

## Mission Statement

How familiar is this scenario? Do you typically click on the PowerPoint icon immediately you are tasked with preparing a presentation? If that is the case then you definitely have common cause with most of us. And regrettably it is a big mistake. It's a mistake because our presentation focus is already upon the mechanics of slides, decks, visuals, clip-art, logos and templates. Such a focus will be needed -- but much later. For now the focus has to be on our expected achievement and outcome.

Before we click on the PowerPoint icon we should draft in a single sentence the planned achievement of our presentation. In today's business language we would recognize this as a mission statement. But unlike many vacuous mission statements the purpose of this one is to capture the planned impact of our presentation upon our audience. That is, how do we plan for our audience to respond? We should consider the following questions at this stage:

- After my presentation what will the audience do that is different?
- After the presentation what will they know that is different?
- Once they have heard the presentation what will they believe that is different?

Before we begin to physically lay the foundations of an effective presentation, let alone build its structure or prepare the PowerPoint slides we must have a firm grasp on the expected outcome of the presentation -- what it is that we are aiming to do. To be effective our presentation will have an impact upon our audience beyond that of a management report, an email or a document. Our direct face-to-face presentation aims to change the actual behaviour, thoughts and beliefs of an audience. That is why we do it.

If our successful presentation has to impact our audience in a way that simply reading its content would not achieve then our mission statement has to capture these planned expectations. So, taking an example from a recent manufacturing presentation in the South West, our mission statement was:

**"Ensure that the team understands the HR (Human Relations) impact of factory closure."**

What can we say about this? It meets the requirement for a single sentence. It is succinct and to the point. It is measurable -- we should be able to gauge the team's understanding of the HR consequences quite readily. It also sounds achievable within the context of a single presentation. And that should not be overlooked. We can not expect too much from only one presentation!

With the mission statement prepared, what's next?

Well, my advice would be to park the mission statement for an hour. Then try to recall it from memory. If you can do so readily then you have got something that is fully workable and from which we can hang the working objectives of a quality and effective presentation. And that is the second step.

