



Own The Room
Business Presentations That Persuade, Engage & Get Results

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Author's Bio: **David Booth** is a professional theater director and classically trained actor. **Deborah Shames** is an award winning producer and director. They are partners in Eloqui, a leading business communications firm. **Peter Desberg** is a licensed clinical psychologist. Combining their extensive experience in the entertainment industry and corporate arena, they formed Eloqui, coaching individuals and training teams within corporations to differentiate their services and apply effective communication skills.

Author's big thought: Research shows that a memorable presentation is a combination of stirring your audience's emotions while appealing to its intellect. This team of authors has developed techniques that do just that and will engage, inspire, and jump-start your audience to action.

Preface

- The authors do not believe that there is a one-size-fits-all method to successful presentations.
- Good communication is personal, revealing, and memorable. It persuades, influences, and makes you indelible in the minds of your audience. People should be able to look forward to speaking, mesmerizing audiences, and attaining their goals.
- Rules don't provide guidance in communication. The Eloqui method of persuasive speaking embodies these concepts:
 - Strive to speak in an authentic voice from your own perspective.
 - Identify one primary intention and shape your content around it.

- Persuade your audience by using a variety of engagement techniques rather than by simply educating or informing.
- Grab and keep your audience's attention, beginning with our opening remarks.
- Use imagery and visual snapshots to support facts and figures. Whenever possible, use examples to illustrate, clarify, and support your ideas.
- Close with commitment, certainty, and a robust final statement.
- Many companies now realize that in today's competitive marketplace, the goal is to be unique and memorable rather than take a defensive posture of not being wrong.
- By combining performance techniques and cognitive science with the best research in psychology. *Own the Room* will guide you in delivering any presentation, provide tools to manage anxiety, and ensure that audiences will remember you and your message.

Intention: The Driving Force

- In order to succeed and deliver a strong presentation you must make an impact. To make an impact, you must have a clear intention.
- Your entire presentation should focus on one well-defined intention. Commit all of your resources to this one target.
- Once you clarify your intention, it provides a target for your talk. If you don't, you end up meandering.
- Educating or informing is a weak intention; the objective is to *persuade your audience or listener to take action*, which is not always about landing business. For example, you could qualify the prospect to see if there is a good fit. Or you could persuade an existing client to refer you to one of their colleagues. My favorite line is "if you educate people, you get them to think. But if you persuade them, you get them to act."
- Ask yourself what specific action you want your listeners to take?
- If you only inform, you will have achieved that intention, but potential clients will not be motivated to work with you. You have failed to give them the opportunity to see your value or involvement in the process. They may respect your expertise, but you have not persuaded them to initiate a relationship. Intention is critical. It is the driving- force of every presentation.
- Well-organized content is not the same as intention or objective. To be effective, a speaker must keep the intended message in focus throughout the presentation.
- Once you identify your intention, you can't help but rethink your presentation.
- When you begin to construct your talk and identify the central idea; everything else is a means to achieving that end. Look at the content that supports it. Your intention should be so clear that it can be stated in a single, active sentence.
- Repeat your intention to yourself right before you speak. You will feel more grounded and directed.

- Use an if-then construction to determine if you have achieved your objective. Be specific about your anticipated outcome and devise a methodology to evaluate your success.
- After you have identified the action you want your audience to take, develop a metric to determine if your goals have been met and your intention realized.
- The key is to make your metric *observable* and *measurable*.
- When delivering an elevator speech: tell a story that would immediately draw your audience in, and then link that anecdote to what you do for your clients.
- By sharing very personal stories, your audience should feel connected, and the listeners inspired.
- As you decide what points of information, stories, anecdotes, metaphors, or examples you want to include, keep asking yourself the question, "Will it lead me toward fulfilling my intention?"
- Edit out all irrelevancies and streamline your presentation. Look for examples that will achieve your goal. Everything you do should focus on meeting your objective. Everything in your presentation should illustrate and support your intention.
- Know what audiences want and give it to them.
- In actuality, no matter what potential clients say, they are only concerned with how you can serve them!
- Once you have decided on your intention, find a way to make it clear to the audience. Since the strongest position is *not* to state your objective directly, you need to creatively deliver content that drives it. If you are successful, the audience will discover and feel your intention through the congruence of your language, content, and delivery.
- Revealing your intention directly can actually dilute the impact of your talk.
- Discovery learning occurs when you figure out something for yourself instead of being told directly - you better understand the big picture and how it impacts you.
- As a speaker, you also have more than your words to convey what is important. The first step is to get in touch with your emotions.
- Keep your focus on your audience, not on you.
- Having a clear intention is effective in both professional and personal communications. Whether it's conveying your values, negotiating a business deal, persuading a group to your way of thinking imparting technical information for training purposes, or inspiring an audience to achieve, the intention makes all the difference.
- A speaker without a clear intention broadcasts a lack of focus. Minor obstacles become big issues and make speaking difficult, if not impossible.
- Once negative intentions take hold, these are the results:
 - Rushing and cramming in additional material shows the audience that there is no focus or main point to the presentation.
 - Displaying little desire to connect with the audience exhibits discomfort and a lack of confidence, even boredom.

- Making the presentation all about you loses your listeners because they feel unimportant or used.
- Leapfrogging from one topic to another demonstrates a lack of focus and preparation.
- Drowning the audience in data diffuses your message and degrades your intention.
- A strong, clear intention at the core of any presentation is the foundation for success. If the presentation is veering off course, remind yourself of your intention, and your delivery will regain clarity and force.

Roles

- A role, whether performed by an actor or a business professional, requires that all aspects be observed and executed with great care. And presenting with others demands an even greater need to be specific and distinct.
- To be optimally effective, presenters should always assume a role when they speak, whether in front of a large audience or during a client interaction.
- The idea is to draw on your experience to choose a business role that will advance your intention. A role will determine how you are viewed.
- Once you have chosen a role, your attention can shift to your audience or client. Taking the focus off of yourself will reduce your anxiety and self-consciousness. What often trips up speakers is the critical inner voice.
- One of the keys to successful presentations is selecting a role that is congruent with your intention. Identifying your role as a presenter has three very important purposes: (1) it gives you a clear filter through which to pass information, (2) it helps to ensure that you achieve your intention or goal, and (3) and it provides specific guidelines for the language and behavior of that role.
- There are two basic kinds of decision making: emotional and cognitive. We are all familiar with emotional decision making. Cognitive decisions are different. To make a cognitive decision. You must first do your own exhaustive research, and then carefully weigh the alternatives. Most people prefer to have someone they trust do the research and just give them the results. That's why authority lays such a large role in persuasion.
- The major purpose of a role is to fulfill your intention. Professional roles during a presentation can be divided into two categories: *big picture* and *process*. The only gray area is the technical expert; which is seldom a role that is recommended.
- Big picture roles are strategic, provide an overview, and have a perspective from a thousand feet. They include the *trusted advisor*, *the motivator*, *the mobilizer*, *the seasoned veteran*, and *the visionary*.
- Process roles are concerned with details or the nuts and bolts of operation, deal, or product. Process roles include *the facilitator*, *the liaison*, and *the coach*. When you are solo, the role that allows you to deliver both strategy and detail is the trusted advisor.

- Choose a role based on your language and behavior and how you wish to be perceived. Another critical use of selecting a role is to alleviate anxiety and allow you to accomplish your intention, even in a highly charged atmosphere.
- In a two-person or team presentation, division of content and assignment of roles is even more critical. The client gains a clear idea of each man's function when roles are well defined. This is reinforced by having each person identify and fulfill his role during the meeting. It not only makes for a successful, persuasive presentation, but it also keeps the client happy in the long run, because roles are clearly understood and all expectations are met.

Big Picture Roles

- These roles articulate and frame the overall situation. Their perspective comes from considerable experience. They don't get involved in specifics. It's all concept and strategy. The big picture roles are as follows.
- *Trusted advisor* is the role assumed by most business professionals. If someone is going to present alone instead of with a team, trusted advisor includes both big picture and detail. A professional will be seen as a trusted advisor if he exhibits the traits of warmth, confidence, empathy, and depth of knowledge. The trusted advisor's role is to provide guidance. He is a good listener and asks probing questions. He serves as a problem solver. In that role he must demonstrate integrity and discretion. The language of a trusted advisor reflects understanding and concern for the difficulties facing a client. The advisor cites examples of how she solved problems for companies or individuals in similar situations. She frames stories in which her help and advice made a difference. She also demonstrates certainty while acknowledging the inherent complexity or range of choices open to the client. To shorten the curve of being perceived as a trusted advisor, Eloqui devised the following template and sequence:
 1. Demonstrate empathy and concern in both your language and tone.
 2. Reveal an understanding of the client's challenges and the industry he or she represents.
 3. Use vocabulary that suggests long-term relationships with other clients,
 4. Once trust is established, deliver recommendations or advice. Tell a story or anecdote to illustrate how you solved a similar problem for another client.
- In a first meeting or pitch, tell an anecdote relating to the client's issue or concern. Delivering a compelling story of how you solved a protagonist and put herself in the picture to see how you could best serve her. Embed substantive details in the narrative, instead of listing services like menu items. It is an emotional decision, supported by relevant information, only after you have persuaded the client that your services are in her best interest and you are worthy of her trust.
- In business, *mobilizers* are field generals. They rally personnel, resources, and budget and put them into play to complete the project. Mobilizers require charisma and resourcefulness, and they must demonstrate the leadership qualities of

command presence, keen insight, and commitment. Mobilizers are masters of persuasion and exerting influence. They maintaining a strong sense of purpose and focus on the defined outcome. When presenting, mobilizers are confident that a project will be completed by the agreed-upon date and within the stated budget. They outline the available resources, phases of the time line, any financial restrictions and emphasize the responsibilities of each of the participants. During the course of a project, they hold the vision and keep everyone focused.

- Position yourself as a *seasoned veteran* when you need to demonstrate perspective and breadth of knowledge in a particular field. The veteran does not necessarily make recommendations. The seasoned veteran can and will say what she believes will happen based on her experience, but it is up to audiences or clients to listen to her opinion and/or change their behavior accordingly.
- *Visionaries* are inherently idealistic. They paint the possibilities of the future in vivid terms and display foresight, imagination, and certainty. Historically, they have magnetic personalities and are often perceived as great leaders. When speaking, they can also become fiery and impassioned, because their message comes from core belief and commitment. Although visionaries can vividly describe a picture, do not expect them to deliver the details of a project or service. That is the job of a process person. However, to inspire your team, especially if you are in charge, consider selecting the role of visionary.
- In business, *motivators* are catalytic agents. They strike the match that ignites the fire. Motivating speakers are inspirational and visionary; they stimulate their listeners to action. Their behavior and language are energetic and positive. Motivators have two mechanisms to employ when persuading their audience: the push and the pull. The push is driving clients by hitting their hot buttons, challenging them, or being persuasive and encouraging. The pull is describing the possibilities so they re inspired to achieve their goal.
- *Process roles* function as the procedural road maps to accomplishing a project. You may choose a process role if you are more comfortable or adept at drawing out the audience, rather than being in the spotlight themselves.
- *Facilitators* are the greatest ally of the big picture person. Facilitators focus on the detailed view of how projects are accomplished, from arranging meetings and notifying the participants, to scheduling the assignments, drafting an agenda, or when breakfast and/or lunch is delivered. Facilitators tend to ground big picture presenters in reality. They are also the ones to encourage active participation and elicit responses from all parties.
- *Liaisons* solve problems, build relationships, and make necessary connections between people. Their goal is to deliver the correct resources to their clients. Liaisons don't lead or direct an assignment; they serve and support the effort. Choose the role of liaison if you are less experienced but would like to convey that there is a robust company backing you up.

- A *coach* holds his team accountable. He identifies the potential of and challenges for each participant, provides a training plan, and pushes everyone to succeed. The coach defines the purpose of the project and makes it about the participants, not himself.
- When a presenter has chosen the role of *technical expert* for a presentation, she will do her best to educate rather than persuade her audience. It is not unusual for an expert to include more information than is necessary. Achieving expert status is usually unrealistic and, more important, an ineffective means of achieving buy-in. The role is primarily useful in conjunction with other presenters when a detailed analysis or assessment of a sector or industry is required. Experts are best as complements to team leaders but rarely should lead a presentation or client meeting. An expert is committed and certain and speaks in quantitative, absolute terms. Experts don't make recommendations, collaborate with their listeners, or motivate their audiences. To put the role of expert into perspective, remember this simple axiom: If you educate us, you get us to think. But if you persuade us, you get us to act.
- Once you've determined what you want to achieve with your presentation, the next step is to select the role that best drives that intention. After you decide how you want to be perceived, the task of selecting your role becomes easier.
- The role you choose is determined not only by your intention, but by your audience and the forum where you are presenting. In the course of a day, you naturally select the proper role for the situation you find yourself in. Select the proper role to use in your presentation. Select only one for maximum effect.
- Choose a role directly from your experience. Play to your strengths. Your selection of a role is actually a narrowing down of the many choices you have to the one that will most effectively engage your audience and achieve your intention. A role defines who you are and what you want to deliver. It sharpens your intention and focuses your content. The alignment of intention and role sharpens your presentation, which satisfies your audience client. How do you know if you delivered an identifiable role to your audience or client? One metric is the type of questions and comments' you receive after a presentation.
- Rules of Roles :
 - From the first spoken word, your language and behavior must be congruent with the role you assume.
 - Choose only one role and exhibit its characteristics throughout your entire presentation.
 - Fully commit to the role and do not "break character" during the presentation.
 - Every role requires expertise, but avoid assuming the role of technical expert unless you are an expert witness or analyst in a firm where you are focused on the science or in-depth analysis of a subject.

Premiere: How to Open

- Our brains are hardwired to pay attention to novelty and surprise. The formality of old business models leads professionals to lay out every detail in advance, eliminating all possibility of novelty or surprise.
- A boring opening signals a boring presentation. You can make your opening more dynamic, vital, and, ultimately, persuasive.
- Create a powerful framework in your opening so that the remaining content will be delivered within the frame you've constructed.
- There is abundant evidence that we prefer listening to examples and stories rather than being lectured at. We also tend to believe anecdotal evidence over facts and figures.
- As a speaker, you have a honeymoon period that lasts from thirty to sixty seconds. In less than a minute, you must grab your listeners' attention and make them want to hear what you have to say, or they will determine you are not worth listening to and relegate you to the dustbin of "dull and predictable."
- When you begin a presentation with expressions such as "I'd like to introduce" or "I'm going to talk about. . ." (windups) they create distance between you and your audience instead of delivering striking visual images that force your listeners to pay close attention.
- Linguists call repeatable words or phrases that substitute for a pause "discourse particles." They include "you know," "um," and "just." Like windups, discourse particles are buffers that speakers employ when thinking or formulating an opinion. In either case, jumping into the subject directly or using a pause is much more effective.
- To be universal in targeting your audience, you must focus on one personal experience, story, concept, or idea. Without specific details, a speaker does not truly connect with anyone.
- Communication psychologist Mark Leary points out the importance of engaging an audience right away. He recommends three things to consider in your opening:
 1. *Tailor your talk to the audience.* Signaling that you understand the needs, perspectives, and/or expectations of your listeners lets you target what interests them and select the most compelling stories, anecdotes, and examples.
 2. *Reveal your personal values.* Share what motivates or inspires you to move audience members and get them involved. Persuasion and influence are now more likely, because your listeners believe they know you.
 3. *Present your point of view on the subject.* Revealing your perspective allows your audience to understand your intention, context, and passion.
- **Primacy and Recency** - People tend to remember the beginning and the end most easily. Your opening orients your audience to who you are and sets the tone for what will follow. Use the principle of primacy to place important information that will guide the audience into the rest of the presentation at the beginning. Use the

principle of recency to place the most important information at the end, because this is what you want people to remember.

- If a problem or concern is affecting your client or audience, don't bury it. Speak about the concern first to diffuse a potentially volatile situation. By addressing "the elephant in the room," you display courage and consideration.
- The goal of your opening is to get your listeners to play—and later replay—a movie scene in their heads. You can do this by giving them images that are emotional and rich in detail. Make this movie something they can relate to. Evoke sensory images.
- You can also tap into emotions through personal identification. An opening trigger will stimulate your audience's imagination and make listeners more attentive.
 - Once you have selected an appropriate trigger, flesh out a more robust opening.
 - Use visual imagery to engage the audience's imagination.
 - Add graphic similes or metaphors. People relate to comparisons that stimulate their imaginations.
 - Avoid lengthy openings. Most openings can be delivered in less than two minutes.
 - Appeal to the five senses.
 - Create segues to transition quickly from the opening trigger to the subject matter of the presentation. The key here is relevance. The [best opening trigger piques the imagination and the makes an intelligent link to your topic.
- Using your own experience also adds confidence to your opening.
- Speaking about something that is familiar to you reduces anxiety and keeps you from losing your place or freezing up. When you play to your strengths and speak from your experience, you will be more animated and persuasive.
- The other advantage of a well-crafted opening is that it will usually suggest a theme to be revisited throughout your presentation. Think of it as the central idea.
- Easily repeated themes are fixed in the listener's long-term memory. They can be employed to build momentum, to reinforce your body of evidence, or to persuade your audience to take action. Themes can serve as a transition between sections or allow a speaker to conclude and pay off a concept in a vivid and compelling style. A theme is defined as a principal, recurring melody intended to convey a mood or central idea.
- **Analyze your audience** - An audience analysis is one tool you can use to prepare for your presentation, so that your opening—and the entire talk—will be tailored to your audience. This information will also be key in determining your intention (what you wish to achieve), framing your content, and choosing your role.
- Get as much detail as you can. It will be vital in shaping your content and delivery, especially your opening.

- **Verbal calling cards** - Elevator speeches are special occasions when your opening is your presentation. Such a speech gives a short introduction about your services, and your company—in short, a verbal calling card. When you find yourself with an opportunity to make a quick introduction to a key individual or group—do it in an interesting and memorable way.
- Crafting brief elevator speeches from your personal experience and including vivid details is difficult. The best ones include the speakers' personal traits to set them apart, as well as visual details of how they function. Depending on the venue, you have between thirty seconds and two minutes to deliver an elevator speech.
- Like any presentation, analyzing your audience before crafting your elevator speech will give you a leg up on achieving your goal. Fundamentally, it is impossible and never recommended to include everything you do in one elevator speech. Instead, pick one message and give vivid examples to support it. Then, if you have the opportunity to speak to the same group again, pick another message or aspect of your company to focus on. Over time, your audience will form a composite of who you are and what your company does.
- To be memorable, Eloqui recommends not leading off with your name and business. When you do so up front, two things are likely to happen.
 - First, if your listeners have a preconceived notion of insurance brokers, lawyers, or accountants, they will drop you into that slot. Or, if they don't need the services that your business provides, they could decide not to listen to the rest of your elevator speech.
 - Second, audience members do not yet have a visual image or context to associate with you. If you start with an engaging story, visual, or framing device and then give your name and business, it is much more likely that they will remember you. For the principle of recency says we tend to remember the last thing we hear.
- Elevator speeches need to be brief and colorful and, when appropriate, end with a tagline that summarizes your unique personality and/or business or services. The idea is to lock what you do in the minds of your listeners and give them an easily repeatable description that distinguishes you.
- Because the number-one fear in America is public speaking, many speakers choose to deal with anxiety by lowering the audience's expectation with an apology. *Apologies don't work.* An audience that pities you will not respect you. Even worse, when you tell listeners you're nervous, you're directing them to search for visible signs of anxiety. Otherwise audiences rarely notice such things unless they are dramatically obvious.
- *Always present with authority.* If you tell your listeners you are not an expert, they will resent the fact that an amateur is taking up their valuable time. This is not a good strategy for being taken seriously.

- *There is a simple rule for using self-effacing humor.* Only use it in areas where you have recognizable strengths. If you use it in areas of weakness or inexperience, it works the same way as apologies; it points out those weaknesses. The ability to make fun of yourself shows listeners how open and approachable you are. It lets them know they can ask questions or offer their views, because you exude confidence and will not be threatened.
- *Craft your opening with surgical precision.* Draw in audience members with a snapshot of yourself, your perspective, and the insight that your presentation has been prepared exclusively for them. Be authentic. Frame the presentation with a strong visual image using similes, metaphors or anecdotes. When possible, include sensory images other than the visual. Exude confidence and authority, and be congruent in your language and behavior. The strength and audience connection you receive from a successful opening will serve you for the entire presentation.

Finale: How to Close

- Psychologists know that we retain best the things we hear last. When it is time to conclude your presentation, commit. Make it more important. *Increase* your level of certainty. Slow down your delivery. Keep your voice strong and steady. Make eye contact around the room. The delivery should sound as if you're employing an exclamation point, not a comma with an upward inflection.
- If you enjoy speaking and are in control of—and passionate about—your topic, people generalize that you do business the same way. Lowering the volume of your voice or showing any kind of relief that your presentation is over shows a lack of confidence.
- When you run out of things to say and don't end with a firm conclusion, audience members are left wondering what you wanted them to take away from your presentation.
- Speakers spend a great deal of time developing a powerful opening and strong talking points, but they often ignore their closing. This lack of preparation inevitably leaves them and the audience feeling dissatisfied.
- A compelling close is both elegant and potent. How you finish is typically how the audience will *remember* you. With that understanding, it is essential to place at least as much attention on how to close as on how to open.
- The first thing to consider when determining how best to close is to ask yourself, "What is my intention?" or "What do I most want to achieve?" Next, ask yourself, "What is my role?"
- There are a number of effective ways to close. The seven described here will guide you to fulfill your intention and bring your presentation to a successful conclusion. Your close should match your intention—simple, active, and clear. With rare exception, pick only one and do it well. Combining two or more can easily diminish

the impact of your close. Conclude with a palpable sense of urgency, excitement and commitment.

- Your entire presentation should point you toward your closing. If you want your audience to feel something, think something, or, more importantly, do something, make sure your entire presentation leads up to that.
 1. *Giving a Call to Action:* This closing device works especially well when your objective is to motivate your audience to do something specific. A call to action is more persuasive than selling. The emphasis in a call to action is on the client or audience. The more structure and specificity you give in your call to action, the more likely your audience will follow it. The simpler the task, the more likely the audience will make the change you are recommending. Your call to action should be simple and direct. When using a call to action closing, be brief and be bold.
 2. *Bookending:* Another strong method of closing is "bookending," or coming full circle and referencing your opening. Bookending is especially useful if you forget your close, never had one, or run out of time. It provides a sense of resolution and completion.
 3. *Recapping:* Recapping is an effective way to take charge and redirect listeners' focus. A successful close recaps those elements that drive your intention. Recap the central three elements or key ideas. Listeners will appreciate hearing what you believe is most important for them to take away. With a recap, be economical and concise.
 4. *Giving an Inspirational Quote:* To pique the imagination of your listener, end with an inspirational quote. You will be surprised at how effective a quote is when you link the words of someone well known to your message. Reference someone who is long dead or not terribly famous so that your audience doesn't have an opinion about his or her politics or lifestyle, which could adversely color your message. Or attribute a quote to a family member—either real or imagined.
 5. *Using triplicates:* This is the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines. The use of triplicate evokes an emotional response. When employing triplicates, save the best for last. Build the importance of your three statements, so that the third is the payoff. The same is true of your delivery. Build the emphasis according to the ascending power of the content. Using a triplicate is a great way to build the power of your message. Here are some possibilities like "I believe..." or "We will..." or "Together, we can..." It is very important to understand when to use this method. The triplicate signals the end of your presentation. When using triplicates for your closing, save the strongest point for last.
 6. *Revisiting Your Theme:* In speaking, a theme is an easily repeatable phrase, such as: "we try harder." Themes in presentations are the core or central idea. Ending your talk by revisiting your theme says, "This is what I want you to remember." Because themes are short and catchy, they tend to be memorable.

Each time you revisit a theme, repeat it exactly, deliver it with a variation, or add something new to pique the listener's imagination. When you close with your theme, the audience feels satisfied. You have achieved resolution. Themes are often used to inspire or motivate. They need to be strong and emphasized when delivered rather than buried in the text. There is strength to themes that you want to convey to your audience.

7. *Telling a Personal Anecdote or Case Study.* At times the most powerfully persuasive ending is one that comes from your own experience. Telling a personal anecdote demonstrates your investment, your understanding, and your empathy. The other advantage of telling a story at the close is that it links together the key elements of your presentation. Narrative is the best way to explain general concepts and make them specific. We only remember details when they are grounded or embedded in associative images. When you end with a personal story, you lock the message into your listener's long-term memory. Be clear and strong in both the open and close of any presentation.
- Closing a presentation by asking for a deal is ineffective and reduces your chances for success. Instead, you can always say what you're passionate about or how you've solved similar problems for other clients.
 - People like to make up their own minds in deciding whether or not to hire you. For most business interactions, if you have properly identified a client's needs and established your credibility, he or she will ask you how to proceed.

For Example: The Power of Narrative

- Performers will tell you that when they connect with their audience, there is no better feeling. There are risks to making public presentations, but there are also huge rewards. And once you commit to speaking, there are tools and techniques to find your own voice.
- People respond to stories more than a well-constructed collection of facts and statistics. Hearing an engaging story makes the listener want to know what comes next and gets him or her firmly on your side. A good story sets the stage, creates a visual frame, and becomes the jumping-off point for greater understanding.
- In business, stories are valuable tools for engineering the perception you wish to create. The goal is to engage the listener, who draws his or her own conclusions.
- A well-told story highlights your achievements and conveys your skills without the need to brag. A well-crafted anecdote can make your point without qualifiers, apologies, or arrogance.
- Link your story to something your audience understands or needs from you. The more specific the story, the better. Polite generalities miss the mark.
- You gain traction and your message sticks when you are concrete enough to make the audience "see" your story.
- To be most effective, base your anecdote on the audience's experience or area of interest. When listeners can identify, understand, and put themselves into the

scenario, they are engaged. Their experience may vary somewhat, but if the core elements of a story are applicable, it is enough to draw them in. And perhaps the best quality of a well-told story or client anecdote is that it becomes portable—listeners will retell it to others.

- When crafting stories, determine the one impression or message that is most important and choose the anecdote that best delivers it.
- Your entire professional career and personal experience contains stories that can be shaped according to the objective or impression you would like to achieve.
- The idea is to tell a compelling anecdote in thirty seconds to two minutes—the amount of time you can effectively hold in audience's interest in a networking meeting or in response to the question "What is it you do.?"
- An effective story starts with an obstacle.
- The "Solution" is where you get to demonstrate what sets you apart.
- Use concrete terms so the listener can visualize what you do.
- Choose specific, action oriented verbs for your stories.
- To make your solution more compelling, add phrases like "what my client didn't expect," "what we discovered," or "what was revealed." This element of surprise draws listeners in and makes them pay closer attention.
- Even in business, you are a performer telling a story. Accept this axiom and you will be successful.
- Use the element of surprise and highlight unexpected benefits of your services.
- A well-told anecdote can satisfy people with both short and long-term attention spans.
- Client anecdotes can open a presentation and let you immediately connect with your audience. They can be used as elevator speeches or to answer the question "What do you do?" Anecdotes are effective vehicles for explaining and bringing to life a technical point within the body of a presentation. If your presentation needs a more persuasive close, an anecdote is always a good choice. And anecdotes from your own experience are the best way to alleviate anxiety. Exhibit what makes you different from your competitors, achieve buy-in, and ensure that your talk will be memorable.

Stage Fright

- Public speaking is the number-one fear of business professionals
- Researchers have shown that extemporaneous speaking is the closest thing to simulating the fear of actual battlefield conditions.
- The best way to manage stage fright is to understand it. Although the nature of each person's stage fright may be different, the stages are the same.
- **Stage 1: Initial Predictions**
- We make predictions about everything we are about to do. The process of predicting how things will turn out is automatic

- When you experience stage fright, it means that your predictions about the outcome are negative.
 - Anxiety results when we believe that something bad will happen to us and we don't have the resources to cope with it. The anxiety is heightened when the outcome of the situation has important consequences.
- **Stage 2: Anxious Response**
 - There is a simple formula for anxiety. When you believe something bad will happen and you can't cope, your body reacts to these thoughts with symptoms like a rapid heartbeat, shaking hands, sweating, red skin, and shallow breathing. Then these symptoms get in your way, especially during a presentation.
 - If you are not in danger but believe you are, you can think yourself into a state of high anxiety. The relationship between thoughts and emotions is powerful.
 - Your next set of negative predictions is based on the thoughts identified in stage 1 and the new evidence you have from your physical anxiety symptoms. Your predictions now induce an even greater anxiety, because these physical symptoms provide "proof" of how bad things really are.
- **Stage 3: Self-Monitoring**
 - Your brain is wired so that you can only perform one complex thinking task at a time.
 - This third stage is at the heart of stage fright. When you are giving a talk and begin to notice your physical symptoms or try to assess the audience's reaction, you divide your attention, and you cannot do that without paying a price. The more attention you assign to self-monitoring, the less you have for your talk.
 - Self monitoring can turn thoughts into self-fulfilling prophecies.
- **Stage 4: Making Mistakes**
 - If you continue to split your attention between your talk and the distraction of self-monitoring, the chances that you will make mistakes increase dramatically. Self-monitoring is the presenter's biggest problem. But preparation and practice will allow you to manage it.
 - There are two fundamental types of stage fright. The first deals with your ability to deliver your performance. The second type of stage fright has to do with how accepted you feel by the audience. Comedians never know if they are going to get laughs or not. (This is one of the reasons the authors caution you not to tell jokes.)
 - Your perception of your presentation while you're giving it is usually at odds with reality. Our sense of time is distorted.
 - Pause to breathe and gather your thoughts. Occasional pauses are good for the presenter and for the audience.
 - Stage fright is not an inborn trait - it arises based on the situation, and under the right circumstances. Everyone will experience it.

- There are three ways you can deal with stage fright:
 1. *Performing relaxation and visualization exercises.* Relaxation and breathing exercises perform two vital functions: (1) they calm you down by lowering your heart rate; and 2) they oxygenate your brain, which increases your alertness and capacity to perform. Use all of your senses during your relaxation exercises. Exercises derived from acting academies allow you to relax and be successful when delivering your next presentation.
 2. *Reframing or shifting your perspective* - The second point of attack for dealing with stage fright is to shift your perspective. Begin by identifying your fear-provoking predictions and then see if there is any real evidence to support them. If not, learn to shift your perspective and change your thoughts. If you realize that such an event has never happened, it is easier to change your belief that such an event may occur in the future. If there are fear-provoking thoughts that are based on evidence, you will have to work harder to build up skills in those areas.
 3. *Changing your behavior* - the easiest way to attack stage fright is by changing your behavior, which is directly under your control. Choosing a role (such as the mobilizer, trusted advisor, or facilitator) is another way to change your behavior. Once you select a role, you feel grounded and find it easier to stay in the moment; you can fall back on the parameters of that role rather than on your own default mode. A role gives you the security of speaking from behind a mask.
- Presenters, like actors, should eliminate all distractions prior to speaking. Once thinking is clear, recall your intention, or objective for speaking and envision yourself being successful.
- One of the best ways to reduce stage fright is through practice. Many people procrastinate and avoid rehearsal because it is stressful.
- Map out an outline of where you will travel with your presentation. Practice not only refines your presentations, but it also reduces nervousness.
- When you are in command of your material, it frees you up to be in the moment, because you are not hindered by trying to remember what to say next.
- You will perform better if you practice under performance conditions. Before you deliver a presentation, it is essential to find out as much as possible about the physical conditions to minimize surprises and the resulting anxiety. Ask your contact or personally check out the following:
 - How many people will be attending your presentation?
 - There is really no reason to be more formal in a larger space. Convey the same personal, relaxed, informal feel that you project in smaller venues.
 - Will there be a microphone and amplification?
 - Will you be introduced?
 - Determine what information you think the audience will find useful or colorful.

- Will you be sitting at a table, standing behind a podium, or free to walk around?
- What are the incidentals and details? The more familiar you are with your speaking environment and the process, the fewer surprises will distract you.
- Distractions lead to internal thoughts that can throw you off during a presentation. Practice being distracted and getting back on track.
- Researchers have determined that the greatest amount of anxiety occurs during the two minutes before you go on and the first two minutes of your presentation. The more you have rehearsed your opening with various interpretations, the better it will be, counteracting the effects of peak-level anxiety.
- Surprises can create havoc for speakers, especially in the most vulnerable first few minutes.
- When you have an important presentation, being yourself is probably the single best way to combat stage fright.

Presenting in Teams

- Typically, team presenting is thought of as multiple speakers, each taking their turn to present a section of content, or as one person driving the majority of a pitch with minimal participation from the other individuals in attendance. Neither of these scenarios qualifies.
- True team presenting mirrors everyday conversation, when we bounce ideas and concepts off each other. It is closer to a dialogue than a series of monologues.
- Team presenting done poorly can lose business. Working as an ensemble will make your team - and the individuals on the team—successful.
- When you present as a team, the audience listens to each individual but takes in much more. Listeners observe how you work together. When your handoffs are smooth, when you demonstrate that you like and respect each other, and when each of you has a clearly defined role, your audience can't help but generalize that you do business the same way.
- Presenting as a team can project the image of a harmonious organization and is a way to highlight up-and-coming talent in your organization.
- Presenting in teams creates far less anxiety for everyone concerned. When there is a clear division of labor and each member only needs to be concerned with his or her role, it frees up valuable time and energy; people don't need to be worried or anxious about elements of the business that other team members have already mastered. The resulting presentation will require less preparation for each participant and ensure that the team as a whole is more effective and successful.
- Having a CEO present alone is often the worst decision your company can make.
- If it is a matter of respect with one of your clients, have your CEO be part of the team, but let the ones who are most qualified carry the major parts of the presentation. That way, they are immediately identified as the team members with whom the client will actually be doing business.

- When you mechanically go through a pitch book or PowerPoint presentation, you create obstacles to engaging clients and other team members.
- Simply dividing speaking responsibilities among team members is not enough. There needs to be a concerted effort to ask questions, listen to the responses and incorporate those answers into the presentation.
- In most businesses, rarely do teams rehearse to maximize their effectiveness or prepare for contingencies, distractions, or emergencies. A team's language, division of roles, and interaction are stronger factors in being awarded a contract than the actual content of the proposal. Many organizations fail to focus on the one thing that can set them apart from the other viable candidates: the team presentation.
- A vital element for team presenting is confidence, which can be reinforced and bolstered between the participants. When pitching a potential client, you have to believe you will win. Knowing how your company differentiates itself and your unique ability to deliver a product or services and having a ready answer that you deliver with confidence will set you apart and be a critical factor in your success. To exhibit confidence in a team presentation, the whole should be greater than the sum of its parts. The perceived impression of your team is every bit as important as the content you deliver.
- Unpredictability is compelling in a presentation. If the topics are handed off multiple times, the interaction keeps the audience engaged. The dialogue among individual team members is more engaging than listening to one person for a long time. The key is that everyone has a role during every minute of the presentation—and it all has structure.
- The ideal configuration in any team presentation is two, or at the most three, individuals. One can assume the big picture role (such as the mobilizer, trusted advisor, or visionary) and the other can be the detail or process person (the facilitator or liaison).
- The initial step to a successful team pitch is identifying a shared intention. Effective team members don't dominate—they collaborate.
- Once the shared objective is determined, a well-functioning team identifies key participants based on their experience with the client and their knowledge of the information germane to the presentation. Once the team has been selected, roles need to be assigned.
- The facilitator is essential for keeping the meeting on track and making sure the team achieves its objective. If the facilitator senses restlessness in the room or a lack of engagement, it is his job to deal with it. He can ask a question or present an assumption
- The facilitator should make sure the client's questions are answered immediately.
- More than any other technique for team presenting, the ability to listen to one another and to the client will give you the greatest result.
- When two people present together, you have to create a physical relationship between them. You must determine the distance between them, their orientation

toward the client, and what space they occupy. The distance between people conveys important clues about how much they like each other and how well they work together.

- Preferred distance between standing individuals is roughly an arm's length apart. As one person speaks, the other should angle her body to face the speaker, with both leaving their chests slightly open to the audience. Once you've mastered the easy stance together and would like to be more dramatic, practice moving with your partner.
- Position team members when they are seated. Participants sit next to one other on the same side of the table or around the corner from one another. The client can easily make an assessment of how engaged the listener's are when team members are seated together. The proximity to one another also implies collegiality and cooperation.
- When one speaker stops and the next one begins, that is a handoff. With fluid handoff technique, you don't have to structure your presentation so one individual after another speaks for a predetermined length of time.
- Cue with Your Voice - First, be clear about completing your thought. This will provide a conceptual segue or transition. At the same time, signal your teammate with your voice. When you want him to pick up the conversation, use a downward inflection, conclude your statement, and put a definite period at the end of your phrase or sentence. Trust that your teammate will pick up the presentation without you having to gesture, nod, or ask.
- Here is the secret that makes for a seamless handoff. The speaker needs to finish her thought by putting a downward inflection at the end of her statement while looking out at the audience.
- Allow a longer pause when a speaker finishes to relax the pace of the presentation. To pick up the pace and energy of the presentation, leave no pause and have the next person jump in as soon as the speaker finishes.
- After handing off to a partner, do not look at him or her until after he or she has started speaking.
- If you believe that your partner's comments could be damaging or negatively affect the outcome of the presentation, there are options. First, to show your respect, you can say, "Fred has experienced this situation from his position. However, in my department, we see it this way . . ." The idea is not to make Fred wrong, but to offer an alternative opinion that is equally valid.
- When disagreeing with your co-presenter, use "Yes and rather than "No, but... Now you've given your partner a way to build on your comments, even though you disagree.
- Listening team members should nod, smile, or, when asked, add a complementary opinion. The purpose is to convey the perception that the team works well together and to direct positive energy throughout the room.

- By watching the speaker carefully, it will become easier to tell when she is about to finish. Conversely, when you are speaking, remember to include your partner in your eye line, looking at him occasionally. Give him as much eye contact as if he were a person in your audience. If your audience is small, you will look at your partner frequently. If your audience is large, once in a while is sufficient.
- Agree on signals ahead of time for cuing your partners.
- Never underestimate the nonverbal cues that telegraph how your team operates. The client will observe their behavior in this environment and assume it is the way they would behave if contracted for a project.
- Audiences or clients watch anything that catches their interest. Make sure what they see is what you intend them to see. Consider team presenting a performance, with each of the players connected to each other while being acutely aware of the client. Also, like a performance, the pacing, momentum, and cue pickup contribute to the overall integrity of the presentation.
- To learn handoffs, begin by choosing appropriate roles. Then, rehearse with the actual material for your upcoming meeting, session, or pitch. Make practice handoffs to become familiar with how your teammates respond.
- Another way to keep the presentation engaging is to vary the length of material delivered by each person. Start out with brief opening statements, and then have one person go into greater depth or take a longer section. But keep it conversational.
- Variety and unpredictability keep the client's attention.
- Let your passion show in team presentations.
- Team presentations should not be a series of boring recitations. Ideally, they contain interaction, emotional persuasion, and opportunities to compliment and feature your teammates. Conversational dialogue is far superior to delivering professional-sounding, canned speeches one after another. Clients want to be engaged and know that you share their passion.
- Since it is within your control to engineer assent in the room, be positive and support your teammates unequivocally. Always rehearse the delivery and handoffs, as well as the content. Whenever possible, digitally record your practice presentation. Then watch it as if you were the potential audience or client to appreciate what they will see.

Physical Grammar: Movement as Punctuation

- Movement arouses the central nervous system. As a presenter, you attract attention when you move. The audience can't help but watch. Conversely, when you move and then stop, the sudden absence of movement is compelling and creates emphasis.
- Movements should have a purpose and support what you say. If you are adding or changing movement to your presentation, do it one manageable piece at a time.

- The following movements should be incorporated into your own style and used only when you feel the impulse to punctuate a phrase, sentence, or thought. That is the formula for the art of effective movement.
 - *Speaker Moves* - The tendency of untrained speakers is to move indiscriminately. Unjustified movements and repetitive gestures draw the focus of the audience away from the message. Clean and economical movement keeps the focus on the message, so this kind of movement is always preferable.
 - *Overcoming Bad Habits* - Begin by letting your arms hang loosely at your sides. It may seem awkward at first, but resist the urge to put your hands anywhere else. Within seconds of speaking, you will begin to use your hands, because they are free and ready to gesture. When speaking, it's important to note that there is no right or wrong way to use your hands. Do whatever feels natural for you. The only caveat is that if you employ a repetitive gesture, like counting on one hand or pointing, be aware that your audience will notice it. The movement itself attracts listeners' attention and draws focus away from your message.
 - *Physical Neutral* - Before you speak, stand in physical neutral. (Many women prefer standing in ballet's fourth position, with one foot turned slightly out. Feel free to stand like this if it feels more natural.) A solid stance makes you open and accessible to your audience, without a defensive posture or signals. This neutral stance also telegraphs confidence and enables you to use your hands easily to express yourself. Being physically open and available encourages the audience or client to embrace your ideas.
 - *Theme* - move to the center of the space when introducing or visiting your theme.
 - *The Exclamation Point* - When you want to make an important point, the most effective move is to cross downstage on an angle toward your audience. Put an exclamation point on your statement, cross energetically, add a pause or more vocal power, and include a gesture so the importance is accentuated. Since both the movement and statement are dynamic, you have now doubled the effect on the audience. The strongest use of this device is to end the movement at the same time you finish your statement. Plant both feet at the end of your cross. If you know the distance from your current position to the back of the space, walk upstage while facing the audience.
 - *Think Along with the Speaker* - Walking back and forth across the stage invites the audience to "think along with you."
 - *Differentiating Topics with Space* - If you wish to enhance a transition, move to a different area of the stage; you literally create distance from the last statement or idea. Your next topic will appear fresh.
 - *Creating Intimacy* - , moving closer to the audience signifies a need to share something personal or intimate.

- Here is an interesting paradox: You should only use physical movement that feels natural to you so it appears authentic to your audience, and you need to learn to use the physical movement techniques in this chapter so you can incorporate them into your presentations for greater effectiveness.
- Think of your actions as amplifiers for your words. They make your message clear and precise.
- Incorporating movement as part of your ongoing communication is the way you make it your own. There is a reason movements signify transitions, exclamation points, themes, and so on. Your job is to discover how they punctuate your message.
- When closing your entire presentation, hold your ground and stay in one place for maximum verbal impact. Any movement will diminish the importance of your final words.
- *Ending a Section* - If you want to clearly show that a major section of your presentation has ended and a new one is beginning, pause, turn your back to the audience, and walk upstage. Don't overuse this technique. It should be reserved for an important moment and used only once during a presentation or speech.
- When your space is confined, you still have options. With a podium, move from behind it, lean on it, or cross to the other side of it.
- If you are seated at a conference table, turn on an angle to make important point.
- With a handheld or wireless microphone, move away from the podium and practice "owning the room."
- In a larger venue, you must occupy more space with movement and gestures, but keep your style warm, intimate, and direct, however large your stage.
- If you are going to use a handheld microphone, rehearse with a small water bottle. Keep it about three inches away from and pointed at your chin.
- PowerPoint poses its own specific challenges. If possible, stand in close proximity to the screen where your PowerPoint slides are projected.
- Use whatever movement is natural and true for you. Just as your presentation should sound conversational and as close to your personal style as possible, your movements should reflect your normal behavior.

PowerPoint Revival

- PowerPoint is the most popular multimedia program used by presenters. If you want to or must use it, here are a few rules to keep in mind when preparing your slide deck:
 - PowerPoint doesn't give presentations; it creates slides. You give the presentation.
 - PowerPoint doesn't have to be tedious.
 - PowerPoint is best used as a storyboard. Place individual slides in your slide sorter and arrange them in an order that conveys a narrative with strong pacing and momentum. If a slide doesn't advance the story, cut it out.

- You are the interpreter or messenger of the PowerPoint information. In that capacity, consider the one idea you want the audience to take away from each slide.
- What you say and what you show must not compete with each other.
- Include mostly graphics and a minimal amount of text. Make sure the graphics are high quality. Determine where pictures will be worth more than words and use them accordingly.
- Avoid using wizards to plan your PowerPoint presentation.
- Insert a blank black screen whenever you want to deliver an example or anecdote. You can use the B key to black out the screen or W to make it white.
- Avoid too much text on any one slide. Direct the audiences' attention to one key message per slide.
- If you have a number of points to make, consider building them one at a time or breaking them into multiple slides.
- Construct slides that place items above, next to, or around each other and show graphically how they relate to each other.
- Create brief titles that tease the content rather than spelling out everything on the slide.
- Keep your slides simple and visually appealing. You are the center of attention. PowerPoint is your backup and complement.
- Reading slides to your audience is the single most annoying, ineffective, and damaging abuse of PowerPoint.
- Use one or, at most, two fonts on your slides.
- Find one transition style and stick to it.
- Use music sparingly.
- Be prepared to make your presentation without PowerPoint.
- The presenter is always the featured act, with PowerPoint supporting, clarifying and illustrating the content.

Being Memorable

- How you select your stories and anecdotes, organize your material, and make your presentation interactive determines how well your listeners remember what they hear.
- As a presenter, you must do three things to be persuasive and have people remember what you say:
 - Grab and keep their attention.
 - Make sure they understand what you say in a meaningful way.
 - Organize your material so it will be remembered and easily retrieved.
- Memory is being able to remember that information after you have learned it. Learning and memory have a critical relationship. If new information is well organized and relates to what you already know, it is easier to remember.

- Memory is constantly being revised and reconstructed. The chain of events in memory begins with attention. If your audience doesn't pay attention to what you say, the memory discussion is over.
- Attention precedes comprehension - no attention, no retention.
- You must pay attention to the information coming in through your senses to plant it in long-term memory.
- As a speaker, you can focus the audience on aspects of your talk with colorful details that stimulate attention and strengthen retention.
- Many things affect an audience's attention. Here are a few key factors to pay attention to:
 - *Intensity*: Speakers raise their voices for important points. We notice intensity because of contrast.
 - *Novelty*: Use colorful details to stimulate and strengthen retention.
 - *Incongruity*: If you start your presentation with an arresting open, even though people don't immediately know its relevance to your topic, they listen carefully to what you say next. When you resolve the incongruity, they remember it. Things that do not make sense in context draw listeners' attention.
 - *Personal significance*: The more important something is to us, the more likely we will pay attention to it.
 - *Emotion*: Anything with strong emotional content is quickly noticed. Make your anecdotes and stories more emotional.
- Your goal is to have your presentation be the most engaging conversation in the room.
- Break up your talk every eight to ten minutes to keep your audience engaged.
- Employ technology, breakout sessions, and interactivity to mix up your presentation.
- Break your presentation into sections with summaries at the end of each one. This will keep listeners mentally alert and engaged.
- Questions are one of the best ways to make a presentation interactive. Counterintuitive questions challenge, involve, and surprise the listener.
- Always have a compelling story in your arsenal to recapture attention.
- Pure repetition leads to lack of retention unless some form of organization or association is made.
- Your audience will remember information best when it is thoroughly understood, organized, and integrated with knowledge they already have.
- As a speaker, you can facilitate the transfer of information by linking the information to a story, a question directly related to their experience, or an example that would have changed the outcome of an event in their past.
- To implant information into an audience's long-term memory, link the information to a story, a question, or a specific example.
- Give your audience time and tools during your presentation to transfer information long-term memory.

- Audiences remember less than you present, but they also remember more. They do not remember your words, only your ideas.
- Your content will stimulate ideas that relate to things previously stored in each listener's memory.
- No two members of your audience will take away the same information in the same way, even though they all heard the same presentation.
- Provide additional information in a handout, or direct audiences to a website to visit later so they don't have to worry about missing key points.
- Focusing on no more than three to five key topics will insure that your audience remembers your presentation.
- Here are a few important tips to maximize your retention:
 - Limit content to the most important factors.
 - Structure key points so the way they flow together is clear (better organization).
 - Prepare vivid stories and examples for each topic (elaborative rehearsal).
 - Visualize how the audience will use your information (elaborative rehearsal).
 - Practice giving the talk in conditions as close to those of the actual presentation as possible (encoding specificity).
 - Relax because it's all under control (anxiety reduction).
 - Envision receiving compliments on a presentation that shows your mastery of the information (fun).

The Final Word

- Research from cognitive science reveals that people make decisions emotionally and then back up their decisions with rational thought. Based on these findings, it is imperative that speakers include their perspective, passion, and values in any presentation. There is no better way to persuade your audience or achieve buy-in.
- More than 50 percent of the impact of a presentation is nonverbal including movement, gestures, and body language. Therefore speakers should pay as much attention to the delivery of their presentation, as to the preparation of content.
- In this concluding chapter there are three purposes: (1) if you are going to make a presentation, it will give you a checklist to guide your preparation; 2) it serves as a summary for the entire book; and (3) if you read this chapter today and have to give a presentation tomorrow, it will act as a life preserver.

Recommendation: Whether you speak to audiences as a public speaker, to small groups at Lunch 'N Learns or use presentations to sell concepts or products, you will improve your presentations and your skills after reading this book. Please read my new "elevator" pitch below - the result of Eloqui's suggestions.



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About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, Ph.D

Think of me as the AAA for leaders who are stuck. I'm the business advisor and mentor/coach that responds to the "roadside" call if clients are derailed. I show up within 45 minutes of the call (I am just as responsive as AAA). I bring change instead of chains to boards and executive teams and the result is traction and acceleration of communication.



Dear Fellow Reader,

I know how much time it takes to read a book and how many books are sitting on the pile, ready to be read. I don't know about you, but after a while they started to make me feel guilty. I wondered when I would read all the books that I knew would make me feel better informed.

There was also another challenge that I encountered with reading a lot - all the books I read started to blend together in my mind and I couldn't remember what I read in which book. That's why I thought book summaries were a good idea. I could read many more book

summaries than I ever could books. I started writing summaries on the books that I read so I could revisit them and remember what I read and where.

Then I started sharing my book notes with all the people I knew. My clients love to hear about what I have read so that they too can learn. That's how a joint journey of learning about leadership, making difficult decisions, knowing how to have tough conversations and many other things began.

I was inspired to start a community of learning and that's when sharing my book notes and starting a book club by teleconference was born.

Reading the RIGHT books and discussing them in the RIGHT way in the RIGHT forum can enhance your leadership skills and communication abilities. Frumi's LEADERSHIP BOOK CLUB can be your ongoing resource!

Go to www.frumi.com and join the discussion forum now!