

# Tactic:1

## Focus on them, not you.

### Typical Situation

*Thank you very much for allowing me to present to you today. Our company has handled many issues similar to yours, and we are confident our processes and technology can move your organization forward, so you can meet the challenges you have described to us. We have helped others like you before, and we can help you, too.*

*Let me review what we have done and why our people and our processes are so revolutionary.*



“I! WE! OUR!”

*First of all, our people are special.*

*Special because they have more experience than their counterparts in other firms in our industry. They are constantly being trained at our own state-of-the-art corporate training center, where we employ the finest trainers and have at our people's disposal simply the best research minds in our industry.*

*Second, there's our commitment to service beyond the norm. We call it Unlimited Service. What a response we are having from our customer base to that concept! It has set us apart from others, pure and simple.*

*Now regarding our value to your firm, just let me say that we have some benchmarks of how we have delivered to the bottom line of our customers. Let me illustrate how we have used our unique service and technology to advance the ball for firms like yours. . . .*

And so it goes. Lots of terrific information about your organization. That is how many presenters begin. Maybe most presenters. It is almost predictable, and many listeners even encourage it by asking you, "Will you please tell us about your organization, because not everyone has met you yet?"

Presenters accept the invitation and leap into a well-produced and usually well-delivered presentation with beautiful visuals, all designed to evangelize your organization's products and services.

**It sounds like this . . .**

Focus on them, not you.

*In fact I (we) have not met all of you before, so let me first tell you about our organization, so you can understand all we bring to the table.*

Sound familiar?

## **Tactic:1**

### **Focus on them, not you.**

Listeners ache to have us talk about their needs, but presenters tend to keep the focus on their own company and will do almost anything to talk about what they want to say. Whether you are presenting to change someone's opinion, change an attitude, change some processes, close a deal, or sell your services or products, almost all presenters start out by reviewing their background and experience and their organization's capabilities and successes.

Even custom dog-and-pony shows representing months of research and work by your team won't win customers if you focus on your own products, processes, and organization, rather than on your potential client's needs and concerns. Instead, begin with a very clear statement of your client's needs, outlined on a flip-chart page, and use this as the agenda for your presentation. You will find that the same people, wearing the same clothes, presenting to the same sorts of customers the same products, price points, experiences, and abilities will dramatically increase your win rate.

**Instead,** ...Listeners  
**begin with** ache to have us  
**your listeners'** talk about their  
**needs.** needs ...

## A Real-Life Story

A few years ago I got a call from the West Coast office of one of the top five advertising agencies in the world.

The head of business development said that, in the past nine months, he and his team had gone zero-for-sixteen in new business presentations. These were not just capability presentations, but custom dog-and-pony shows representing months of research and work by the team, which was competing in the final round with three or four other agencies.

When I arrived, I found a group of unhappy campers. All of these people were professionals. They knew they were very good, but they weren't winning. They felt angry and frustrated. It soon became clear that, in their presentations, these people were focusing on their own products, processes, and organization, rather than on the potential client's needs and concerns. This is business as usual today: a well-produced media presentation using all the grandeur of PowerPoint to blast out the story of your own organization.

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I suggested they begin their presentations in a different manner and with a different content. I suggested they begin with a very clear statement of their client's needs, which would be outlined on a flip-chart page. This list of needs then became the agenda from which they gave their entire presentation.

## **The results of this one simple change?**

The same people, wearing the same clothes, presenting to the same sorts of customers the same products, price points, experiences, and abilities went five-for-six in their next half-dozen new business pitches.

If you want to stop being predictable, talk about the listeners' issues, opportunities, problems, and needs *first*.

If you begin this way, listeners will say to themselves, "*Boy, this presenter is on the mark. They get it. I should listen to that person because he or she is focused on my issues and maybe, just maybe, we can advance the ball today on our problem/opportunity.*"

**You will gain instant attention.  
Instant differentiation.**

## **So what can you do right now to use this idea?**

- 1.** Realize that you can use the important information about your firm as you answer all the listeners' needs and issues. It simply needs to be re-sequenced to be dropped in where it is part of your answer to how you will address each of the listeners' needs. When listeners hear about your organization in the context of what they need, it is truly heard and can make an appropriate impact.
- 2.** Call your listeners and verify just one more time the key needs/issues they want you to address. What are the problems they want you to help them with? Hear one more time how they define their needs.
- 3.** Get them to e-mail you or fax you this list of needs.
- 4.** Also ask them to prioritize their needs and issues, so you can address them in the order they believe is most significant to their situation.
- 5.** Promise the listeners that you will begin your presentation by listing on a flip chart the set of needs they send you and that you will address them in the order they want. (They will hardly believe their ears, because they are so used to the typical scenario described earlier.)

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**6.** Start your presentation by delivering on the promise: Write the list of needs they sent you, in the order they prioritized them, on a flip chart before they come into the room. Leave it on the flip chart so they see it when they walk into the room. They will say to themselves, “This is what was supposed to happen. So far, so good.”

**7.** Open with the normal, “Thanks for the opportunity to speak to you today.”

**8.** Then immediately say, “You asked us to address your issues/needs in this order, and we are prepared to do that. Before we begin, have there been any changes that we should know about, so we can also address those concerns?”

**9.** If there are any additions or changes, such as order of priority, write them on the flip chart.

**10.** Then ask if they would like you to present in the revised order. You are showing them that you are not only flexible enough to respond to changing priorities, but you can also adapt if the priorities change yet again. They will be amazed you can. It proves you are there for them; you are there to help them with their needs, not just there to tell them your story. This is Consultative Presenting.

**11.** Your job right now is to re-sequence all your information in the presentation you have prepared to flow in the order required to explain how your ideas can address their needs. To do this, your visuals must be sequentially flexible. This should not take long. The visuals are in your computer. Just reorder them so you can address the needs of the listeners in the order they requested. Most of the required changes



can be executed by using the “cut and paste” function in MS Word, once you have your listeners’ needs clearly defined.

**12.** You will give your same presentation, but in a much more listenable form. This will make your presentation stand out from the others, and it will be much more interesting to your audience.

**13.** Now go make the call to your listeners. Make the offer to address their needs in the order they wish. Get them to send the list to you. And promise to start by addressing their needs in the order in which they have prioritized them. This tactic is easy to accomplish, and it makes you stand out right off the bat. In fact, this tactic makes you stand out even before the presentation begins.