

# THE 7 DEADLY STYLES OF PRESENTING...

OR HOW TO REALLY BE  
MEDIocre PRESENTER



*“YOU CAN CALL ME ANYTHING YOU WANT BECAUSE I’M FAIRLY THICK SKINNED BUT NEVER, EVER CALL ME MEDIocre...”*, those words echo inside my head from 20 years ago when my sales director gave me my first real lesson in presenting. At the time I was working for a chap called Anthony Robbins in New York and we sold 90% of our business through presentations to groups of people.

During that time the school of hard knocks was a frequent classroom I visited and feedback was my breakfast, lunch and dinner at times! An old mentor of mine always use to say, “Good judgement comes from experience and experience comes bad judgement”. One thing I’m really certain of is I’ve had lots of experience – yep, I’ve probably messed up more times than China has won Olympic medals. Presentations are one of the few areas you get immediate feedback about how you did – the feedback comes from your own intuition (what you felt like after the presentation), the reaction of the people in your presentation and the feedback you get in the cold light of day – you won the business or not, got the job or not or the feedback scores at the end of the conference.

In seeing and in being part of literally thousands of presentations over the years I've noticed some specific genres that really stand out and at best, make the presentation mediocre and at worst, the presenter 'nose dives'. Presentations are in many ways one of the last unfair advantages in the market place because business propositions today within industries are fairly similar, price is rarely a differentiator for high quality products or services and anything other than 'world class' performance would not earn you the right to tender in a global setting. Therefore, how you present and what you present could be the difference that makes the difference.

Here are some styles that will ring the bell of mediocrity...

## 7 STYLES, EACH ONE DEADLY!

### 1. *The Gifted Presenter - Intellectual Superiority*

#### Symptoms

The presenter baffles more than enlightens, enjoys their own voice and really, the presentation is a glory vehicle for their own self indulgence

#### Remedy

Spend more time connecting with your audience. Involve them in your thinking and take them on your journey. Make your presentation easy to understand – if you are a subject matter expert, practise your presentation in front of someone who has limited exposure to your topic.

### 2. *The Slide Junkie*

#### Symptoms

Complete slide co-dependency. They face the screen and read what's written.

#### Remedy

Trust in yourself and come out from behind your slides. Get more disciplined in knowing your content and use your slides to enhance what you're saying. You tell the story not the slides.

### 3. *The Presentation Thief - No Value for the Audience*

#### Symptoms

There's a thief in the room and he's stealing your time! Some presentations stumble at the first hurdle of 'What's In It For Them – the Audience'.

#### Remedy

Ask yourself the big 'What's In It For Them' question. Understand what level the audience is and think about what you need to do and say to fill their needs. Be very clear about your purpose and make your key points obvious.

### 4. *The Absent Presenter – There's rabbit in the head lights!*

#### Symptoms

Why do some presenters pretend there is no one else in the room? Perhaps the thought of presenting overwhelms them so much they can only look above everyone's heads.

#### Remedy

Rehearse, move around a bit. Get comfortable in your skin. Before you begin speaking spend a second or two to look at the audience – I say look, not stare at one individual. If you use notes, write in the side column 'smile', 'look @ people', 'take a breath' at different points in your presentation.

### 5. *The "Hello, McFly" Presenter - E.B.C.*

#### Symptoms

They Emotional Bladder Control – They're a bundle of nerves! And have no confidence or authority.

#### Remedy

Breathe. Relax. Rehearse. Rehearse. Rehearse. Practise 'confidence techniques' and proactively put yourself into scenarios where you can learn to overcome your fears.

6. *The Air Force Presenter - They think they are a fighter pilot...*

**Symptoms**

...And try to wing their presentation because they are either ill prepared or think they know it all too well so they shoot from the hip.

**Remedy**

No matter how well you know your stuff – you can always be better. That comes through practising and searching for new and better styles, content and sequencing. Leave the ‘cut and pasting’ old presentations for the competition and keep yourself out there by constantly trying to improve.

7. *The News Night Presenter - On no! They’ve been possessed!*

**Symptoms**

When they present they suddenly become possessed by a ‘news reader’ and they lose all sense of grace and personal style. They come across static and way too formal.

**Remedy**

Relax. Breathe. Practise in front of people and ask them to coach you out of your static approach and work more with being yourself. Imagine you’re speaking to a group of friends at a BBQ, that way you’ll be more of the real you.

Presentations are not meant to be a scary or complex things but that’s the way they sometimes feel. But with some great practise, handy skills and encouraging coaching your presentation could be the difference that makes the difference in the next sales pitch, interview or conference slot.

Keep smiling,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brad" with a stylized flourish underneath.