

Sales Coach Series

First published in Infomatics

Presenting for impact

First published on 01/04/2001

The Dilemma

I have to deliver a formal presentation to the board of my top prospect. I am used to impromptu 'talk and chalk' but what should I do to really stand out this time?

The Coaching

Growing informality in business conduct is often used as an excuse to avoid 'formal' presentations. However, these can provide the perfect opportunity to raise the game and outshine your competitors.

For maximum impact:

- Make it relevant. Consider:
 - Who is the audience? - their roles, knowledge, interest, hierarchy, politics etc
 - What do they want to get out of it?
 - What outcome do I want?
 - What are the key messages they need to hear?
- Build a structure
 - Map out the available time
 - Organise and order topics and key messages
 - Note the main talking points for each
 - Make it specifically relevant to them
- Use visuals to emphasise key messages. Well-designed Powerpoint slides can look professional and create impact but they can make the presentation stilted. Expand on slides by using other media such as a whiteboard to stimulate interest and encourage greater interaction
- Be flexible
 - Have a fall-back plan in case technology or other factors let you down
 - Be ready to adapt your presentation to meet changing or emerging needs
- Observe your body language
 - Don't fiddle or pace excessively
 - Be animated
 - Relax
 - Look at the audience - engage them

Finally, two old ideas that still hold true:

1. Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, tell them what you've told them
2. Be enthusiastic - it's infectious.