

## Workable Objectives

Building strong workable objectives is the second step in effective presentation planning. The emphasis is definitely on the word, workable. All our objectives have to be achievable by us, the speaker. And they have to be achieved in the time permitted with the audience's involvement. Once we factor in the external pressures of time and audience it is imperative that we have the means to deliver -- workable objectives give us the means.

Having good workable objectives is, therefore, an essential element of the effective presentation. Critically they fulfill 3 main purposes:

1. Workable objectives provide us with a framework for success -- giving us a quick embodiment of everything that we need to present.
2. Workable objectives stop us from rambling and going off message -- either when we plan, when we write or when we deliver our presentation.
3. Workable objectives get us to where we want to be getting -- serving as visible milestones of progress made and distance still to be covered.

But that is not all they do. Workable objectives have another overriding purpose in our presentation. Well outlined and understood objectives assist our audience to understand our presentation's logic flow. They ensure that our audience is more likely to follow the presentation and remain captivated by the subject -- whatever that subject might be. And that has to be the overriding reason why we invest time and effort in getting the right objectives.

In an earlier article we used a mission statement selected from a presentation given in the South West: "To ensure that the team understands the HR (Human Resources) consequences of factory closure." It was a dry old subject, but typical of many presentation missions made every day in the work-place. With this mission statement we could expect some workable objectives along the lines of:

- Set the scene for manufacturing optimization.
- Establish the productivity benchmarks for manufacturing progress.
- Assess the options available and their impacts.
- Describe and cost the HR (Human Resources) consequences.
- Detail the preferred route for factory closure.

Our target should be some four or five workable objectives that can be handled easily and smoothly in a business presentation. Any more objectives than this, however, and you run the risk of exhausting your audience. It is a mistake that is most often found with the PowerPoint presentation style -- where we are presented with multiple lists of objectives and issues at every stage. Too much detail at this early stage is not useful.

Our workable objectives should be short and sharp. And to the point.

They should stress action and focus on activity. Your choice of words is important, for they also convey important meaning for the audience. For the matter of the cardboard manufacturing plant we used the action words: set the scene, establish, assess, describe and detail. And they were probably appropriate for the circumstances. In a marketing presentation your workable objectives might include: research, develop, deliver, compete or gain share -- action words which are well understood by the audience work the best. There is no room for misunderstanding.

Finally, once you have committed to your workable objectives, consider how they fit with your mission statement. Ensure that the two are in tandem and assist one another, bearing in mind how they impact upon an audience's understanding and appreciation of our presentation. With the workable objectives settled, the next step is the planning of our presentation in more detail.

