

Dear HOSA Students,

It was a pleasure presenting to you at the HOSA Conference on November 19, 2010. I thoroughly enjoyed your enthusiasm and engagement and appreciated your kind words about my presentation. I have uploaded my presentation for your reference on your website.

It is important to emphasize that great communication skills come only with practice. A person can read a lot of books about human relationships, storytelling, and advertising. Yet if you only repeat what you have learned without putting it into action, your learning will be useless. As Sun Tzu says in *The Art of War*: “One may *know* how to conquer without being able to *do* it.”

In that case, I hope you realize that I used the techniques from my presentation when presenting to you. Most presenters, no matter how hard they try, are boring. So I identified your tension as “The presenter will be boring”. Yet I need to teach. So how do we each get what we want? If I teach in an entertaining way, you will be engaged and you will learn something. Everyone goes home happy.

Here are some other things I did to make my presentation interesting. These techniques will help you make interesting PSAs, presentations, and documents. They might even help you make more friends.

1. Prepare well. I rehearsed my presentation five times before I spoke to an actual audience. This preparation helped me stay confident and in control. It also helped me time my presentation so I would finish before my 20 minute time limit without too much time left over.
2. Adapt. The group that saw my presentation last got the benefit of my experience with the first three groups. By the time the last group came in, I had changed two of my slides and worked out the timing for my jokes better. I even found that I was wrong in one instance – for your cohort, most of you associate the game “*Call of Duty*” with the word “video game”. I figured that “Nintendo” would come to mind when I said “video game”, but I was wrong – at least when dealing with you. So I accepted that I was wrong, adapted my presentation on the fly, and gave you a better product. (Read this paragraph again and ask yourself if I addressed your tension, too.)
3. Ask the audience questions. I could have spoken *at* you, merely working through my presentation without getting your input. But I spoke *to* you, and asked you a lot of questions. Quite simply, people don’t like to be lectured to. Also, many people are smart enough to figure out the answers on their own. I could have simply *told* you that McDonald’s cheeseburgers might make you fat, but I *asked* you because I guessed that someone in each group would know that. In short, it was much more rewarding for you to arrive at the answer on your own than for me to tell you what the answer was. (By the way, this is great in conversation, too. If you listen intently to people and ask them intelligent questions based on the things they have already said, they will love you.)
4. Be gracious. Please remember that no one is always right, not even your teachers. When you do great work, some people will praise you lavishly, while others will

- criticize you harshly. You might assume that those that praise you are the same people that like you, but that may not be true. Someone might praise you just because he or she wants to use you for something, while someone who criticizes you might genuinely care about you and may want to help you improve yourself. Given these realities, my experience is to say “Thank you” to both praise and criticism.
5. Remember: You are building a relationship. This is equally important in making PSAs or friends. A PSA that threatens people, like Click It or Ticket, might get people to wear seatbelts, but they’ve been coerced against their will. Such coercion leads to resentment, so even if they wear their seatbelts they still may not want to, and as soon as the police go away those people will probably stop wearing a seatbelt anyway. Furthermore, people will harbor resentment towards the policemen who give them traffic tickets, and the public’s relationship with their local police will suffer. But now imagine that instead of *punishing* you for *not wearing* a seatbelt, the police officer *commended* you for *wearing* a seatbelt. In fact, he is so impressed that he sends a letter to your insurance company, asking them to give you a lower rate. If you knew wearing a seatbelt would save you money on your insurance bill, wouldn’t you *willingly* wear one all the time? Think: The insurance company would have fewer fatal accidents and thus lower costs. The government would have lower costs for the same reason. You, the consumer, would have more money in your pocket. And the relationships between these three entities would be greatly improved. (By the way, my experience is that most people *do* wear seatbelts. At least I do. So in that case Click It or Ticket might just be a way for the government to make more money on traffic fines.)

Two closing notes: I found a great list of common human needs on page 18 of the 1998 paperback edition of *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie. Such a list might help you find “tensions” you can address in your own PSA. Finally, if you need to use music in your PSA, plenty of no-cost, copyright-free music can be found on www.CreativeCommons.org and its affiliated sites.

I hope you all do well on your PSAs and, if I don’t see you again, in your careers. I can be emailed at Anthony.Wojtkowiak@gmail.com.

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