

What's your Story?

Christmas, mid-winter solstice; whatever your preference, this is a time of year rich with story-telling in our culture - and many others.

As human beings, we have a deep need for stories, which is an important pointer for presenters - particularly any who want to lift their skills from basic to advanced.

You can do this in many ways. Here are three to consider.

1. What is the story that your presentation sets out to tell? Finding a narrative line through your presentation will give it real impact and create a compelling experience for your audience.

Ask: "What is the story I want to tell?"

2. How can you use the story telling form to make your message easier to understand and more interesting to your audience? Raw facts and figures excite few of us - even when presented to the highest standards. Use a story to highlight the message that the evidence gives and you will hook your audience and persuade them effectively.

Ask: "How can I tell this as a story?"

3. What stories can you incorporate into your presentation to bring it to life? Entrance your audience with a well-chosen anecdote or story. This is not about being the comedian (few of us can make that work). It is about using a story to get your audience thinking about your message in a different way.

Ask: "What stories can I tell?"

The next thing to consider is how to illustrate your presentation. Consider first whether you need to. Visual aids can detract from the power of your story telling. How many great comedians or inspirational leaders use PowerPoint? Do Eddie Izzard, Bill Bailey, Nelson Mandela or Bill Clinton?

On the other hand, for a master-class in combining facts, story telling and powerful visuals, hire a copy of "An Inconvenient Truth". Whatever your views on climate change, Al Gore is a powerful presenter!

So decide how to create a few slides that have **massive impact**. Keep them simple, text-light, and highly controlled.

Ensure your visuals are aids for your audience: not prompts for you.

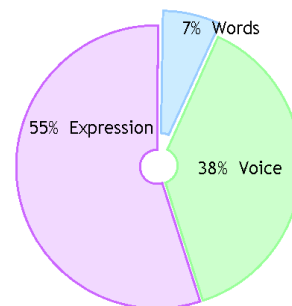
Learn more, [Advanced Presentation Skills](#) on 17 January, [Presentation Skills - Introduction](#) on 4 March, [PowerPoint Introduction](#) on 16 January, [PowerPoint Advanced](#) on 6 March.

Essential Ideas

It ain't what you say ...

Albert Mehrabian is the man behind one of the most widely quoted conclusions in training.

He found that when what we say and how we say it are mismatched, then people hearing and observing us are more likely to believe your tone of voice or your facial expressions than the words you choose.



Put simply, he found that it's pretty hard to lie.

And, if you want to persuade someone, the best thing you can do is believe what you say. Now there's a thought!

Stop Press: [Team Leadership](#) on 28 January - 1 Place remaining - Next course is 19 June.

Christmas is a time to learn the skills of Influence

In our September issue (see our website: www.kenttrainers.co.uk for a copy), we

showed how **Reciprocation** works as a form of influence - illustrating it with a Christmas story. Let's do the same thing for another powerful weapon of influence: **Social Proof**.

This is an intensely social time of year. You go to lots of parties, buy lots of gifts and send lots of cards. How many of those parties would you rather just skip? How many presents would you prefer not to shop for? How many cards do you send purely out of a sense of duty?

Why do you do this? Because everybody else does. This is the principle of Social Proof - often, we do what others do, just because they do it. It is easier to follow the crowd than make up our own mind.

This doesn't happen over big decisions, does it? Well, hopefully not. But a little bit of social proof often helps the people we want to persuade to make up their minds.

So when you are selling to a new customer, let them know that you supply people "just like you". When you want to convince a colleague, let them know "other colleagues already agree". When you want to implement changes, let your bosses know that "companies like us" are doing the same, successfully.

Learn more, [Influencing and Persuading Skills](#) on 17 January, [Negotiating Skills](#) on 21 January, [Complaints Handling](#) on 16 January, [Assertiveness](#) on 12 February.

Favourites for the New Year

Personal Ass't Development	22 January
Office Management	24 January
Time Management	24 January
Equality & Diversity	31 January
Supervisory Management	31 January

Did you Know?

... that primary school children are now learning the basic skills of recruitment and selection, and appraisals?

They are at our local school. Children are being paired up with a "talking and listening buddy" to help them develop fundamental communication skills that will serve them well. They learn:

Speaking

Making their point clearly and succinctly. Being confident to say what they think.

Listening

Respecting others and paying attention when they listen. Being prepared to re-evaluate their opinions.

Turn-taking

Controlling the flow of their conversations. This helps them to gather the most information and to have maximum impact on their buddy.

Advanced communication skills?

When done well, these are absolutely the peak of great communication.

Recruitment interviews and appraisals should be a two way dialogue. If you want to find the best candidate from your applicants, or get the best from your staff, here are three tips from Kent Trainers:

1. Look and listen for evidence of effective behaviours. Focusing on evidence will ensure that you are objective. Focusing on the positive will give people the confidence to show you what they can really achieve.
2. Make time to plan. We are sure you can wing it if you want to; but why would you want to?
3. Put the other person at their ease. Ask yourself how they will perform at their best and be most open and honest.

Learn more, [Recruiting Staff](#) on 19-20 January, [Appraisal Process](#) on 23 January, [Communicate with Confidence](#) on 23 January.