

Presentation Training: Which Approach Works Best?

By Paul LeRoux

Delivery Skills Versus Content

Content is the basic facts you want to explain to a group. What you say has to be clear and logical, but, in the scheme of presentation training, it is relatively easy to revise the wording and adjust the sequence of your ideas.

However, delivery skills are not so simple to change and are far more critical in getting your message across. If you master the physical techniques of delivery, you will conquer nervousness, project commitment, and feel confident in your ability to deliver any content to any size group. In short, your words will produce the effect you want them to have.

In sports, the quickest way to improve is to hire a professional coach. Whether you are a beginner hoping to start on the correct path or an intermediate needing to break bad habits and build new ones, a trainer teaches you the movements to execute, say, a powerful serve in tennis, a delicate chip in golf, or a daring axel in figure skating.

The principle is the same for learning presenting skills. With the help of a good coach, you can master extended eye contact, pacing, pauses, voice projection, stance, and gestures that support your words and hold the audience's attention.

Evaluating Consultants

Presentation consultants offer advice ranging from worthless to priceless, so it is best to find out beforehand what you are signing up for. Consultants who've authored a book or written an academic paper give you an easy way to judge how useful the consultant's advice will be.

Review the content of their writing, evaluate what the consultant teaches and how, and decide whether it suits your needs and personality.

Take advantage of LinkedIn's fifteen-minute free chat, which lets you sound out candidates' ideas and techniques. Pick a low-, middle- and high-priced consultant, and ask questions about the following topics:

1. The consultant's experience. Does he/she mainly work with students or executives? What is the range of that experience? How many years of experience does the person have? How many clients?
2. How does the consultant teach delivery skills? Is the information you would learn too vague, or is it practical and specific?
3. Results are the bottom line for business and self-improvement, so ask about the consultant's success. Did the clients' engagements result in standing ovations? Did their presentations bring career promotions, pay raises or new business?

In summary, read as much as you can and sound out prospective consultants about the above topics. You should feel confident at the outset that you are investing in the right consultant for you.

Calculating the Price

For thirty-one years I have helped accounting, consulting, and engineering firms win competitive presentations. I have also assisted many startups to get initial funding with their pitches. My experience in coaching and knowledge of presentation techniques reflects the pricing for my services.

I charge by the hour because clients have varying skill levels. Beginners are sometimes easier to coach because they have fewer bad habits to overcome. And, of course, some people learn faster than others. Some have natural ability to acquire the physical skills, while others have to practice longer and harder.

However, you alone control the cost by deciding the number of hours you think you need to improve.

A Complimentary Evaluation of Your Skill Level

Because I believe potential clients should be confident in my advice, I am willing to review a five-minute video of your presentation skills. Film yourself or have a friend shoot the video and upload it to YouTube or Facebook and send me the link. I will respond within a few days with a free critique and thoughts of how you can improve.

In the alternative, call or email me so I can evaluate your presentation training needs and what you hope to accomplish. I could then estimate the hours needed to reach your goals.

My LinkedIn Profile

Are you looking for an experienced public speaking coach to:

- * Show you how to handle nervousness and boost self-confidence?
- * Connect with listeners?
- * Prepare for an important presentation?
- * Turn wordy, boring PowerPoint slides into persuasive visuals?

I have spent 31 years rehearsing Fortune 500 executives for key presentations, preparing major accounting, consulting and engineering firms for competitive presentations and coaching startups in their pitches for funding. I can help you feel confident and become more persuasive.

I am a member and investor with Heartland Angels in Chicago, hold two patents, own a presentation consulting business and a publishing firm. I am the author of *Visual Selling: Capture the Eye and the Customer Will Follow* (John Wiley), as well as the earlier *Selling to a Group* (McGraw Hill.)

CLIENT QUOTE

“Paul also had great insights into my presentation delivery, from what to emphasize verbally to the body language used. His insights and feedback were critical to both the pitch materials and my presentation itself.”

CEO of a fast-growing medical Chicago startup

FAVORITE QUOTE

“There’s a geometric progression in ability: you need to be only 10% better at what you do than most people to go 100% farther.”

Sydney J Harris, syndicated columnist

CONTACT: leroux@twainassociates.com or 312-467-2120