

# A Speakeasy Extra:

The A - Z of persuasive presentation

by Andrew Thorp



# A

is for  
Audience

Remember, it's not about you, it's about them. Your audience should be the focus of your preparation. What interests them? What situation are they in? What would you like them to feel/think/do as a result of your presentation? Make this a central part of your preparation.



“I still believe in a place called Hope....”

Bill Clinton  
42nd US President

# B

is for  
**Body Language**

Research suggests that about 60% of effective communication is of a non-verbal nature. Your movements, gestures and nervous ticks can all impact on the effectiveness of your presentation. Video yourself and play it back (ideally with the sound 'muted') to learn and improve.



“An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.”

**Martin Luther King Jnr**  
**American Civil Rights Campaigner**

# C

is for  
Connection

So many people present as if the audience weren't there at all. They'll throw information in their general direction and hope for the best. Aim to connect with your audience through eye contact, asking them questions, doing group exercises, moving amongst them - engage with them on an emotional level. Aim to stir something inside them.

# D

is for  
Dynamism

Avoid getting stuck behind a podium. A bit of movement about the stage can energise a performance. Perhaps some gesticulation to emphasise a point. And remember that you can exhibit dynamism in your voice too.

# E

is for  
Empathy

The bedrock of persuasive communication. Get in the audience's shoes. Demonstrate you know how they feel, that you understand the situation they're in. That's when you really get their attention.



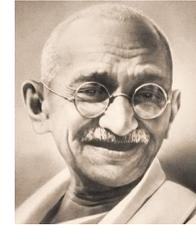
“I don’t believe in failure. It is not failure if you enjoyed the process.”

**Oprah Winfrey**  
Actress, Producer, Philanthropist

# F

is for  
Fear

The prospect of speaking in public terrifies many people and of course they'll avoid it. But it's a fantastic skill to have if you have ambition or you're seeking to have influence over others. Remember Susan Jeffers' words: "Feel the fear and do it anyway." Once you overcome your fear and develop the skill of competent (then persuasive) presentation, you'll enjoy the power-trip that comes from positive influencing your audience.



"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."

**Mohandas Gandhi**  
Indian Political and Spiritual Leader

# G

is for  
GPS

Group Persuasion Skills, the art of winning over an audience in one go, instead of one person at a time.

# H

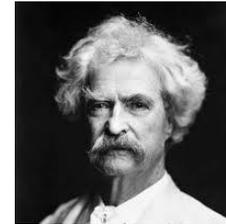
is for  
Humour

Presenting is theatre and people in a theatre expect to be entertained. Jokes can back-fire unless you're a skilled operator, but humorous stories can work well. However, make sure there's a point to them and practise so you can relate them with confidence.

I

is for  
Images

Favour images over text. A well-chosen image can provoke an emotional response. If it's not immediately obvious what a picture is about, the audience is intrigued when it appears. This is a great place to have them - primed and ready for you to bring that image to life.



“Better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt.”

**Mark Twain**  
Author and Humorist

# J

is for  
Journey

Good presentations are about change. Take your audience on a metaphorical journey. Show them you understand where they are now, and paint the picture of an exciting new place - your destination - before setting off. Make it an attractive proposition and make them feel confident in your ability to take them there. Maybe it's about marketing on a shoestring, accessing finance or a new way of recruiting key people. These before-and-after comparisons (like TV transformation shows) are compelling stories.



“We can put a man on the moon, so we can most certainly crack Africa’s financing puzzle, jump-start economic growth and drastically reduce poverty.”

**Dambisa Moyo**  
Economist & author of ‘Dead Aid’

# K

is for  
Knowledge

One reason people fear public speaking is the thought of being caught out. “Will they ask me something I don’t know?” But you’re there for a reason and presumably you have something interesting to share with your audience. No one expects you to know EVERYTHING about the subject, but you can give them value with just a handful of insights. If you’re confident with the material YOU’VE CHOSEN, it’s extremely unlikely you’ll be viewed as a fraud for not covering everything!

# L

is for  
Less is more

A big mistake people make is to assume that plenty of content equates to delivering value. It’s a paradox that delivering less usually has far more impact. Give your audience just two or three key messages, perhaps wrapped into one main theme, and provided you deliver them really well you’ll give great value. Just remember the less-is-more mantra. They say presentations are like a sauce - you’ve got to keep reducing!

# M

is for  
**Message**

Consider the overall message you're trying to get across. Is it totally clear? Is it relevant? Is it compelling, something that really stirs your audience? Remember the old adage, tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you've told them!



“Don’t try to make a product for everybody, because that is a product for nobody. The everybody products are all taken”

**Seth Godin**  
**Marketing Guru**

# N

is for  
Nerves

If you can convert your nerves into nervous excitement this can inject energy into your performance and be constructive. But if nerves consume and overwhelm you that's a problem! So much depends on your attitude and approach to the occasion. Work on this and practise - a lot.



“In my twenties I went to Africa to try to save the continent, only to learn that Africans neither wanted nor needed saving.”

**Jacqueline Novogratz**  
Founder of The Acumen Fund

# O

is for  
Outcome

Start by weighing up the audience and then decide what outcome you really want from the presentation. Everything stems from this.

# P

is for  
Persuasion

Audiences want a passionate presentation. If you don't believe in your message, why should we? And we know you're passionate by observing your body language and the WAY you say things. If you're going to persuade you must show enthusiasm on the OUTSIDE.

# Q

is for  
Quotes

Be careful using quotes if you're reading them out from the slide. If they're long you'll lose the audience's attention. Keep them brief and bring them to life by highlighting sections and paraphrasing.



“The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn't need to be reformed - it needs to be transformed.”

Sir Ken Robinson  
Author and Creativity Guru

# R

is for  
Respect

Treat your audience with respect and so too the opportunity you've been given to address people (the 'privilege of the platform').



“Leaders don’t create more followers, they create more leaders.”

**Tom Peters**  
Author and Management Guru

# S

is for  
Stories

There's a saying that goes, "facts tell, stories sell". Invest time and effort in crafting your story (the overall narrative structure of your talk) AND developing strong anecdotes that have relevance and meaning. Nail the art of storytelling and you'll become a persuasive communicator.

# T

is for  
Timing

Are you timing your presentation properly? Do you run out of time and rush the last few slides? Are you 'timing your lines' properly? Make sure you leave space for the audience to respond emotionally to your messages.

# U

is for  
Useful

Are you giving something that's useful to the audience? Is it relevant to their situation? Is it easy to understand and in a form they can put into practice?

# V

is for  
Voice

Your voice is your key instrument and should be looked after and nurtured. Think of the voice like a musical instrument. Play different notes, vary the pacing and noise level. Use it for dramatic effect. Listen back and practise!

# W

is for  
WIIFM

What's In It For Me? As well as making sure your content is relevant for your audience, it's great to give them something concrete to take away, ideas and techniques that can make a positive difference to them. There are generally THREE BIG TOPICS that matter to most people - health, money, relationships.

Oh, and an alternative to WIIFM...

“What's In Me For You?”



“Anyone who believes that something small can't make a big difference has never been to bed with a mosquito.”

**Anita Roddick**  
Founder of Body Shop

# X

is for  
X-Factor

This is what charismatic presenters have. They seem to be on exactly the right wavelength with the audience and manage to stir something in people on an emotional level.



“Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves.”

**Dr Stephen Covey**  
**Author and Educationalist**

# Y

is for  
YOU

Y was a tough one, but a Speakeasy client suggested YOU, and I bought into this. But in the sense that presentations need to focus on YOU the audience. It's about getting into the shoes of the people you're aiming at. Too many presentations, web sites and documents are about I, ME, US and not enough about YOU.

# Z

is for  
Zoning Out

It's important to judge the audience's energy and attention levels. It's impossible for everyone in your audience to remain completely engaged for the duration of your talk (they'll 'zone out' from time to time), but the key is to have strong content, a good delivery style and the ability to spot energy dips and adjust your strategy when required.

## Andrew Thorp - Profile -



Andrew draws on his hugely varied background to deliver powerful messages and highly effective soft skills training.

A history and politics graduate of the University of Manchester, Andrew initially ran golf tournaments worldwide for the Professional Golfers' Association, refereeing in the 1989 Ryder Cup at The Belfry.

He then moved into the business arena, and for eight years managed and marketed a number of commercial golf & leisure clubs throughout the UK. In recent years, he has worked as a journalist, editing a national sports publication and as a professional coach and event manager for the corporate market.

Andrew now works as a professional speaker and communication skills trainer, specialising in networking, public speaking/presenting and helping people develop their personal brand.

He sits on the advisory panel for the Sports Management Degree Course at the MMU Business School (Manchester) and acts as a mentor within the NWDA's business support programme.

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### **Other Activities/Achievements**

Spoke at the TEDx Conference March 2010.

Chair Local Advisory Board, Careers Academy (Ashton Under Lyne 6th Form).

Published first book in July 2009, entitled "The 7 Pillars of Sporting Success: and how to apply them in business".

Co-manages the Manchester branch of the worldwide phenomenon Pecha Kucha (social nights showcasing an innovative presentation style).

Provider of pro-bono support for the iNspire programme, helping charities survive and thrive during recession.

Founded Speakeasy Groups in NW England (Jan 2010) - a feedback system to improve the way business people get their message across.

