



SALLY WILLIAMSON AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Executive Coaching | Winning Presentations | Persuasive Selling

CASE STUDY: WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

A CEO speaks frequently at customer meetings, industry conventions and other public forums. He is the voice of the company, and his marketing staff relies on him to communicate with various key audiences. Through the years, he has worked on his speaking skills, so he is comfortable on his feet; however, he doesn't achieve results anymore. Audiences don't seem as enchanted with him and seldom ask questions after his presentations. The marketing staff says there haven't been any disasters—but there also haven't been any wins.

GOAL

The marketing director engaged Sally Williamson and Associates to observe the CEO during his presentations and offer counsel that would re-energize his presentation style. While he was open to coaching, he didn't really feel he needed it.

STRATEGY

Initially, we observed two separate presentations to get a sense of this executive's style. Although the audiences were very different, we were surprised to hear his message was the same to each group. He was polished on his feet, but he didn't connect with either group and seemed at a loss for making that happen.

Feedback. We started by first offering this CEO feedback from his presentations and specific suggestions for how they could have been more effective. This helped him buy into the concept of coaching and encouraged him to implement the concepts during his next presentation. He was also quick to say the flat content was the writer's fault, and that we needed to help the writer incorporate better ideas into the presentation. It was important for this CEO to understand that no one could bring the speech to life for him. The missing element was his ownership of the ideas and his interest in illustrating them to each group.

Tell me a Story. This CEO is engaging when he takes the time to notice his audience and consider how his message will impact them. In the past, he sacrificed that element of his presentations to minimize his time involved. As he re-engaged in the presentation development, he added personal stories and anecdotes that provided the missing connection with these audiences.

Put me In, Coach! As we rehearsed an upcoming presentation, we emphasized the CEO's strengths and reviewed key elements of his style. Videotaping helped him see the missing elements, and we developed ways to incorporate them. He saw the value of practice and realized that even a pro needs to practice before delivering a presentation.

Help me out. The coaching process also provided a format for his speech writers to better support their CEO. By outlining how to work together, the writers learned to personalize messaging for each audience. The CEO was integrated into the presentation development at least a week before each speech. He was provided an outline that showed him what direction his speech had taken and created an opportunity for his input. Today, the writers are able to develop most of the content for him.

Rain Check. The only thing worse than a CEO who doesn't get exposure through speaking engagements is one whose exposure is mediocre. Impressions last a long time. The marketing group gained a clear sense of what it takes to get a CEO ready to deliver a great presentation. As a result, they decided not to seize every opportunity but to be selective and develop a schedule that allowed necessary time to achieve results from each opportunity.

RESULT

Six months later, the CEO is delivering fewer presentations, but he's making great impressions every time he speaks. He's re-engaged in his speaking opportunities and understands what he needs to accomplish with each speech. His speech writers and marketing staff are providing better support because they understand what their CEO needs to achieve success.