

Hidden Messages Behind Public Speaking



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Over the years I've coached a broad range of clients toward the goal of making their public speaking and media appearances more effective.

My clients have included the CEO's of many of the largest, most successful companies in America, which leads me to my

first point.

1) Successful entrepreneurs and leaders of successful companies are the most difficult to train. Why? Because success spoils them into thinking that because they've made it to the top they must know what they're doing. So why should they listen to a communications coach who has less money and power than they do?

Answer: because they still need to learn a few new tips and techniques from someone who focuses on communications, and not on building businesses or amassing wealth and power.

The visual

Does it matter how you dress or the color of the clothes you wear? Answer: yes, most definitely.

The other day I attended a presentation by a man who has built a number of successful insurance marketing agencies across the county that are still growing at an awesome 40% a year. One of the insurance companies they represent credits them for having sold \$1 billion worth of life insurance.

So how was this genius business builder dressed who was once in his own words a financial "train wreck" in debt \$30,000 and changing jobs one after another, but now has hit it big and earning millions a year and helping others to do the same thing?

All in black.

Unless you're a Steve Jobs, why on earth would you wear a black shirt, black pants and black shoes?

Had he asked me how he should dress to speak to a group he's endeavoring to inspire to take the same road to riches that he took, I would have told him to lighten up, wear brighter colors.

At least wear pastel shades that cameras like better and that will make you look friendlier, happier, more prosperous and what you have to say or to offer, more inviting.

I would have told him to forget the black shirts, once the pride of the paramilitary wing of the National Fascist Party and after 1923 an all-volunteer militia of the Kingdom of Italy.

Together with the black pants and black shoes, my friend you're projecting a dark, almost sinister image that's the opposite of the impression you want to make.

2) Does the length of your talk matter?

Answer: are you kidding? TOTALLY! You've no doubt heard the expression, "less is more." I'd say the shorter the better unless, of course, it's a complicated message you want to impart, in which case you might need to speak for more than 20 minutes, but every minute after that you're out on a cliff near a dangerous precipice of your audience descent into mental blackout.

Besides staying on track with your messages, speakers need to be mindful of urinary tracks in their audience for after 20 minutes, while you're just getting wound up, some will be thinking of rest room relief and mentally bailing out on you.

I'd recommend speaking for not longer than 45 minutes and leaving 15 minutes for Q&A. That's plenty of time for most talks from a stage or in front of a group. On TV, you can shave that down to 3 to 5 minutes, because that's all you'll get to deliver your message.

Back to the whiz-bang successful business builder in black, he spoke for (gulp) over two hours and articulate, smart and accomplished as we was, if he went a minute longer, I thought my bladder would burst.



About the Author: Madden is the founder and CEO of the public relations firm TransMedia Group. Books he has written include ***SPIN MAN, King of the Condo, Is There Enough BRADY in TRUMP To Win The inSUPERable Bowl?*** and ***Love Boat 78.***

His blog, Madden Mischief.com finds him “Looking at Truth through the prism of Absurd.” Madden started out as a newspaper reporter for ***The Philadelphia Inquirer,*** then rose to the pinnacle of network television as Vice President, Assistant to the President of **NBC** under then CEO Fred Silverman, for whom Madden wrote speeches when they were both at **American Broadcasting Companies.** Madden recently launched **Madden Talent,** a licensed talent agency representing actors, artists and models. Corporate titans like the Chairmen of Kellogg’s Company and AT&T looked to Madden to do crisis management and write influential speeches for them that were reprinted in *The New York Times.* Madden won the Public Relations Society of America’s Bronze Anvil for a PR campaign he conducted for The City of New York. Rexall Sundown Founder Carl DeSantis credits Madden’s publicity for the firm’s spectacular success, culminating in DeSantis selling the company in 2000 for \$1.6 billion.