

## Coach Hof's (under) 2-minute drill

I'm Coach Hof: a leadership and communications skills coach.

Now, I know most of you, or have at least met you through our various networking activity, in which case we've exchanged business cards.

Why am I reaching out to you?

I want to show you every couple of weeks how to improve your presentation skills. Not only for stand-up, *formal* presentations, using PPT, but for meetings, interviews, conference calls; any time you have to communicate, deliver product knowledge or promote a service. I'm going to give you specific actions to practice that I've used over the years: related to posture, body language, content creation and organization, and knowing your audience, so you can better serve them. I'll also teach you how to recognize the needs of a potential client or customer.

As a successful presenter, you will have command of three things:

1. Your self – your *physical* self – and your nerves!
2. Your content – your message, or story - and how to organize, and present it
3. Your audience – and the confidence to answer any question, because you'll be listening to them

We all have a story to tell, and a message to share. I want to help you tell it with authority, confidence, and spontaneity, and enjoy the process. Stay tuned for specifics in upcoming blogs.

In the body of the email: I don't want to clutter up your inbox, so if this is absolutely of no interest to you go ahead and unsubscribe at the bottom of this page – no problem –

On a separate slide at the end of each video:

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Coach Hof

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Ok, here's the drill:

I'm a coach; a leadership and communication skills coach. It's true, people aren't interested in *coaching* per se; what they *are* interested in is results, what's in it for them.

"So, what can a coach do for me?" you may be asking yourself.

Well, a good coach has helped *me*:

- Get a job
- Keep a job
- Do better in my job
- Change jobs
- Start a new career
- Get motivated to do something I know I want to do but haven't
- Feel more confident
- Become a better public speaker
- Change my outlook and attitude
- Have more fun in life, at work and elsewhere

Any of these resonate with you? Truth is, we can all use a coach. What's stopping us? Admitting to ourselves we can use some help.

What I'd like to do in this series of articles is share with you valuable and easy-to-implement practices that will improve the quality of your life.

Here's one: time is our most valuable commodity, would you agree? So why do so many of us have difficulty "managing" it? For starters, it's a misnomer to say we can *manage* time; we can really only *use* it. And the truth is, most of us procrastinate what we really need to do to move ourselves forward, or develop new business. We'd rather do something that's easy to accomplish, like check email, or do the dishes, or laundry. We like doing those things because it gives us the feeling of accomplishment that we got a lot done.

It's valuable to sequester yourself during the most productive and creative hours of your day, when circadian rhythms are in harmony with your most creative energy levels, and do the absolute #1 priority of your day during those hours, not fritter them away in data entry or bookkeeping chores, things that can be accomplished when you're not required to think in the most creative vein.

So start by making yourself a daily to-do list or schedule that includes the #1 priority during your most productive 2-3 hour period of the day, and set a timer; and *do nothing but that task*. No answering the phone, or re-texting a friend, or checking FACEBOOK. Once you get in the habit of doing this you'll see that you actually get more done, and attack the thing that you've been putting off, the thing that you know you really need to do. And you'll also feel really good about yourself.

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Coach Hof here. [MEDIUM CLOSE-UP]

You know, presenting, in any format, any venue, is a physical activity. (So, get to the gym, and get in shape☺) In truth, it's all about energy, your energy, and how you use it to connect to your audience. It's all about engagement.

So, let's start with your posture. How you sit, how you stand. [PULL BACK TO REVEAL DESK AND CHAIR]

(Coach Hof demonstrates at a table, on his feet, proper posture and a few of the typical bad habits people fall into.)

[CLOSE-UP] We convey a lot with body language. Even before a word comes out of your mouth, you're sending a myriad of signals to your listener, just by your physical presence alone.

What signals are you sending? [PULL BACK TO GET FULL FRONTAL VIEW OF COACH HOF DEMONSTRATING]

- Are you approachable?
- Are you defensive?
- Are you open, present, attentive?
- Are you distant, and removed; cut-off?
- Are you judgmental, dismissive?

Even the way we move when not speaking, also sends a message.

(By the way, if using a visual aid or Power Point slides do you know where you should position yourself with respect to the objects or pictures?)

[MEDIUM CLOSE-UP] So, here's your homework: it's a fun exercise of observation. I want you to notice people's body language, wherever you are, in the workplace, when you shop, at restaurants, riding on a train, sitting in a barber shop waiting your turn, etc.

Have some fun with this activity, and in two weeks, I'll show you two skills, that if you master, will put you head and shoulders above everyone else. See you in two

## **Coach Hof's (under) 2-minute drill**

[FULL BODY SHOT] Hi again - Coach Hof demonstrating mastering your physical self.

[MEDIUM CLOSE UP] Two skills, if you can master, will put you head and shoulders above most presenters and public speakers.

The first is eye contact: where do we look? Well, it's easy if it's only one person, isn't it? And that's the key to making good eye contact, no matter how many people are in our "audience" - only look at one person at a time.

[PULL BACK TO REVEAL FULL BODY] Let's do an exercise: wherever you are right now, look around you and try to scan several objects at once, make the objects several feet apart, so you have to move your head. Now go back and scan those same objects again. Getting dizzy?

One pair of eyes at a time; and only speak when you speak to a pair of eyes.

That goes for when you move, also. And by all means, you can and should move, especially if you're doing any demonstration. Just don't speak until you've re-located yourself and have made contact with another pair of eyes. We call this, the arc of silence. And it's a most effective technique. Your audience will be glued to watching you to see what you're going to do next. And that's exactly what you want.

See me in two weeks for the second of the two skills which will set you apart from all other presenters.

## **Coach Hof's (under) 2-minute drill**

[FULL BODY SHOT] Coach Hof here, with the second of those two skills.

What do I do with my hands?

[MEDIUM CLOSE UP] Have you ever noticed, when you're in the company of mixed friends or co-workers, and someone is telling an animated story, how illustrative they are and what use they make of their gestures?

And then when they get in front of an audience, they're suddenly stiff and wooden, and hold their hands in a fixed position?

(Coach Hof demonstrates hands in fixed positions, and how to keep hands at side in order to gesture naturally.)

[FULL BODY SHOT] so, look at one person at a time, and keep your hands free, and you'll be in charge of your physical self and able to concentrate on your content and connecting with your audience.

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[FULL BODY SHOT] (Using full voice) - well, hello again - Coach Hof here, with a reminder about one of the most musical instruments you can possibly play: that's right, your voice.

How many of you feel you get the most production, and value from using your voice?

Anyone sing in the shower?

[MEDIUM CLOSE UP] Ever notice when someone is relating a story to a friend or loved one, about something they care deeply about, how rich and inflected their voice is? And yet, when doing a presentation, or speaking in front of a group how suddenly monotone it gets, almost robot-like?

The voice is an instrument, and it plays many notes.

And the key to a rich, inflected, and resonant voice is exercising it. Like all instruments, you need to practice. There are many exercises you can do to keep it in shape; and I don't recommend shouting at a football game. One thing you can do is rehearse what you're going to say by practicing it out loud; record yourself and play it back. Then make a few adjustments: add some more inflection, different rhythms, vary the pitch and volume according to the weight of your message, and re-record it. You'll see a real difference, and you'll like the results.

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Let's get right into your content. Content is still "king" - and the real reason people are listening to you, or why they're interested in what you have to say.

And the real key to all of this presentation stuff is communicating it in such a way that engages your audience, gets their attention and makes them want to listen. Think of it as a dialogue, not a monologue, an interactive dialogue, or conversation.

People use to say there are two kinds of presentation: informative, and persuasive. My feeling is that there is only one kind of presentation - persuasive.

If it was just information we wanted to communicate, we could just as easily hand someone a brochure, or pamphlet, or send them an email.

And one thing that gets someone's interest or attention right away is a personal story. It engages, because it's particular to your given set of circumstances, which people can relate to, because they've more than likely had a similar experience, or wish they had, or hadn't.

So what's your story? You have one, and it's significant because it relates to the message you're conveying.

Get your audience's attention: give them an outstanding fact, or statistic, or tell them an anecdote, or show them a photo, or diagram, that relates to your subject matter. It's step #1 in creating and organizing your presentation whether you're using Power Point, or not. I'm a real believer in getting right into it, save your bio or list of credits to the end, after you've intrigued them, proposed your idea, or got them interested in your topic.

Even if, and especially if, you're in sales, give them value first; don't sell. Your story and material, if presented effectively, will convince them more than a sales pitch. Stay tuned to how to best organize your material.

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(Close-up on flip chart showing 7 steps)

So, ok, you got their attention. And don't worry - the attention getter is the result of your entire presentation. So you should really create this **after** you have organized the more detailed part of your speech; it should be a natural segue from the attention getter to the recommendation.

The recommendation is your proposal; what action do you want your audience to take. It is most effective when it is concise, direct, and straightforward.

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You made a recommendation. That's a start. You want your audience to take a specific course of action. Great. Why?

Because it benefits THEM. Remember, it's all about them.

So what are these benefits? Easy on the features. More on the benefits.

Features tell, benefits sell.

Keep it to three. Don't overwhelm them. Benefits are usually related to three things: money, time, and feelings. Nobody will ever tell you they want to waste your time, spend your money needlessly, or hurt your feelings.

So, what do *they* get out of this? What's in it for **them**?

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OK. Here's the part you've been dying to tell them: your PROOF.

So, go ahead; this is the part where you are justified in gloating.

However, keep the proof specific to the three benefits you listed prior. Relate everything to the benefits of the action(s) you want your audience to take.

Remember, it doesn't have to be a product or a service.

You may be recommending your audience think differently about a concept, or adopt a different point of view about a subject they already know, or consider an alternative to a course of action that's been proposed. It's all persuasive.

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Now, what do they DO about all of this?

What are the next steps? What action do you want your audience to take **now**?

What are *you* going to do next?

It's all very nice to know or learn something; but what happens next? If it's a meeting, what are the participants' next responsibilities?

What is expected in terms of an anticipated result, and whose responsibility lies where?

Next steps may be the most important part of any presentation. How many times have you left a meeting and asked yourself, "well, that's all very well and good, but what am I supposed to **do** about it?"

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Summarize – OK, you've done a bang-up job of making a strong recommendation, fortifying it with your consumer's benefits, and proving it, + telling them what to do about it.

Now what?

Summarize – re-cap, re-affirm, re-state your recommendation: "That's why I advocate, that's why I recommend ... the course of action I'm recommending."

You almost can't do this too much. Letting your audience know that the reason you have taken this opportunity to share the information you have given them is for a very sound reason.

It's also an opportunity for you, the presenter, to check in with them and make sure they got the gist, or essence of what you have delivered to them with clarity, and no confusion. And then you simply ask them if they have any questions.

What's the presenter's greatest fear?

That they will ask me a question I don't know the answer to.

How do I avoid this? What if they ask me a question I don't know the answer to?

Stay tuned!

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Uh, ummm, yes, well... Oh, so – what was the question again?

This ever happen to any of you?

You know, the brain works much faster than we can speak. So how can we leverage this to our advantage?

Here are a few techniques that will give your brain enough time to catch up. And the truth is, about 99% of the time we actually know the answer to any given question. It's just that when we're put on the spot, we tend to freeze up, get tongue tied, and tense; stutter, get nervous and feel unsure of ourselves then stumble through a wordy, or lengthy explanation, not realizing if we answered their question or not.

To counteract this, when asked a question, do the following:

- Hold your ground – never retreat, or back up.
- Make direct eye contact with the person asking the question.
- Listen to the entire question – don't anticipate what it is you think they're asking you.
- Give a slow, methodical, vertical nod of your head – not that you are in agreement with them, but that you hear them and understand what it is they're asking you.
- Now, repeat their question *as a statement*, not a question. Or partially repeat it, using the last part of their question as a stepping stone to your answer.
- Prior to this, you can use a lead-in, an acknowledgment of your point of view about the question that validates it. Examples: good question, glad you brought that up, interesting that you ask that; and if not sure what they're asking, get clarity: so that I can understand correctly, what you're asking is, so I can be clear about what you're asking, so that I understand you correctly, to be sure we're on the same page, etc.
- Then answer concisely, simply, don't elaborate, or apologize, then move on the next question.
- If you get someone in a group that keeps asking question after question, finish your answer on another person in the group as far away from that person as possible, then continue your presentation, or ask for the next question.

The confidence you exude with this process will tell your audience that you are in control, in the driver's seat, and on the rare occasion you *don't* know the answer to a question, tell that person you will get the answer, and get back to them as soon as feasible. This should pacify even the most impatient of clients.

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Coach Hof - here to assist you with your presentation challenges.

I'm asked, often now, in this cyber world, what about remote presentations?

What do I do if it's a webinar, or teleseminar?

Or if I have to do a presentation sitting down in a conference room?

Or conduct an interview one-on-one with a prospect while sitting behind my desk?

I will tell you the same skills apply, whether standing or seated.