

VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

THE PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO MAKING GREAT PRESENTATIONS



JACQUI HARPER MBE

EXPERT TIPS FROM HIGH-PROFILE PRESENTERS

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Client feedback on Crystal Business Training

"I've been on many courses but nothing has helped as much as this – great to be given things to build on your strengths rather than feel you have to start all over again" –
Senior Manager, Microsoft

"I now can go into a presentation knowing that I am going to make a good impression" –
Executive, Unilever

"The training gave me the confidence and skills to do the presentation and really enjoy it." – **Executive, Formula One Management**

"The best course I have been on for a long time. The presenters really know their stuff and I learnt lots! I found the course very relevant, both to my work and to wider life skills." – **Delegate, Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

"A very helpful and useful training day to help maximise the initial impact you have with clients." – **Sales Manager, Merck**

"A very practical course tailored to my needs. The trainers were very good at bringing out the best in me." – **Senior Manager, Sara Lee**

"The course brought home just how important it is to focus on the message and the audience and what I want them to take away! Dreadful that it's taken me so long to realise that!" – **Director, AVIVA plc**

"Excellent course. The trainers made the course very relaxed but very effective & fun. Most importantly I have learnt a lot of new skills to take away and practice."
– **Senior Manager, Prudential**

"We now have the confidence and skills to win really big pitches – and we are!"
– **Delegate, Business Link**

"They listened, interpreted our ideas and came up with something creative and totally tailored to the needs of my team." - **Abbey Business Manager**

"These special conferences played a very critical role in shaping the effectiveness with which we have been able to execute our change programme." - **Director, ABN AMRO**

"Brilliant understanding of how to work with the media to give the story they want and to get your message across." - **Manager, BT**

"The way Crystal Business Training organised the conferences had a positive influence on the seriousness of these events...it changed the way we work together."
- **Board Member, Rabobank International**

"It is the first course that I have been on where I noticed an instant improvement as a result of training." - **Sales Manager, Zurich**

"Excellent session, very focused on my objectives." - **Trainer, First National Bank**

Contents

Preface	ix
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Part One: Business Presentations

Introduction	1
Sir John Harvey-Jones	3
Gary Lineker	9
Nicola Horlick	15
Debbie Moore	21
Lord Herman Ouseley	27
Karan Bilimoria	33
Keith Harris	39
Rowland Rivron	45
Tina Knight	51
Stephanie Manuel	57
Beverly Malone	67
Judith Rutherford	69
Dame Jocelyn Barrow	75
Cristina Odone	81
Rutger Schellens	87
Linda James	93
Tony Buzan	99

Part Two: Media Presentations

Introduction	105
Michael Cole	107
Cary Cooper	113
David Brewerton	119

Part Three: After Dinner Speaking

Introduction	125
Bob Bevan	127
Richard Blackwood	133
Marilyn Orcharton	139

Part Four: Motivational Speaking

Introduction	145
Simon Weston	147
Roger Black	153
Richard Wilkins	159
Gerard O'Donovan	165
Geoff Burch	171

Preface

This book is dedicated to my husband and children who patiently supported me throughout. For inspiration and so much more I also thank my mother, John Byrne and Brian Collett.

Writing this book has been a brilliant journey for me. It's taken me a little longer than expected (the birth of my son changed the timing by about eighteen months). But three years on I'm still buzzing. I still feel there's a place for a book that gives busy people great ideas and inspiration for their business presentations without long lists of dos and don'ts.

I write this book as a professional presenter. For more than ten years I presented news and current affairs programmes for BBC Television, GMTV and Sky News. I even had my own talk show. I can say without hesitation that my toughest presenting job was fronting the news desk at Sky. Three hours of fast-moving live television filled with interviews ranging from politics to pop music always gave me a huge adrenaline rush. On television, my presentation skills were well developed and operating at full throttle. My tips from the worlds of broadcasting and business are liberally scattered throughout the book.

As a businesswoman I know the value of good presentation skills. It gets you the deal. It gives you status. It gives you profile. I could go on and on. But despite the benefits many people simply dread making presentations.

Dr Desmond Morris, author of *The Naked Ape*, has looked at the psychology of presentation. He believes the fear is rooted in human evolution.

He says, "As the speaker confronts the audience he feels threatened because he is being stared at. The basic reason is that human communication

started in small groups of two or three people. Thus, when a man stood in front of a larger group the feeling was unfamiliar, and indeed the others did stare at him.”

Thankfully it is possible to get beyond this fear and even enjoy presentations. It requires commitment to get better and access to a variety of techniques to adapt and use as you need them. This book is full of tips to help you do that.

In writing this book I've been guided by my own business experience. As managing director of Crystal Business Training I'm constantly doing presentations: to conference delegates, to clients and to colleagues. I am always looking for new ways to improve my own presentations. I wanted a reference book I could dip in and out of for inspiration and tips. I also wanted to learn from people who excelled in the way they communicated. Hence the creation of this book.

I took a look at great presenters from different fields to see what I could learn from them. For this book I've brought together an eclectic mix of people and each of them have something different to contribute to the science/art of business presentations. Some are business leaders like Sir John Harvey-Jones and Nicola Horlick; some are television presenters like Gary Lineker. You'll also find comedians here including Richard Blackwood. Brain expert Tony Buzan is here alongside PR guru Michael Cole and many others.

I originally intended this book to be a follow-up for delegates on my presentation courses. After the courses I encourage delegates to regularly refresh their presentation style and techniques. I thought that a reference book with lots of ideas and inspirations would help my delegates. As the book got underway it seemed to me that other people might find this book helpful and practical.

So whether or not you've been trained by my organisation, I hope you find among the wealth of viewpoints new insights and tips to enhance your business presentations. All of the interviewees have helped me refresh my own presentations.

I hope you will also find this book fun to read. I've let the personalities of the presenters shine through the text. Learning new information while you're enjoying yourself has always struck me as a powerful combination. I know at school the classes I did well in were always the ones I enjoyed the most. So learn lots, enjoy yourself, give great presentations and maybe I'll interview you for my next book!

Jacqui Harper

Note: Some of the proceeds from this book are going to a charity called Preset which provides leadership skills to inner city youngsters. To find out more about Preset you can visit their website at www.preset.org