

# Forget the words, concentrate on getting your messages across

BODY movement and voice projection are the two most powerful forces for effective communication in presentations, says coach Dr Gary Wohlman.

Fifty-five per cent of communication is non verbal, he says, and words matter little, with 38 per cent of the message delivery down to volume, pitch and rhythm of the voice, leaving seven per cent dependent on the presentation's content.

The principle of the Wohlman coaching method is to match content with physical expression in what he calls the three Vs: Verbal, Vocal and Visual. If tone, nuance or stance are out of alignment, the message will come across as insincere or fake, he claims.

Wohlman has developed dozens of propriety tools and techniques including the Nine Squares Grid, where audiences follow the speaker's movements, listen more attentively and remember the message. The technique uses a map that looks like a noughts and crosses game where the presenter moves across the squares signifying past and future from left to right and returning to the central square to emphasise key points.

Given that more than half of a successful presentation is dependent on the body's, hands and arms, getting the presenter's movements right is more vital than the message.

Wohlman suggests postures for the fingers, arms and hands to make pictures the audience can clearly see. "Show what you are telling," he says. "The audience will see the message – even before you open your mouth, and retain and recall the message more deeply on multiple levels."

Wohlman also says:

It is always the first time: No matter how often you have presented a talk, find something different and new each time. Draw on the audience, the location, your own mood or recent events to keep the presentation fresh.

Speak to one person: whether it is two people or 200, select one person at a time and speak to them, ideally choosing people who are giving you attention and positive energy. Do this in a structured way by dividing the audience into a grid pattern and moving through it, picking out one person at a time.

If you get lost in the presentation: don't say out loud, "Where was I?" include the audience with something like: "Where do we go from here?" or "let me go back over what we've been talking about". Use it as an opportunity to recap and to include the audience.



Dr Gary Wohlman