

HPCG High-Performance Coaching Newsletter #6, Ralf Wolter



Dear Reader,

Dear R,

“You cannot learn new skills and look&feel good at the same time”

Here is a simple exercise, try it right now: take a sheet of paper and a pen, if you are writing right handed, sign with your left hand - and vice versa if you are left handed.

How did it feel? I bet, if you have done it for the first time, it feels strange and so looks the result, compared to signing with your 'default' hand. However, if you would practice 20 times per day for one week, your new signature would look much more real than it did in the first place. In addition, it would feel more natural. This is the power of practicing new skills!

The same applies to presentation skills. Learning and practicing a new way to communicate more effectively and present a message differently to demonstrate more confidence, does not feel so great in the beginning. Yet, the more you practice, the better it looks. Actually, I should rather say: the better it looks to your audience - because as human beings we are pretty bad at judging our own performance in front of a group. Especially, when we do not feel so great about it. How can we overcome this dilemma? Rehearsal is key to success!

First, rehearse your next talk and video record it with your Smartphone. By watching your recorded rehearsal, you can identify what works well and what needs to be changed. Next, rehearse in front of your colleagues or family members. Afterwards, combine the two approaches, feedback from both sources provides the most realistic feedback.

When watching your recording, what should you look for?

1. **Content:** audience centric - who is in your audience, what are they interested in, how can you best deliver your message?

2. **Style** - get your words and body language in sync:

- **Eyes:** connect with your audience instead of just glancing at people. You connect by speaking a full sentence to a person and look them in the eye.
- **Face:** let your face express your emotions: good news are worth a smile!
- **Pause:** pausing on stage is a real challenge, because adrenalin keeps us moving. Pause while walking and place a glass of water on your podium. Drinking is healthy and stops you from speaking.
- **Voice:** are you passionate about your subject? If not - change jobs. If yes: let people hear your passion through vocal inflection and emphasis plus variety in volume and rate.
- **Gestures:** your gestures should illustrate your words. One hand gestures are often more descriptive than two hand gestures. When not gesturing, relax both arms to the side.

- **Stance & movements:** stand with your weight balanced on both feet. After finishing a section in your talk, move to the other side of the stage. Make larger movements and always finish with a balanced stance.



How many times should you rehearse? "Practice makes permanent!" - the more you rehearse, the better you get. Consider the analogy of looking into a mirror, in the morning you check your look, before an important meeting you check again. The same applies to rehearsal - the more important the talk is, the more time you need to rehearse.

As always, if you want to move faster, find a coach and leapfrog.
If you want to hone your presentation skills, check out [PowerSpeaking](#).

Have a nice weekend! And if you need to work during the weekend, make sure that it is fulfilling.

Best regards,

Ralf Wolter

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<http://hpcg.eu>

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