

# Practical Success

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## Practical Tips on Getting the Opportunity and Making Industry Publications

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Making a presentation at an industry event or any type of gathering of your target market is perhaps the best opportunity to land new clients. In this column I will give you an exercise to teach you how to get the opportunity and how to give a presentation that will get attract potential clients.

I will use a real life example of a presentation I gave that attracted many new clients.

You will get the greatest benefit from this column if, for each step you provide the information for your own potential presentation. I will also tie my real life example to the main points of *Give Your Speech, Change the World* a book by Nick Morgan and published by the Harvard Business School Press.

So, let's get started.

Why is giving a presentation to a group of potential clients from your target market such a great opportunity?

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I want the opportunity to speak at a national annual meeting of construction contractors. I have selected three potential topics (I have actually done presentations on all of these topics). My three potential topics and the reason I think they may be good are as follows:

**1. Contract Administration:** Many contractors pay very close attention to building the project but little attention to the contract. This presentation is designed to help contractors create a system that will enable them to more easily comply with the contract terms.

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**2. Ethics and Compliance after Enron and WorldCom:** After the problems those two companies faced the Department of Justice and the USDOT Inspector General ramped up their investigations of contractors. This program is designed to help contractors avoid ethical and compliance problems that will get them into trouble.

**3. Negotiation for Contractors:** Contractors negotiate every single day and most of the time do not realize it. This program is designed to teach contractors how to recognize when they are in a negotiation and strategies and techniques to be more successful negotiating.

Which of my three topics do you believe would most likely attract new clients from the audience?

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Why do you believe your selection is the best topic? \_\_\_\_\_

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Think of a group for which you would like to give a presentation. What is the group? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are three potential topics you could present? Put them in the order you think would be most likely to get you the opportunity to speak and most likely would attract new clients.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

How can you best approach the person responsible for choosing a speaker for your meeting?

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Why should your audience want to hear your presentation on the subject you have chosen?

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Suppose you have successfully been given the opportunity to speak. What homework and preparation will you do before the event? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Your Presentation as a Story or Stories

You may have read or heard that a presentation should tell a story rather than being filled with facts and law. In of *Give Your Speech, Change the World* Morgan includes a chapter on the types of stories. There are three I believe apply to our potential presentations.

The most widely used story type is called *Quest*. In that type of story the hero sets forth to achieve a difficult goal. Along the way she encounters obstacles that she has to overcome to reach the goal. She may have a mentor who helps at crucial moments with wisdom or advice. The hero achieves the goal and then celebrates the victory.

For presentations about change, the *Stranger in a Strange Land* story fits. The hero is thrown into a new situation. She doesn't know the customs, rules and path. She is at a loss and confusion. Once again she may encounter a mentor who helps her find her bearings. The third type of story is *revenge*. It is based on a good enemy to conquer. There is wrong done the hero who almost loses everything and then sets out to avenge the wrong.

For your selected topic which one or more types of stories fits best and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## The Structure of Your Presentation

How should we organize the content?

1. Linear with a chronology?
2. Inductive observing facts and explaining the general rule?
3. Deductive using the general rule this is most likely to happen?
4. State a problem and offer a solution?

Which of these structures can best be used for my presentation and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which structure can best be used for your presentation topic and why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Engaging the Audience

It is important to engage the audience and get them involved. How would you do that with my presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

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How would you do that with your presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Your Opening**

Experts on presenting say you have about 90 seconds to engage the audience and convince them that they should listen to you and pay attention.

How would you do that with my presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

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How would you do it for your own presentation?

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**Your Ending**

The end of your presentation should not be: “Are there any questions?” It should not be: “In conclusion.” Instead it should be a call to action. You actually want the audience to do something and it works even more effectively when you get them started before they leave.

How would you end your presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Follow Up:**

I believe it is important to find a way to follow up after the audience goes home.

How would you follow up with your audience? \_\_\_\_\_

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I invite you to share your answers with me. Drop me a note at [cparvin@cordellparvin.com](mailto:cparvin@cordellparvin.com).

By the way, the topic I chose was Ethics and Compliance after Enron and WorldCom and the reason I chose it was because contractors caught in the web of an investigation could easily be forced out of business.