

Mark

The secrets of persuasive speaking are as old as Aristotle, but you don't have to be a great orator to make effective use of them. In fact, the techniques themselves are very, very simple. There, I just used one – repetition. Repeating key words, key phrases and even key sounds throughout your talk has a cumulative effect on your audience. Don't just tell them; *keep* telling them!

Rhetorical questions are another effective technique because they get people *thinking* about an issue before you tell them what *you* think. Don't just tell them – *ask* them; *then* tell them.

Look in any dictionary of famous quotations and you'll find a lot of them take the form of contrasts. Think of John F Kennedy's 'Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country'. Don't just tell them. Tell them what you're *not* telling them first; then tell them what you *are* telling them.

Colourful adjectives and metaphors are a further way of painting pictures in the mind. And we know how memorable pictures are compared with words. Don't just tell them, *picture* it for them.

Finally, perhaps the best-known technique in the book is the so-called group of three – Julius Caesar's 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. Don't overuse this one. You're not Winston Churchill or Martin Luther King. But don't just tell them one thing, then another thing, then another thing; try grouping your key points in sets of three.

Of course, all these techniques work even better in combination. Watch these presenters creating impact through the skilful organisation of their material ...

Presenter

In fifteen ninety-seven the English philosopher, Francis Bacon, famously said: 'Knowledge is power'. In *nineteen* ninety-seven knowledge was *still* power. But knowledge isn't power any *more*. When's the last time you opened an instruction manual or went to the library to look something up? It's hard to remember, isn't it? These days we don't need knowledge. These days we have Google instead.

In business, we have been repeatedly told that big isn't beautiful; that it's the small, agile companies that succeed; that the hippopotamus cannot keep up with the hare. Well, I'm going to tell you the opposite. If you run a twenty-thousand employee multinational, even a ten percent improvement on productivity is going to make a massive difference. If you run a ten-person start-up, you're going to need a *twenty-thousand* percent improvement just to keep up.

I've mentioned this word, 'worldsourcing'. But what is worldsourcing? And how different is it from outsourcing? Outsourcing is just chasing cheap labour around the globe. Worldsourcing is bringing together, from right across the planet, talent, customers and resources – but, above all, ideas. These days, there's no more borderless economy; there's only *the economy*. There's no more company headquarters; there's only *everywhere*. There are no more time zones; there's only *now*.

It's interesting, isn't it? Even after large-scale layoffs and endless rounds of cost-cutting, we continue to underperform in every market in which we operate. What's going wrong? I think the answer might be staring us in the face. In the Olympics there is an event called the decathlon, in which athletes compete in ten different track and field events, from the long jump to the pole vault and the hundred metres to the discus. But there are no decathletes in *this* industry. There are only specialists leading their respective markets. We thought our company was overweight –the truth is we've spread ourselves too thinly.

Let me give you an idea of how vital India is to the future of IT in Europe. Did you know that in the next ninety seconds a hundred and ninety babies will be born? Only *one* will be British. *Twenty* will be Chinese. But *twenty-five* will be Indian. At present, fifty percent of Indians are under thirty-five years of age. Many of them already work in IT. And, of those who have graduated from college, how many of them do you think speak English? That's right, *all* of them. So when I say that in the field of technical support, the foreseeable future is Indian; believe me, I have the figures to prove it.

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Remember, rhetoric is not just some stylish accessory in the public speaker's wardrobe. It's the way effective communicators naturally communicate.