

ROCK STAR COMMUNICATIONS

How to Inspire Action
& Commitment

PATRICIA **FRIPP**



Why are so many executive presentations so BORING? In an era of tough competition, presentations that persuade, educate, motivate, and inspire give you a competitive edge. Good presentation skills are no longer a nice skill to have; they are career life or death.

Welcome to Rock Star Communications: How to Inspire Action and Commitment.

Your speech coach is Patricia Fripp. She is a National Speakers Association Hall of Fame speaker, in demand executive speech coach, and sales presentation skills trainer. A “secret weapon” to corporate clients and sales teams. Co-author of *Speaker’s Edge*. *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* wrote, “Patricia Fripp’s speaking school is the sixth best way you can invest in your career.”

I wish you could have been there, sitting in the front of a ballroom at the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas. There were 1,500 sales people from all over the world.

This was the company’s January sales meeting. This meeting was especially a challenge. A few months before, they had bought one of their competitors, and 40% of the sales professionals had experienced the inconvenience of being acquired and had nothing whatsoever to do with making the decision.

Pat, the VP of Human Resources, told me, “Patricia, we need everyone to know they are working for the right company, at the right time, that our strategy is sound, and they have a great career with us. Your presentation skills training and speech coaching with our executives and technical staff has gone very well. We are confident they will do well in their speeches. Now we would like you to work with our president. He is a lovely man...French. Quite brilliant, an engineer, and rather shy. He is not a bad speaker; however, this company does not have any Rock Stars! Can you make him a rock star? He lives in Paris, is here next week, and you can have four hours. ”

Later, his executive assistant told me, “Ms Fripp, he’ll only stay two hours.”

Congratulations on your investment. You are about to learn the inside secrets of how I work with executives and well known speakers to help them create speeches that inspire action and commitment.

You, too, can be a rock star communicator in the business world.

Inside Secret 1: Even if you work with the best speech coach, or have an army of speech writers, or a communications department working for you...

If you want to be a rock star presenter, YOU have to get actively involved in the building of your presentation.

I asked Pat, “Do you have his speech from last year’s sales meeting?” Companies usually record all the presentations at conferences for the archives or legal department. Nobody ever watches them!

Inside Secret 2: As soon as you have finished listening to this message...

If you have a recent recording of a presentation, go and watch it. Do not do it yet, because you need to view it with fresh eyes and new information.

When I watch a recording of an executive speech or a live presentation, I am looking for the moment the speaker warms up or is relaxed. Speaking in public, especially to 1,500 people, is not a natural act. We need to learn the techniques

What I saw by watching Bernard’s presentation was that, yes, he was smart, had a great voice, was pleasant looking, and gave an acceptable speech. He also did not hit his stride until twelve minutes into his presentation. He had far too many slides that had a tendency to dominate the presentation, rather than his personality and message.

Not the Rock Star Communicator they needed.

Inside Secret 3: Warm up before you hit the stage.

You do this with neck rolls, shaking the tension out of your hands and legs. Do not sit down for thirty minutes and walk on the stage from a seated position. You need energy in your body. Rehearse your opening lines, practice smiling, and get the rhythm of your speech in your body.

Whenever possible, before my speech, I like to talk to my audience. This is what I call the “schmooze factor.” I am warming up, getting comfortable with the words coming out of my mouth.

If this is not possible, and for high-level executives, often it is not; if you are back stage, and this is not possible, pace and talk to yourself. Do NOT get distracted with emails and calls.

Inside Secret 4: The first thirty-sixty seconds of your speech sets the tone. It helps build anticipation.

I compare this to the opening on a movie, which is called the Flavor scene.

Here is a clue..."Good morning ladies and gentlemen. What a pleasure to be here." may be polite; however, it is predictable, boring, and will not Inspire Action and Commitment.

You may be thinking, "Patricia, I have forty-five minutes for my speech. Plenty of time to warm up and connect."

Fine. Consider this...your audience is full of stimulation junkies with short attention spans. You need to come out punching, and grab the audience. We want them to think, "Wow! This is going to be good!" Perhaps they will even look up from their texting!

Even the more analytical of audiences...engineers, scientists, and accountants...watch sports on large TV screens, play video games with their kids, and go to the theatre. In other words, they want to be educated, informed, and entertained.

Inside Secret 5: An audience of one or one thousand will forgive you anything, except being boring.

When I first met Bernard, for our two-or four-hour meeting, I asked him my first question.

"Bernard, if you had just one sentence, rather than forty-five minutes, what would you say?"

He said, "This is a brand new company."

I replied, "Great, write this down. This is your opening line. 'Welcome, to a brand new company!'"

Inside Secret 6: What is your central theme, core message, or premise?

Inside Secret 7: Answer the questions the audience has in their mind.

I asked him, “Who decided this would be a new company?”

He said, “The Board of Directors.”

Where were they...what room looked like...

Inside Secret 8: See the scene and it will be easier to talk about, so WE the audience can see it.

Who said what to whom?

Bernard said, “Arnold, who has been on the Board for ten years asked me, ‘Bernard, what can we do once and forever to grab the market share?’”

“What did you reply?”

“We could do this, or that, or take the boldest move ever and buy this other company!”

Which you already know they did.

Inside Secret 9: Don’t report on dialogue, give us the dialogue.

I hope you are noticing the secrets in the examples you are listening to.

One hint...When your other character in the story is speaking, you can add your name into their dialogue. This makes it obvious to you, and the listeners, who is speaking.

Bernard’s next talking point obviously was about strategy. I asked him, “When was the first time you realized the importance of strategy?”

He said, “When I was a fourteen-year-old ball boy, before the French Open. People came in to see the match and did not realize they would be watching the ball boys first. I was playing my best friend. We were equally matched as far as skill was concerned. However, in this case, the ball boys were girls.

At fourteen, girls are enough of a distraction. Our ball boy...girl...was my friend’s sister.

She wanted him to win, so she was sabotaging my game by the way she was throwing the balls. I had to play with this disadvantage.

And that, Patricia, was when I first learned the importance of strategy.”

Bernard, like all my executive speech-coaching clients, asked, “Is the audience interested in these stories?”

YES, a resounding YES!

The reason this story was so amazing and important to the speech leads us to...

Inside Secret 10: If you are a rock star communicator who inspires action, the audience must see the person behind the position.

This is the person you would fight in the streets for, work long hours, and feel confident in the corporate strategy.

Inside Secret 11: It is not only WHAT you say that communicates your message, it is the subtext.

That is what the audiences knows, or assumes, that you don’t actually say! They are thinking, “Our corporate strategy must be good. Our president has been studying strategy since he was fourteen.”

Later in his speech, he was talking about corporate citizenship. It was soon after a tsunami, and the company matched the \$360,000 the sales people and employees had donated. This was a wonderful subject, and I could tell Bernard felt passionate about it. Yet we needed more emotion.

I asked, “Bernard, how do you describe corporate citizenship to your children?”

He said, “It was the day after Christmas. I sat my two children down and said, ‘You are very lucky young people. Generous parents and even more generous grandparents. Perhaps you would like to give back one of your gifts or certificates, and we can take the money and give to the children who no longer have homes.’”

He said, “I was so proud of my son. He came back the next day and said, ‘Papa, how do I know

how much to give? I could give you all of my Christmas gifts, all of my pocket money, all of my savings, and it still would not be enough to make a difference.”

I told him, “Oh, you never give it all. Just enough that it hurts a little.”

Then I said, “Bernard, if you want to inspire action and commitment, you need to tell your sales professionals specifically what you expect. WHAT you want them to do. What YOU commit to do to support them. How will it be in THEIR BEST INTERESTS TO DO SO, as well as the company’s?

Inside Secret 12: Rock star communicators realize, to inspire action, you need to appeal to the rational self-interest.

Understand that people make decisions for THEIR reasons, not yours.

Then I recommended Bernard go back to his opening comments.

“You close your presentation with the same words, thought, or vision in your opening.

Then, your last words linger. Leave them with a new idea; however, an inspirational thought contained in your presentation. Such as, ‘Together, the best is yet to come.’”

After five hours, the mangers kept popping heads around the door and running around saying, “Bernard is still with Patricia!” They were amazed. He was finding it productive.

When professionals think about working with a speech coach, they often think, “The coach will tell me what to do with my hands, improve my gestures, body language, movement.” These are all part of the delivery. We work on this LAST.

As important as these aspects are, why perfect a badly structured and poorly written presentation? Let us discuss what I mean by written. It is difficult to write how we actually speak. I frequently say, “I do not write speeches for my clients. I ask them questions, take my clients’ words, polish them up, and pop them back in their mouths. Then say, “This is what we write down.”

Inside Secret 13: A speech is not a conversation; however, it needs to sound conversational.

The real secret is cleaned up, tight, edited, specific conversation.

Rachel Welch...style yourself on purpose.

With real conversation, we open our mouths and start speaking. Often we ramble, and use not specific language: stuff, bunches, tons, things. We edit and specify what we want to say. Shorter sentences.

Finally, Bernard's associates had to drag him off to another meeting.

He said, "Patricia, this has been very valuable. How can we continue?"

From then on, I went into their building at 6am and video conferenced our coaching session. Bernard lived...in Paris. Once we had the speech script, we looked at the place where he absolutely HAD to have a PowerPoint.

Inside Secret 14: Visual aids are visual!

They are a tool, not a crutch. They support the speaker. When you are not talking to them, turn the "Off B" for black, or use your remote control.

If you are going to be a rock star presenter who Inspires Action and Commitment, do not compete with yourself! Your audience can't listen and read. A PowerPoint with too many words, too much information, can sabotage what could be a great presentation.

As I told Bernard, "Once you have your structure and script, know where you need the visuals. You are half way there. Now you have to internalize it. You need to know it so well, you can forget it."

In other words, you do not have to think too hard, and you can focus on the audience.

As my friend Gene Perrett, who for thirty years was Bob Hope's head writer, says, "Your words need to fall flawlessly from your lips."

Inside Secret 15: You do not have to be perfect; you have to be personable.

Let us do a review.

If you want to be a rock star communicator:

1. Know central theme.
2. What are talking points to make your case?
3. Add personal stories.
4. Conversational talk through what you are going to say, then write that down, or
5. Have strong outline, and at least script opening and close.
6. Talk through your speech and record. Transcribe and use as a script.
7. Ultimately, you will not read your speech. You will use the transcript to tighten, edit, add more dramatic adverbs and adjectives, action words, then
8. Add visuals.
9. PowerPoint is NOT how you write your speech.

Inside Secret 16: Once you have your speech with the slides, rehearse.

You are busy; build rehearsal into your everyday life. Tell each story at the dinner talk, at the water fountain. Practice to your assistant, or try them out at a staff meeting.

Inside Secret 17: Now it is time for the delivery.

Michael Caine said, “Rehearsal is the work, performance is the relaxation.”

Show me a natural looking rock star presenter; I will show you someone who values the importance of rehearsal. They make it look so easy.

As Lawrence Oliver says, “The art is hiding the art.”

When you walk on stage, stand front center. Stand still while you deliver your opening remarks. Move...with purpose...on transition...on a movement specific phrase. If you talk about the past, gesture or move to your right, the audience’s left. When you talk about the future, gesture or move to your left, audience’s right. That is how we read.

Pause between ideas and thoughts. Think of verbal punctuation: end of a sentence, paragraph, new topic area.

My brother Robert Fripp, who is, according to *Rolling Stone* magazine, “The 42nd best guitarist in the world”, practices his guitar while watching high action films. I said to him, “You can’t be paying much attention to the movie.” He replied, “I am building the muscle memory in my hands.”

Rehearse in your own environment, then rehearse on the stage where you will be speaking.

Make friends with the stage. I was there at the Bellagio working with all the presenters.

You need to know how many steps it takes to get to the center of the stage. Work with the production company and audio visual technicians. These people are your friends.

It was amazing walking around the lobby of the Bellagio Ballroom, hearing what seemed like hundreds say, “Wow, that was so great! What happened to Bernard?”

I knew...it was me! He was Frippnotized!

The sales professionals said, “I’m excited. Can’t wait to go out and sell. This really IS a new company. He has my commitment. What an honor to be part of it.”

Bernard is obviously one of my favorite clients because he realized this was important to him personally, to the company, and shareholders. He took our work seriously.

An amazing speech that Inspires Action and Commitment, is a masterpiece and does not happen overnight. It does not happen, unless you make it a priority.

Good luck with your ***Rock Star Communications: How to Inspire Action and Commitment.***

Hope you will remember me...FRIPP. Much more important, remember what it stands for:
FRIPP...Frequently Reinforce Ideas that are Productive and Profitable.

You have just learned 17 inside secrets from someone who has invested more than a quarter of a century studying how to more effectively communicate.

As a bonus, here are a few of the mistakes my executive clients make BEFORE they meet me.

As you know the Secrets of Rock Star Communicators, you recognize how easy they are to solve.

1. **Waiting until the last minute** - So many executives don't start preparing their message early enough to get the impact and results they want. They overlook what a dynamic difference a great speech can make to morale and their stock price.
2. **Unfocused thinking** - Often they can't explain what they want to say in a clear and concise way.
3. **Weak starts** - They start their presentations by waffling around and not getting to the point fast enough.
4. **Not recognizing the big picture** - Once they have developed their script, or at least a strong outline, they think they are done.
5. **Not rehearsing** - Very few of my clients appreciate the importance of adequate rehearsal. I promise them, the more they rehearse, the more they can relax and enjoy their performance. And every presentation IS a performance.
6. **Letting visual aids dictate contents** - They prepare their PowerPoint before they work on their specific message and appropriate wording.
7. **Not using stories** - They fear their speech won't be seen as "high content" if they illustrate key points with compelling stories and metaphors. Actually, they are the best way to make complex points.
8. **Closing with answering questions** - This is good to do before you close, not as the close. Remember, your last words linger. They should present a key theme, a call for action, or a motivational challenge. When in doubt, I always suggest going back to the opening and closing with the same thought or idea.
9. **Not getting help** - The biggest mistake ever. So many executives just don't realize how close the help they need is. Let's talk about your next presentation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Companies hire Patricia Fripp when they want to gain a competitive edge by mastering their important conversations and presentations.

She is a Hall of Fame keynote speaker, executive speech coach, sales presentation skills and on-line learning expert.

Patricia was the first woman president of the National Speaker Association. *Meetings and Conventions* magazine named her, “One of the ten most electrifying speaker in North America. *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* magazine wrote, “One of the best ways to invest in your success is to learn presentation skills from Patricia Fripp.”

She is author or co-author of five books and creator of FrippVT Powerful, Persuasive Presentation interactive online learning program.

If your message must be memorable, your presentations powerful, and your sales successful Patricia Fripp can help. Trusted by companies including Nutanix, Zebra Technologies, Distech Controls, Veritas, ADP, Microsoft and the American Payroll Association.

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