

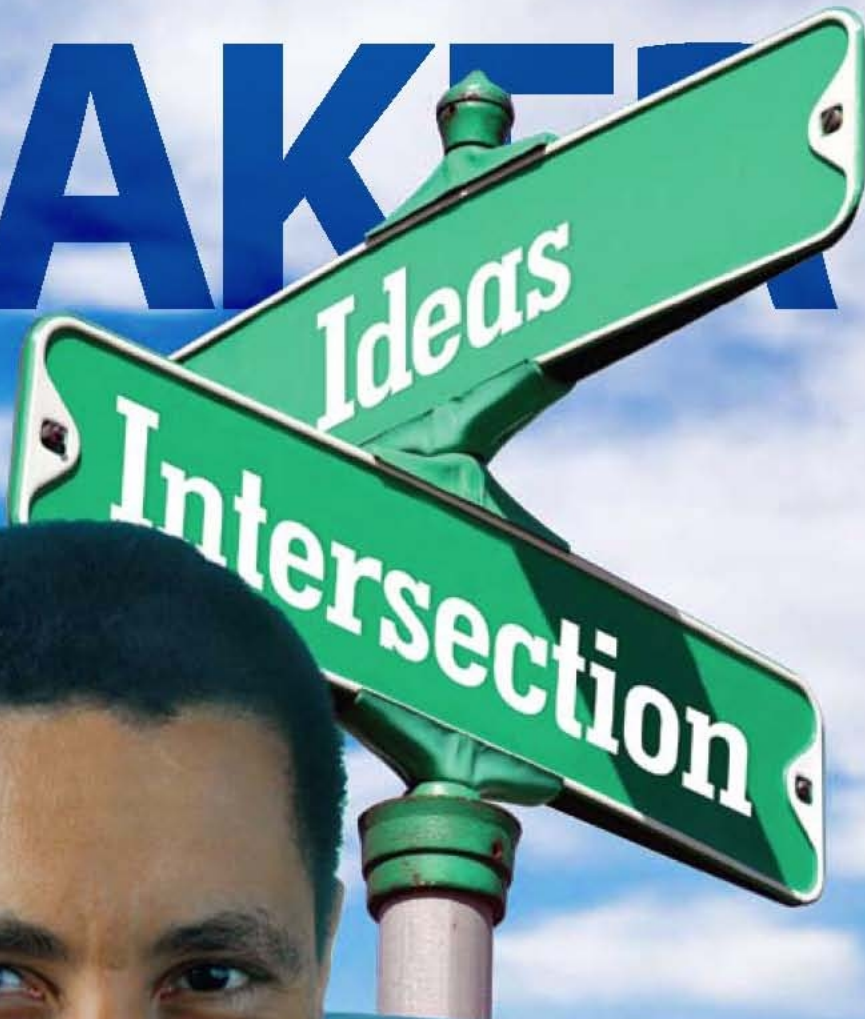
SPEAKER

PLUS:

How Did He Do That?
Magician shares
secrets for success

6 Ways to Create
Original Content

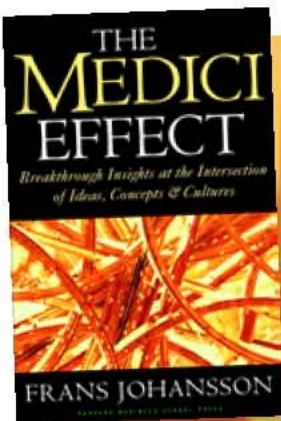
Pecha Kucha:
PowerPoint on
Steroids!



Spark Your
Imagination
Using the
Internet
PAGE xx

**FIND YOUR INTERSECTION:
Where Creativity and Innovation Meet**

SPEAKER



16 At the Intersection

Speakers can become more creative and innovative by adapting other disciplines to their presentations, according to best-selling author Frans Johansson.

By Stephanie R. Conner

FEATURES

20 Create, Don't Copy

Stuck in a rut? Create original content and become an in-demand resource by following some simple tips.

By Sam Horn

24 Destination: Imagination Station

Explore a fun way to spark your creativity using the Internet.

By Michael Benidt and Sheryl Kay

28 Work Magic into Your Presentations

A clown and magician shares valuable lessons for combining skills, experiences and creativity to become a one-of-a-kind presenter.

By Randall Munson, CSP, CCP, MS



16



COLUMNS

6 **Message from Editorial Advisory Board Chair**

8 **Reality Check**

Putting a fine point on the speaking industry

10 **It's Your Business**

Advice for enterprising speakers

11 **What Would You Do?**

Casting a reality check on real-world conundrums

14 **Relevant Resources**

Time-saving tools and technologies

32 **Beyond Borders**

Exploring culture, countries and comfort zones

33 **Turning Point**

A career-changing moment or experience

38 **Humor Me**

Quips, tips and parting shots

DEPARTMENTS

4 **News from Headquarters**

34 **Calendar of Events**

36 **Index of Advertisers**



WORK MAGIC INTO YOUR PRESENTATIONS

**WHAT A CLOWN AND MAGICIAN CAN TEACH YOU ABOUT
SPEAKER INNOVATION ON AND OFF THE PLATFORM**

By Randall Munson, CSP, CCP, MS

MY LIFE'S AMBITION WASN'T TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL SPEAKER; IT WAS TO BE A CLOWN. DON'T LAUGH. OH, WAIT, GO AHEAD AND LAUGH—CLOWNS THRIVE ON IT!

What can you learn from a magician? Nothing, according to my friends who insist, “A magician won’t tell you how anything is done.” But that’s not completely true.

A magician won’t share his secret for sawing a person in half, but he can teach you a lot about the magic of professional speaking. Success as a speaker comes from a magical combination of skills, experiences, education, training, creativity and tenacity that makes you a one-of-a-kind presenter.

My life’s ambition wasn’t to become a professional speaker; it was to be a clown. Don’t laugh. Oh, wait, go ahead and laugh—clowns thrive on it! My speaking career came *after* my stints as a professional clown, master magician, ventriloquist, corporate executive, adjunct professor, and a computer scientist who architected computers for IBM for two decades. I’ve learned the following valuable lessons along the way.

**LESSON 1:
ENJOY YOURSELF. IT SHOWS.**

After I performed a magic show for a mother-daughter banquet, my family members remarked how much it had improved. I didn’t understand their reaction because I did the same magical effects and used the same pattern many times before. “Yeah, but this time you

were having so much more fun,” they said.

What happened? I had relaxed my usual professional stage persona and enjoyed the show right along with my audience. Instead of just making them laugh, we laughed together.

Studying the style of comedic greats such as Carol Burnett, Johnny Carson and Red Skelton, I realized that part of what endeared them to their audiences is that they occasionally cracked up at their own jokes. I used to think their behavior was unprofessional when they broke character and started laughing. But now I realize that part of their success was sharing their joy with the audience. It was contagious.

**LESSON 2:
RELAX BEFORE YOUR
PRESENTATION.**

Allow your audience to see you enjoy what you do on the platform, and to join in the fun. I had the honor of meeting Red Skelton in his dressing room after one of his shows. Initially, I wanted to meet with him prior to his performance, but he was still taking a nap while his warm-up act was on stage—talk about relaxing before facing the audience! We laughed while



chatting about clowning and some of the great clown friends we shared. As Red chewed on his unlit cigar and peered at me over his reading glasses, we talked seriously about humor, the challenge of performing it well, our shared disdain for those who resort to foul language and off-color jokes, and being blessed by careers that allowed us to share our love of laughter with others.

**LESSON 3:
PEOPLE JUDGE QUALITY
BY PRICE.**

Buyers equate fees with a speaker’s worth. For years, I volunteered my clowning at children’s hospitals, nursing homes, parades and charity events. As my skills improved and my reputation spread, companies wanted to hire Circles the Clown for corporate events. When I stated my fee; however, they were shocked. They figured \$25



would be adequate for a guy who just slipped into a pajama costume, smeared some lipstick on his cheeks and waved at kids. “Besides, we only need you for 20 minutes,” they argued.

To justify my fee, I explained that it took me two hours to apply my makeup and get into my costume, and another hour to get cleaned up before I even left my house. Some of my custom props cost hundreds of dollars and took me hundreds of hours to design and build.

By sticking to my fee, they understood that it was not unreasonable. Even a clown needs to make a living. When clients paid me more, they treated me better, too.

As Circles the Clown, I was named the No. 1 whiteface clown in America, and was the highest-rated parade clown by the World Clown Association. I performed in the circus with Emmitt Kelly Jr., and at venues like Walt Disney World and The White House.

In the past decade, I have increased my fee by 50 percent—and my business increased both times. As a speaker, you must be comparable to other speakers who charge a higher fee. But once you have achieved that higher level, take a deep breath and ask for it—and then deliver what you promised.

LESSON 4: YOUR AUDIENCE IS YOUR TEACHER.

As a magician and a ventriloquist, I thought a large, white rabbit puppet would look great on stage and be a nice addition to my act. (Every magician needs to pull a rabbit out of his hat.) Unfortunately, my right hand would cramp up when I used it for any length of time. I also struggled to find a personality and voice that was befitting of this somewhat rigid-looking rabbit. Eventually, I gave up and decided to sell the puppet.

The market is small for an expensive handmade puppet. Luckily, I had an opportunity to sell it at an auction for entertainers. When the puppet was put up for bid, the auctioneer asked me to demonstrate it. So, I picked up the rabbit and started an impromptu conversation telling the rabbit that I was going to sell him. He whimpered, “You mean I can’t go home with you?” I tried to calm him by explaining he’d have a new home with his new owner.

To make the rabbit more likable, I made him appear sad and forlorn when he responded that he wanted to continue working with me and feared he’d never see me again. This interaction allowed the audience to see the puppet in action. Then, something unexpected happened: The audience sympathized with the sweet rabbit.

When the auctioneer started the bidding at \$300, no one bid. He tried \$200, but there were still no takers. He lowered the starting bid until it became

DON'T BE CONTENT WITH YOUR PROGRAM. THE BEST SPEAKERS ARE CONTINUOUSLY PERFECTING. AND THEY USE EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT.



clear that nobody was going to bid at all. No one wanted to take the rabbit away from his home.

I decided to keep the rabbit puppet and develop a voice and personality that instantly endeared it to everyone in the auditorium. I reshaped his ears to soften his appearance, and had a more informal costume designed for him. Based on the lesson I learned from my audience, the white rabbit has become one of my most popular ventriloquist figures. In fact, I've booked jobs from people who wanted to hire "Eddie Rabbit and that guy."

You also can improve your delivery by listening to your audience. When I performed in a parade, I designed a mechanical ghost to float behind me as my clown character ran down the parade route. I paid attention to crowd reactions, and tried many subtle variations in how I reacted to the ghost as it "scared" me. When I first began performing this act, I would see the

ghost and immediately run away. By the end of the long parade, I knew how I could refine my routine based on audience reactions.

In the improved act, I would see the ghost, do a double take, face the audience with a wide-eyed look of shock, jump into the air with my arms and legs spread eagle, pivot, and then run. These cartoon-like nuances elicited dramatically stronger audience response than my original routine. The audience's previous simple smiles were replaced with participatory yelps, boisterous belly laughs, and appreciative cheers. Their response told me what worked best.

So, what have I learned in my many years as a professional clown and magician? The real magic results from spending time practicing, rehearsing and changing your presentation. Don't be content with your program. The best speakers are continuously perfecting. And they use everything they've got.



Randall Munson, CSP, CCP, MS, conducts seminars and addresses groups in over 30 countries. His keynotes focus on innovation and humor.

Munson's business consulting practice concentrates on marketing and boosting sales. He has performed at MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Walt Disney World, and The White House. Munson also is the author or co-author of nine books, including one best-seller. Visit www.CreativelySpeaking.com.

YOUR WORDS ARE MAGIC

The image of a magician saying "abracadabra," and then pulling a rabbit out of an empty hat has profound meaning. The magic word, whether it is *abracadabra* or another of the magician's choosing, resonates with the audience because there is an instinctive understanding that words are powerful, creative forces. The same applies to professional speakers who give memorable presentations that impact their audiences.