

Speaking of Tips....

Volume 1

*150 ways to improve your next presentation...
from concept to delivery!*

A MediaNet, Inc. Publication

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF EXCITING PRESENTATIONS!

These tips comprise a variety of interesting and practical ideas to help you prepare and deliver effective presentations. The tips cover these categories:


- *Message – the context of your script*
- *Media – the design of your visual support*
- *Mechanics – the style of your delivery skills*
- *More... – the room layout, logistics, etc.*

One tip about how to read this book is that it doesn't matter where you start. It's not arranged like a story or a narrative. It's just a collection of helpful hints.

The tips are grouped into separate categories because there are times when messages are created, when visuals are designed, and when delivery skills are practiced. Although the tips are numbered, they aren't in any specific order within each of the sections. However, some tips do follow a pattern, such as tips #50, #51 and #52, which all deal with the cost factors associated with a variety of media-types.

Perhaps a good way to read this book is to jump around, at first, and see if certain suggestions catch your attention. Another choice might be to look at the index and find key words that relate to a particular issue. Of course, the table of contents can give you some indication of what information a specific tip contains.

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MESSAGE

The *message* is the content behind your argument. It's the format of your story. It's your *script*. Sometimes that script can last five minutes, sometimes five times that long, or longer!

For most messages, the approach is *persuasion*. You can recognize this quickly by asking yourself, “Do I want *something* (some action or effort) from my audience?” If the answer is “yes”, then you’ll probably need to do a bit of convincing to get what you want. Only you can decide how persuasive you need to be.

What you will find interesting about the message tips that follow is the way in which audiences can be approached in order to make your message appeal to the greatest number of people. Too often, we develop a script focusing on just the presenter, rather than the relationship between the presenter and the audience.

The important thing to remember is that a message must be clear, concise, and to-the-point. Yet, to produce a lasting impression, a message must *change* something in the listener to the point of causing some *action*. Once a person has been changed, even in some small way, the memory of that change lingers.

The following tips may help you the next time you need to craft a message that counts.

This imaginary area in front of the audience in which you can move is called the **Presenter's Triangle™**.

To build your triangle (see Figure 10), construct an imaginary line from the eyes of the person sitting on your far RIGHT, to the left edge of the screen. This line becomes the long end of the triangle, or an “angled wall”.

From each end of this angled wall, imagine two lines meeting at a 90-degree angle to complete the shape behind you. Now you are standing inside an imaginary triangle, facing the angled wall. The most important point to remember is that the angled wall is a boundary that you cannot penetrate. If you step through the wall, people on your right will not be able to see your screen.

The Presenter's Triangle forms the basis for all movement throughout the entire presentation and offers the speaker the best chance to stay consistent. Remember — there is ALWAYS a triangle, even if that triangle is only big enough to allow movement within it by just shifting your weight.



FIGURE 10

The imaginary “line of sight” from the person to your far right to the left edge of the visual creates an invisible boundary for the Presenter's Triangle.

#103 THREE POSITIONS OF THE TRIANGLE

While movement is important, some wonder HOW the movement is done when using the Presenter's Triangle. The good news is that there are only THREE positions of the triangle that your body ever has to occupy. That's it — only three spots — the front, the middle, and the back. Figure 11 offers an enlarged view of the three positions.

The FRONT is closer to the audience; the MIDDLE is where you should be most of the time; and the BACK is much closer to the screen. You will never use the full area of the triangle, unless you feel like hiding in the far corner behind you. You are really presenting inside a thin “corridor”, parallel to the angled wall (long end) of the triangle. All of your movements, toward or away from the audience, take place in this narrow “hallway” along the angled wall.

But — you MUST move! You need to change the position of your body every so often or people won’t watch you. If your body is not adding value for the audience, they have less reason to watch you present the information.

All forms of communication require some type of change to be effective. The change takes place in writing, in speaking, and in delivering. When you write, you skip lines and start new paragraphs. That’s “form” in writing. When you speak, you pause between thoughts. That’s “rhythm” in speech. When you present, you create action in a defined space. That’s “movement” in delivery.



FIGURE 11

The three positions (front middle and back) allow the use of proximity (depth) to increase attentiveness. The shaded portion (far corner) is not used, as movement occurs only along the angled “wall”.

#104 CHOOSING A SPECIFIC POSITION IN THE TRIANGLE

You might be wondering WHEN to use the front, middle, and back of the Presenter’s Triangle. Here’s a guide. Choose the back of the triangle when the visual is busy. Think — “busy-back”. A complex visual forces the audience to keep looking at

your palm up until the person begins to speak, and then you can casually pull your arm back, almost as if catching the first syllable in your hand.

The reaching out gesture (palms visible) signifies approachability, warmth and friendliness. This is the best gesture a presenter can use while speaking.



FIGURE 13

If you don't leave your arm extended until you get the beginning of a response, you'll end up with the opposite effect, a gesture that suggests insincerity or indifference. It's called the "Like I care," gesture. It's when the presenter flings a hand at a person while asking a question, as if to say, "*Like I care about your answer!*" Don't start tossing your limbs at people and then expect interaction.

#116 THE LEFT HAND FOR GUIDANCE

Your left hand does the majority of the guidance for the audience. If you recall, the screen is always to the presenter's left for languages that read left to right. So, if you want to guide the eye to the screen, simply lift your left arm and use your left hand to motion slowly in the general direction of the visual. This indicates that the image should be glanced at by the group, but they should remain more focused on you.

Moreover, if you raise your left arm and dart your left hand quickly toward the screen, the more emphatic movement tells the audience that the content has more importance.

If you gesture to the screen and continue looking at the audience, the group has a choice to either stay focused on the screen or return their focus to you. This is because you are facing them and, technically, so is your visual.

But if you turn your head to look at the screen as you gesture toward it, you force the audience to focus more on the visual than on you. Even if they look back at you, they see you looking at the screen and realize that's where the concentration should be.

Both of these methods should be used to help shift emphasis on and off you from time to time. This variation is important.

#117 THE LEFT HAND FOR MOVEMENT

Without establishing the use of your left hand, you will not be able to move effectively in the Presenter's Triangle. The audience needs logical reasons for your actions. You can move toward the audience using no gestures. This move is natural, since our perception of depth judges proximity against our own fixed position.

Yet, when focal points move away and become more distant, we try to understand the fixed position that the focal point is moving toward. We seek to know where the "object" is going. If we don't know, we distrust our logic and become confused.

In presenting, you can't walk backward without an excuse. If the body retreats, it is a sign of distrust; the body language indicates that you are not telling the whole story or that "you are not telling us where you're going with this." You appear to be "backing away" from the issue. The audience is unable to focus on exactly where you are headed as you move away.

To retreat with a "reason", use your left hand. If you gesture to the visual (a fixed focal point) when navigating backward through the triangle, the audience accepts the movement because you are gesturing. They allow your retreat using the logic (excuse) that you had to back up because you had to gesture to the screen.

#118 THE LEFT HAND FOR HELP

Until a new visual is displayed or something new appears on the current visual, you can only look at that visual **ONE TIME**. If you look at the same visual more than once, the audience may think that you don't know the information. To avoid appearing unsure, use your left hand!

After looking at your visual the first time, without a gesture, you can look at the visual again, only this time, gesture to the screen. The audience justifies your extra glance to the screen,