

TED TAUGHT

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Ahead of this month's LPM conference, I thought I'd take on a topic we've all had to deal with. We've all been in a meeting with a group of people we've never met and the chairperson says: 'Let's start by going around the table and say a little about ourselves before we start.' This fills some of the most successful managers with absolute fear. According to some surveys, people fear public speaking more than dying. Yet, there are business leaders such as Richard Branson, Steve Jobs and Sir Ken Robinson, who have delivered some of the most inspirational presentations at TED conferences (a personal obsession) – and their success is no coincidence. They've an ability to innovate and inspire others through their talks.

STAND-OUT STATISTICS

There really is a knack to delivering a presentation, and being a slideshow wizard isn't the answer, although it does have its place. Interesting graphical displays will make your pitch far more successful. Take the example of Professor Hans Rosling and how he makes fantastic use of his presentation software Gapminder. It has inspired thousands. The key to using visual aids with your presentation is to leave people feeling that they have learned something.

TELL A STORY – FROM THE HEART

Turn a presentation into a story and make the audience feel like they have been part of a conversation. If you can make an emotional connection with your audience, they're far more likely to remember you and what you've said. This can be gained from personal experiences. Take the lead from human rights lawyer Bryan Stevenson, speaking at TED 2012, who says that giving personal examples of people who have influenced your life can make that connection. One of his was his grandmother, using this example to reach the imaginations of his audience by touching their hearts first.

BE PASSIONATE

As a leader of a team or department your success is dependent upon being passionate in your delivery. Okay – presenting your financial results for the first quarter might not be the most exciting of subjects, particularly if there is bad news, but you can inspire action in others through delivering the results vividly. It is important as a leader to exude passion in the way you deliver your content to connect with others. But you have to be sure that you are inspired yourself. This is all about how you sound, and your body language.

DON'T OVERCOOK IT

Listening can be quite tiring and if we consider TED talks, they usually run for no longer than 18 minutes. The key here is once you have made your point you're not helping people process it



any more by repeating it over and over. This might not always be practical in your day-to-day work when you are allocated an hour slot in the quarterly partners meeting. However, you can split up the presentation with soft breaks such as visual aids, externally related facts (maybe benchmarks), or even another speaker. Try forcing an hour presentation into 18 minutes and you may find that it's far more effective.

If all else fails you could always try imagining your audience stark naked. Or dressed as turkeys. They say that works. Perhaps there's a TED talk I can watch about that ... [LPM](#)

ABOUT

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