

Is the cash register in your agency broken?

 By Sid Peimer

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The cash register in an agency is the PowerPoint presentation (not just the PowerPoint, but the whole package that comes with it - which is usually you). Although we frequently sell our work boarded up on paper, and even sometimes verbally; in the vast majority of cases the success of the sale depends on the persuasion of the PowerPoint presentation.



No, not this sort of cash register... But your PowerPoint and the whole package that comes with it - which is usually you. (Image: Infrogation of New Orleans, via Wikimedia Commons)

Unfortunately, we often use PowerPoint as a drunk uses a lamppost - more for support than illumination. We place an extreme amount of focus on 'the work', and yet we will spend very little time on effective presentation to sell the work. That's like giving your wife a Gucci handbag wrapped in newspaper. Or your husband a radio controlled plane without the batteries.

It's about control

Contrary to popular belief, the work does not sell itself. If presentation skills are so important - and they are the veritable buttons on the cash register, why do we just plug away, using whatever natural talents we were blessed with, to stand up in front of a critical audience and state our case?

Having control of your bodily functions (in the non-gastrointestinal sense) is crucial to getting your message across. As ironic as this may sound - the more control you have over your hands, feet, eyes etc, the more natural your presentation style appears. If you've never seen yourself present on videotape, how do you know what you're really projecting?

If Tiger Woods relies on it...

Even Tiger Woods has a coach to give him feedback on all the attributes of his swing. And, I am told, he often uses videotape to watch himself (playing golf). But, just as we often don't like our own voice when played back to us (except if you're a voice artists and the sound you hear relates to income), in the same vein, we don't like to see a recording of ourselves presenting. Actually we cringe.

Make that cash register work

Here are five things you have to do to make the cash register work

1. Don't read slides verbatim - it infers you know nothing more than what's on the slide
2. Never ever go smaller than 16 point
3. Use a picture instead of a thousand words
4. Don't put the agenda up as a slide - just give the general gist of where you're going (otherwise it's like the dentist telling you why the next 30 minutes will be unpleasant). Better still, the opening slide should allude to the entire story you're telling.
5. Get yourself videotaped. Trust me, you are your best critic. This may sound somewhat passé, but I think the term 'get over yourself' is most appropriate.

Although I am clearly promoting training (and hopefully you will choose mine - highly effective, reasonably priced, challenging but lots of fun), there seems to be this aversion to outside influence which might 'affect my natural style'. There is no natural style to presenting. The detractors are the same regardless if you're the life and soul of the party or anal retentive.

As I have sometimes said to a close friend: get help.

Stratplanning runs presentation skills training nationwide. More details [here](#).

ABOUT SID PEIMER

A seasoned and insightful executive with multisector experience in roles as diverse as senior management, strategic planning and copywriting. I am a qualified pharmacist with an MBA from UCT. I am also an accomplished keynote speaker and presenter.

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