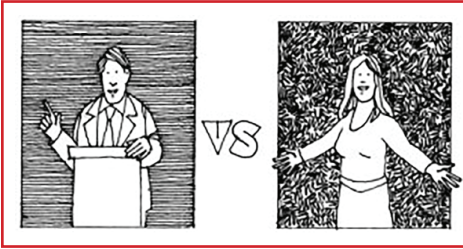


Speech or Presentation

A Tale of Two Minds

Fusion White Paper #3



Much has been written of late about the myriad varieties of intelligence and mental methods of function. We're each wired a little differently it seems. The right brain/left brain discussion is our focus today. (Hey Jack, I don't care which side of the brain the thinking comes out of... I have an institution to run! So let's get on with it!) Exactly! So we're not going to get caught up in ganglia, or neurons; but instead focus on the two wildly different "minds" that you might rely on to solve two radically different assignments: the Speech and the Presentation.

"What's the big deal?" you say, "Speech, Presentation — what's the difference? It's just semantics."

Well, No — actually — they're not the same. They are siblings. Though they share the same roots in public or business communication, they occupy opposite sides of the yin/yang.

SPEECHES are formal, scripted — given to high flown rhetoric and phrasemaking. Big audiences — sometimes loud. Big fees. Rooted in Oratory and Oxford style debating. Speeches are written. People often dress up to make speeches and rehearse heavily. They often require teleprompters. They are designed to be reprinted, quoted and ultimately aim to be republished now and forever — hence the careful attention to wordsmithing and turning out quotable phrase and sound bites. Questions afterward please from the press... (I can't remember the last time the press attended one of my presentations... or was invited.) Speeches inform, entertain or lay a political foundation. Speeches are solid — unchanging. A speech is meant to incite and inspire. Speaker tends to stay in place. No room for mistakes or slip ups. It has its eye on history. It's more public. It's usually is a form of self expression for the unique point of view of the speaker. We want to know what this person thinks! We may decide to elect them, or elevate them to a post.

PRESENTATIONS on the other hand, are more private with smaller audiences, we don't usually dress up or pay a fee to attend or give a presentation. Often unscripted — there probably won't be an anxious press corps asking for the transcript... Presentations employ visual aids, props, demonstrations. The speaker has more latitude for movement around the room, to stand or sit as desired, to entertain questions, to ask them of the audience — to engender live discussions and interplay.

Presentations are constructed. Presentations usually have a business purpose — they focus on a business outcome — a tangible result or next step. Presentations happen at the drop of the hat — so they tend to be more extemporaneous or even impromptu. Presentations are not recorded and filed, they fade away as the listeners leave the room. Presentations are practical and have limited shelf life. Presenters are not running for office, though they might be angling for promotion.

There's a difference, see. And in the difference is the reason we employ different methods, minds and tools — for their creation.

Text vs. Bullets

Speeches are written and take the form of text on a page. Speeches rely on wordsmithing tools to write, edit, smooth and nuance the content and delivery to obtain the desired public effect and response. Speechwriting tends to be linear — even laborious as the writer strings together words, sentences and paragraphs to make a coherent result. Speeches take time and effort sometimes by an entire team or even government department. No speechwriter worth their title would be caught dead posting a page of bullet points on the teleprompter.

Presentations on the other hand are constructed/composed and take the form of bullet points in boxes — to allow the speaker to improvise in the moment and flow with the audiences' questions and concerns. There's no point in writing everything out longhand for a presentation, because you won't have time to read and deliver a script anyway.

Intuitive vs. Linear

Presentations don't have scripts, they have notes, plans, formats, flow charts, diagrams. Presentations are fluid. And presentations, because they are not linear, can avail themselves of our more creative, intuitive, holographic ways of thinking. Think bullets instead of paragraphs. To build a presentation, you begin with the next step — the statement of what you want to the audience to do — but just a few single word notes. Then move on to evaluating the requirements of the audience. Finally, you build the arguments. Notes mean freedom. You can deliver it a little differently next time as the audience and the situation require. And because you are extemporizing, not reading — you have freedom to look at your audience and really connect.

If it's not scripted, it doesn't have to be linear. You have the freedom to make compositional leaps from the beginning to the middle, from the end to the beginning. Not being tied to the linear writing of word chains, you can work with bullet points and concepts. This freedom is demonstrated in the "Ready Set Go!®" Boxes. Just put a bullet in a box



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as a signifier of an idea and come back to clean it up later. In this way, you can compose a presentation in minutes rather than hours. Rather than writing it out longhand, and then laboring over the rehearsed delivery, stay free by sticking with your word, bullet and concept notes. Work out the delivery in one or two practice runs. It's done! And your delivery will look and feel light and flexible rather than sonorous and stiff. That's the difference. Intuitive composition is swift, flexible, and genuine while scripting is laborious, political and difficult to deliver. Think about it. Reading a script well is tough enough to defeat Presidents. Presenting is easier — but only if you treat as a unique skill and use the right tools.

What's the Point?

You wouldn't use a screwdriver to cook a meatloaf — well, some of us might...

But the right tool is everything. Many clients persist in clinging to their familiar linear mind and tools — text, sentences, paragraphs and writing to move forward word by word... often asking for software that makes the words smaller in the boxes isinglass effect — reaching for the screwdriver — when this project requires letting go and freeing the intuitive compositional mind to think about the big picture. We don't care which side of the brain you use, but chuck the speech tools and let your extemporaneous genius fly.

“Ready, Set, Go!” is a tool for rapid composition — not for speeches as literature — but for powerful extemporaneous presentations.

Abandon the text... and embrace the boxes!



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