

[TJ Walker](#)  
Media/Presentation  
One-on One Training

## Media Training

### Four ways to Data Dump.

What do you do if you have an incredibly large amount of data that you must present to an audience, but you are limited to a strict time amount of, say 10-30 minutes? By far, the absolute worst mistake you could make is to do the following: cram every fact you can find into a bullet point and then on a PowerPoint and then race through that PowerPoint in front of your audience. You can guarantee that no one will remember anything you say if you try this technique (though you will be in good company, since this is what most bad-to-average presenters do).

It's OK to dump data, but don't do it in your speech and don't do it in the PowerPoint slides that you are projecting to the whole room. If you goal is to actually communicate your ideas, facts and data, then you should use at least one or more of the following four tactics. [Article](#) in Wisdom.

### Eliminate Bad PowerPoint.

A lot of people like to sit around and complain about boring PowerPoint presentations. "But TJ, I can't do anything about it. That's the way it's done around here—it's always been that way." That's what I hear all the time.

I can buy this if your boss is telling you that you have to give his PowerPoint presentation bullet point by bullet point to the board of directors, otherwise you are fired. But the reality is that most of us have a whole range of opportunities to influence PowerPoint presentations in our lives. For starts, if any of your own employees or direct reports have to give you a presentation, you should issue the following edict to them:

"When you are delivering your PowerPoint presentation, do not give me any slides with bullet points on them. I repeat, it will be unacceptable if you have any slides containing bullet points." At first, your employees may think that you've gone mad. But once they've actually delivered an interesting presentation to you and others using PowerPoint slides as visuals, rather than overblown notes for bullet points, they will thank you. [Article](#) in Wisdom

### There is always time for anything important.

I often stress to clients that the only way to get dramatically better as a speaker or media presenter is to critique a video of your speech or media interview, preferably right after it happened. Everyone thinks this is a good idea, and yet I estimate that fewer than 1% of my clients or the general population of people who speak actually do this. "Why?" I

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**Leader:** [TJ Walker](#), President, Media Training Worldwide  
**Mission:** We're addressing all issues facing communicators who appear as media spokespersons, or who counsel or advice clients and colleagues on how to conduct media appearances.

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ask. "It takes time," I am told. Well, ya, but so what? It's worth it if you want to improve and stay in top form.

Paul McGuinness has been manager of the band U2 since 1978. He told the New York Times (June 12, 2005) that one of their secrets to success is the following: "You'll never see the band emerge from the dressing room until at least half an hour after each show, and it's not because they're taking showers. We've developed a practice over the years where every night the five of us sit down and deconstruct the show."

Wow, think about that. Here is a band made up of wildly successful, incredibly rich superstars who have millions of fans telling them they are wonderful in every way. Yet how do they spend 30 minutes after every show? Criticizing and critiquing every aspect of their performance. That's how you get good. That's how you stay good. [Article](#) in Wisdom

### **The pause solution.**

Over the years, I have found out the hard way that it is not productive to ask people to focus on NOT saying uh or um. All this does is make the speakers even less confident and more jittery. Instead, I get the speaker to focus on pausing more often. Pause after a thought, Pause when you are uncertain. Pause when you feel like saying uh or um. By specifically trying to pause more, the mind learns that it is OK not to be uttering sounds every second. Once you develop the habit of pausing when you give a presentation (we all automatically pause all of the time during normal conversation), you will enhance your image as a polished speaker. [Article in Wisdom.](#)

Less facts, more meaning. The world does not need more information. Your audience doesn't really want more information. Instead, your audience is looking for someone (you) who can sift through all the info they don't have time to go through and distill for them what they really, really need to know. In short, your audience is looking for wisdom. And when you are adding the value of meaning, even if it is how to make award winning paper airplanes, you will be perceived as a speaker who adds the value of wisdom to your audience. [Article in Wisdom.](#)

**Priming the Hand Pump.** You should do with your hands what you normally do with them when you speak—move them fluidly and constantly. Unfortunately, when people become nervous, they forget to do things that they normally do without even thinking. The problem with failing to move your hands is that you now appear to be a nervous potted plant. [More](#)

**Know Your Audience.** If you know with absolute certainty that your boss is jealous of your speaking abilities, then, by all means, adjust your performance levels downward when you must. But then spend all of your time looking for a new boss who will actually support you doing your best in all endeavors. [More](#)

**Confess Nothing.** In theory, everyone loves a candid, non-pretentious individual. But as human beings, we can't help but be shaped by the last thing we hear from someone. And if the last thing we hear from someone is that they are scared and wallowing in self-doubt, then that is what we remember about that person. [More](#)

**The Right Foot.** Don't leave your introduction up to chance! You don't want to have to waste your first few minutes correcting your introducer. Write out your introduction exactly the way you think it would be most interesting to the particular audience you are speaking to. However, here is the unique twist: Don't write out the introduction word for word. Instead, write out the first few sentences word for word. But then, list your accomplishments and credentials in bullet point format.

**Critiquing the US Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates.** (October 13, 2004): Bush, following his improved 2nd debate performance, continued to display good body language, comfort and confidence (though he did seem a tad giddy in the opening 30 minutes). But the President does annoy. Bush says the name "Ted Kennedy" with such a barely contained smirk; it's like listening to Beavis and Butthead trying to discuss the male anatomy with a straight face in Jr. Hi School health class.

John Kerry was smooth, polished, poised and confident throughout the entire 90 minutes. His delivery, mannerisms and grammar were impeccable. But Kerry committed major strategic blunders. Namely, he spent too much time on defense. This debate was a small victory for Bush on points, but will sway few undecided voters. [Full critique](#)

(October 8, 2004): The good news for George Bush is that he wins the most improved award since Reagan's transformation from the 1st to the 2nd 1984 debates. Gone were the grimaces, puckering, leaning on a lectern, and general signs of disdain. Bush moved his head, his body, his legs, and hands in a fluid manner that suggested he was comfortable, confident, and commanding.

The bad news for Bush is that Kerry also significantly improved his debate performance. Whereas Kerry was defensive about being a "flip flopper" in the first debate, in this meeting he spend 90% of his time attacking, yet he did so with more grace and likeability than he has ever displayed before. [Full critique](#)

(October 6, 2004): Cheney came across as confident, knowledgeable, intelligent, seasoned, reasonable, steady, low-key, and earnest. But by every traditional measure of good public speaking, Cheney is a truly wretched communicator. His sins include the following: staring down constantly, cocking his head awkwardly, placing his chin on his hands, speaking in a monotone voice, saying "ah" incessantly, and using weird clutter phrases like "if you will."

It is difficult to critique Senator Edwards' communication skills because he is consistently a technically flawless communicator. Edwards comes across as comfortable, likeable, knowledgeable, and friendly. Specifically, Edwards moves his head, hands, and body in a totally natural manner. His voice is soothing, conversational, and energetic. [Full critique](#)

**Winging it is for the birds.** Every time you face the news media you should have an agenda -- thought out and written down. [More](#)

**Avoid weasel words.**

Many business communicators lard up their speeches with jargon and weasel words. The results? They sound like

bureaucratic stooges. [More](#)

### **Break the rules, but learn them first**

Sit up high and lean forward 15 degrees into the camera when appearing on TV. This makes most people look taller, thinner, more dynamic, and have a stronger jaw line—traits most people desire. If you sit back in your chair and relax on TV, you will tend to look short, fat, bored, and sloppy. As a general rule, the 15% forward posture will enhance your image and increase the chances that you don't distract from your message. [More](#)

### **Tell Your Story.**

Stories are not the most efficient way of communicating data, which is why most business communicators strip out all stories from their speeches. However, stories are the most efficient way of getting audience members to remember what you said. If your goal is to get people to remember your key points, stories are essential. [More](#)

### **The question of questions**

Question time is a highly valuable part of any presentation; it's one many speakers flub. For starters, many presenters don't plan enough time for questions from the audience. This occurs for two main reasons. One, if the speaker is allotted an hour for a presentation, he or she writes out an hours worth of material because of the fear of running short.

Second, the speaker writes out material or plans a PowerPoint that seemingly runs only 30 minutes, but the difference between practicing in your own head silently versus saying it out loud in front of a real audience is very different. It will take much longer when speaking it for real instead of reading it to yourself. Once again, there is no time left for questions. This is a huge mistake. [More](#)

### **To lead, speak effectively or get out of the way.**

The one most common trait among true leaders is the ability to communicate well, especially through the spoken word. Of course speaking styles can vary among leaders, but at some point most leaders find a way to be effective when they are speaking. More than height or looks or wealth or even charm, strong public speaking skill is the one true x factor that makes up the leader. In fact, strong communication skills can sometimes overwhelm the fact that there is nothing else a leader can do in a certain situation. [More](#)

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