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Be the Most Persuasive Person in the Room

Commanding the Room:
The Art of Effective Presentations and Storytelling
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I. **Tap into the Power of the Persuasion Cycle** (Mark Goulston's *Just Listen*)

- You need to know how it works—and how to move people through it
  1. From *resisting* to *listening*
  2. From *listening* to *considering*
  3. From *considering* to *willing to do*
  4. From *willing to do* to *doing*
  5. From *doing* to *glad they did* to *continuing to do*
- Problem: wish to skip from *resisting* to *doing*—because it's *our* goal to get people to *do* something
  1. Then we've missed the most important step: getting them to *buy in* to what we're offering
  2. Only happens during Step 2: when we move them from *listening* to *considering*
  3. In general, we accomplish this not from what we tell *them*, but what we get *them* to tell *us*
  4. Stories help with the toughest part of the cycle: moving from resisting to listening to considering—the "buy-in" phase
- Before your next meeting (internal or external), consider where that person is on the persuasion cycle

II. **Know that Our Brains Are Wired for Stories**

- When you recount a tale of running, for example, the motor cortex of your brain shows more electrical energy—it lights up
  1. The same is true for the people who are listening to you—your brains synchronize
  2. This not only builds rapport but allows you to plant ideas, thoughts and emotions into your listeners' brains
- This is much more powerful than PowerPoint presentations or bullet point lists, which only light up the two areas in the brain that recognize language
- Studies also show that people accept ideas more readily when their brains are in story mode versus an analytical mindset
- Compelling stories can be a Trojan horse we can use to sneak persuasive ideas into people's minds

- That happens because stories speak to our emotions
  1. This is the part of the brain that helps us make decisions
  2. We don't make choices logically: science indicates otherwise
  3. When the emotional center of the brain is injured, we can't decide—even something as simple as picking a blue pen or a black pen
- When we read dry, factual arguments, we read with our dukes up
  1. We are critical and skeptical
  2. When we are absorbed in a story, we drop our intellectual guard

III. **Use the Six Types of Strategic Stories** (Annette Simmons, *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins*)

- Who I Am Story
  1. Goal: Break down preconceived notions or judgments about you, your company and both of your motivations
  2. Use: To make you and your company more "human" and approachable
- Why I'm Here Story
  1. Goal: Replace suspicion and give people a reason to trust you by showing you don't have a hidden agenda
  2. Use: Show you have goodwill and want to work with others to achieve a common goal
- Teaching Story
  1. Goal: Demonstrate an idea in a memorable way
  2. Use: Make a lesson clear and help people remember why they are doing something
- Vision Stories
  1. Goal: Inspire hope
  2. Use: Stimulate action and raise morale by reminding people why they are working together (or investing in your stock)
- Values in Action Stories
  1. Goal: Explain what a value *really* means
  2. Use: Clarify an intangible (such as authenticity) in a working relationship or situation
- "I Know What You're Thinking" Stories
  1. Goal: Show respect for others' viewpoints while sharing your own
  2. Use: Recognize objections and then show why these don't apply (great tactic for when you've fallen below their expectations)

IV. **Ask Five Questions to Create Better IR Stories**

- Who are the people we want to reach?
  1. List the different groups (analysts who cover us, analysts we want to cover us, etc.)
  2. Note their key qualities
- What does each group think of us?
  1. Your management team
  2. You
  3. Your company
  4. For example, do they know, like and trust you?

- What does each group want to know about us?
  1. List the information they really want to know
- What do we want to tell each group?
  1. List the points you think are important and want to share
- Where do the answers to the last two questions intersect?
  1. List the information that others want to know and that you want to tell them
  2. Pick the three most important messages and focus your story on these

V. **Use a Storyboard to Focus Your IR Story** (based on Cliff Atkinson's *Beyond Bullet Points*)

The Story Board		
5-Minute Column	15-Minute Column	45-Minute Column

VI. **Lead the Q&A**

- Set goals for your meeting or conversation in advance
- Develop the three key messages you want people to remember

Bridging

- The art of answering a tough or off-target question (or an easy one) and smoothly segueing into a positive answer

- The secret is to give a short answer to the question and then either
  1. Ask yourself another question and answer it with a key message
  2. Move directly to the key message
- QAQA: When asked a positive friendly question, answer it, then ask yourself a related question and answer that
- QaQA: Answer a yes or no question, then offer more information that relates to it
- QAA: Answer the question and then add more related information from your key messages

Listing

- This gives you the opportunity to present more information than the questioner expected
  1. Do this when you have a lengthy answer or a process to share
  2. Say you have three important points you want to make, number them as you go through them, and people are less likely to interrupt you
- Q123: "To answer that, let's go through our three strategies for growth. One … Two … Three …"

Hooking

- This gives a taste of an idea and encourages people to ask the follow-up questions
- QA …: "You'd be surprised what our research indicates …"
- I like this the least
  1. It gives up control and relies on the other person to ask a question you want to hear—which may or may not happen
  2. Can also be seen as manipulative
  3. Use sparingly

Flagging

- Uses your voice and language to let the questioner know you're about to share something very important
- Q*!*A: "The most important point to remember is …