reinforce the messages they put across.

Effective Presentation Skills

The Effective Skills training starts by discussing why certain people are nervous or frightened of presenting and looks at ways in which any unnatural levels of fear is overcome.

One of the main keys to diminishing such a fear is good preparation; knowing your material; knowing your audiences and knowing that you will succeed.

We then briefly cover presentation structure, although as the presentation material has already been created for them, this section of the course is minimal. Just enough to understand why it is structured in the way it is.

We then go on to look at the tips and techniques of presenting. How to gain the audiences attention and how to keep hold of it.

Finally the training turns to the non-verbal communication, enabling the delegates to discover how important their body language, the room layout and the use of visual aids can be in getting their message across.

At the end of this condensed training session, our consultant will give the new corporate sales pitch.

Coaching

To minimise the time away from their desks the skills training sessions, while interactive, do not include any session for the delegates to present. This is left until slightly later when pairs of sales people give the new corporate presentation to each other and a reviewing consultant.

Making each of the delegates present in groups of two has a number of benefits. Firstly it forces everyone into giving the presentation at least once, before they give it for real in front of a prospective customer. Secondly they gain input in terms of the style and techniques and how well they put across the updated company message. Finally by running it in pairs, it minimises the amount of time away from their desks.

For those people who are less familiar with presenting the company and its products this can also be a valuable experience in terms of the level of preparation a good presentation can require.

In Conclusion

In reviewing the consultancy and training carried out at ABC, the Sales Director said:

"I am now far more confident that we now have the right sales messages and that my team are equipped to get those messages across effectively."

He went on to say:

"We are planning to roll out this same presentation training across sister companies within the group. It works much more effectively than sending people on generic presentation training courses and doesn't cost any more."

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