

Interacting in Business

It's crucial to speak with authenticity

Charlotte Business Journal - August 3, 2007

by [Lou Solomon](#)

Most of us struggle all our lives for the credibility that comes from just being ourselves. We are beaten down by the constant streaming of messages. And we get stuck in an auto-pilot mode for survival.

But in auto-pilot, you can lose your authentic voice and style. Some signs of an inauthentic style:

- 1. The corporate slide show.** Don't despair if the marketing department sends you a boring PowerPoint presentation to use. You can take ownership by omitting redundant slides, adding your own colorful charts and photos, and altering slides that have too much text.
- 2. Slang/jargon.** Giving a jargon-laced talk excludes listeners. When everyone falls into the trap of thinking trendy phrases help communication, we are like parrots instead of communicators. Examples of phrases to avoid include: "at the end of the day," "human/social capital," "leverage," "organic" and "holistic."
- 3. The canned speech.** A memorized script sounds painfully artificial. The spoken word travels on sentences that are short and sturdy. Work with bullets, and use spontaneous energy in your talks.
- 4. Dull topic.** The dry subject has become a brainwash for speakers who become resigned to the idea that they have a boring subject. No matter what your topic, you can identify key messages, limit your material, use bright and bold graphics, tell stories and be yourself.
- 5. Brochure-speak.** People don't want you to talk like a mission statement. They are looking for stories and a glimpse of why they want to work for you.

In business, we are all inspired by that rarified moment when someone breaks through the noise and says something powerful in a brief, solutions-oriented way. A shift occurs, and everyone knows something authentic has happened. The person who does this has credibility and natural authority.

No one can teach you your own authenticity, because you already have it. Authentic speakers:

- Speak in a real, relaxed and conversational way.
- Share stories that involve listeners in an experience.
- Speak with passion and commitment.
- Speak from who they really are (with self-acceptance).
- Speak with a sincere intention to share value.

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