



The Learning Espresso

unlocking
people potential

closing the gap between
knowing & doing

Introduction

How are you feeling as you gear up for 2009? Are you tired of all the bad news about the economy? Would you like to read something uplifting? The latest edition of the talkforce Learning Espresso could be just the pick-me-up you need with the timely theme of **Change, Challenge, and Coping Strategies**. I'll share with you our own challenges in dealing with change and the economic downturn - and the positive coping techniques we've implemented to get through these tough times. See if you can use the techniques too.

The talkforce team is looking forward to the much anticipated Inauguration speech of US President Barack Obama on January 20. Obama is one of the most inspiring and persuasive speakers in the world today. We have an inspiring, real-life client example of how you can use Obama's winning communication techniques to improve your presentations.

We have tips on Stress Management to help you handle the pressures of change and we wrap up with an article on how talkforce digital is helping clients with compliance and on-line induction - developing and delivering vital information to large numbers in a timely and effective way.

The talkforce team is bouncing into the new year refreshed, recharged and ready for 2009. Enjoy our Learning Espresso!

Christopher Whitnall

How to manage your stress in 2009

If the financial experts are right, we're all in for a 2009 with more financial pressures, more uncertainty and more stress.

Businesses are cutting costs and jobs, profits are sinking, and workplace worries are rising. If you've been taking work worries home with you and home worries to work - you're not alone.

But there's good news. We can't necessarily control the economy, but we can control our reactions and perceptions and reduce our stress levels. Here are a few tips to reduce your stress level.

1. Reframe things in a positive way
2. Reassess its importance
3. Reduce the likelihood of the nightmare scenario
4. Celebrate - acknowledge or remember the good
5. Breathe - use controlled breathing techniques to calm down or refocus
6. Remove yourself mentally or physically from the situation - take a recharging break
7. Seek support or advice from friends - take strength from others
8. Ask yourself the right questions
9. Confront the situation - don't ignore it

In our stress management sessions we explore these areas in detail with practical tips on reframing stressful situations (while not ignoring problems).

For example:

- Check if you have any assumptions about the situation that are not justified or out of date
- Reflect on past successes - how have you overcome problems before?
- Chunk problems down. Situations can seem overwhelming, but when you chunk them down and tackle a problem in manageable pieces it can seem less daunting
- Remind yourself what you *can* do - what you *can* control
- Nurture yourself - make sure you get enough sleep, exercise and a proper diet so you have the physical and mental energy to deal with stress

Clever business leaders understand workplace wellbeing and stress management are essential in times of economic uncertainty. Less stressed executives and workers make better decisions and are more productive. If you'd like to find out how we can help you manage your workplace stress please call us on 02 9844 2999 or email talkforce@talkforce.com.au.



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Inspire Foundation uses the power of Obama's speech techniques

By Tony Biancotti

Barack Obama's Inauguration in Washington on January 20 is expected to be the biggest Inauguration in history. The pressure is on for Obama to perform and talkforce will e-mail our clients our analysis of his speech – as we did with his Presidential Victory speech in November.

If you missed our analysis of his November speech, you can download it here... www.talkforce.com.au/obamaanalysis.pdf

After our November speech analysis, several clients wanted to know more about how they could apply Obama's techniques to improve their presentations. Even clients who were not fans of Obama's politics admired his communication skills. So here's how our "Obama overhaul" process works and how the Inspire Foundation successfully used the techniques in a real-life speech.

The Inspire Foundation (Inspire) works with young people to help prevent youth suicide and to improve young people's mental health and well being.

Inspire's Director of Development, Alexandra Lagelée assembled her key people for a talkforce workshop applying Barack Obama communication techniques.

"One workshop with Tony on Obama's speech techniques completely transformed the way we think and talk about Inspire's programs to potential funders. It really helped us make the leap from quite complex internal language to painting a picture for the audience that they could see, feel, and touch." **Alexandra Lagelée**

Language appealing to the senses

A vital part of the process was workshoping Inspire's language and turning jargon and industry speak into sensory language that would make the audience "feel" – taking technical terms and asking what does that feel like, look like, sound like and capturing it all on flipcharts.

CEO Kerry Graham later delivered an important speech using the new language and sensory expressions.

"This is particularly important for a not-for-profit organisation that needs to not only communicate complex issues to potential donors, but also motivate them to give and be part of the solution. We trialled it a few weeks after the workshop in a speech to 900 members of the financial services industry, and got a great response!" **Kerry Graham**

Painting pictures with words

Sensory visual language that paints a picture is far more moving and persuasive than abstract concepts and language. Obama uses words to create "mental movies",

"Some specific examples really brought home how much more powerful an image vs. a theoretical concept is! I still remember

the 'another for sale sign goes up in a family's front yard' vs. the 'property crisis deepens' – the second one goes straight over the top, while I can still see that for sale sign and imagine what it must mean for the family that is putting it up." **Alexandra Lagelée**



The Power of Repetition

Another part of the process was using the power of repetition – repeating key positive messages.

Obama also uses the power of the sound of words with devices such as alliteration – the repetition of word sounds.

"We are the ones we've been waiting for." – The repetition of the W sound makes it memorable and sound attractive to the ear.

Here is part of Kerry's memorable and moving speech. Note the sensory language that makes the audience feel, the power of repetition, and the sound of words.

For most young people, they experience, **spirals of stress**, and **days of doubt and darkness**.

For all, **we are there for them**.

We are there for the 16 year old who eats lunch in the library to avoid the jeers of his bullying classmates.

We are there for the 17-year-old who worries from watching her friend wither from bulimia.

We are there for the 19 year old who flails through the ups and downs of manic depression.

We are there for the 21-year-old who drowns his confused feelings in a sea of drugs and alcohol.

We are there for the 23-year-old who makes the choice to be here for one more day.

We are there for them. We need you to be there for them too.

Inspire Foundation uses the power of Obama's speech techniques *continued from page 2*

"We learned some amazingly simple and yet powerful techniques for communicating effectively with an audience, so that they will hear your message, remember it, and be inspired to take action."
Kerry Graham

If you'd like to find out more about Inspire's great work check out their website at www.inspire.org.au/

Barack Obama – Presidential Victory speech – Powerful communication techniques

Technique	Example
<p>Inclusive language Obama connects with his audience by making the speech not just about him, but about them</p>	<p><i>"But above all, I will never forget who this victory truly belongs to – it belongs to you... This is your victory.</i></p>
<p>Sensory Triggers Using words that trigger sense memories that make an audience feel his words. Words that appeal to senses – sight, hearing, feeling</p>	<p><i>...the not-so-young people who braved the bitter cold and scorching heat to knock on the doors of perfect strangers</i> <i>(you can feel the heat and cold, hear the knocking on doors, and sense the feeling of knocking)</i></p>
<p>Repetition – to hammer home positive messages</p>	<p><i>If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible...tonight is your answer.</i> <i>It's the answer told by lines that stretched around schools and churches in numbers this nation has never seen...</i> <i>It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican...</i> <i>It's the answer that led those who have been told for so long by so many to be cynical, and fearful...</i></p>
<p>Memorable messages – the sound of words e.g. alliteration</p>	<p><i>This victory alone is not the change we seek – it is only the chance for us to make that change.</i></p>
<p>Strong structure Obama projects strength through the strong repeated structures of his sentences. See how the sentences follow parallel structure.</p>	<p><i>To those who would tear this world down – we will defeat you.</i> <i>To those who seek peace and security – we support you</i></p>

If you would like help your organisation to maximise the power of your message please contact us at talkforce@talkforce.com.au or give us a call on 02 9844 2999.

Change, Challenge, and Coping Strategies for 2009: How we can get through the economic downturn

By Christopher Whitnall

If you're starting 2009 feeling the squeeze from the economic downturn, if you're facing uncomfortable challenge and change with your organisation, at talkforce we know what you're going through. As the boss of talkforce, I had a few sleepless nights towards the end of last year, but I'm feeling a lot more positive and confident now. I'm more positive – partly because I and the talkforce team are recharged after the Christmas break – and more importantly because of the "coping with change" strategies we've implemented. These are techniques you can apply too to ride out this rough patch.

talkforce is going through some of the greatest change we've ever experienced. Our change started off positively. In October 2008, one of our key people, Director David Borean was offered and accepted an exciting position as General Manager for dmg, Sydney. While we think this is a great move for both David and dmg, the truth is we miss him professionally and personally. We have to manage without his immense energy and enthusiasm in the office.

David's departure came at a time when business was slowing down. Due to financial pressures, some of our clients had to postpone work with us. Every morning, newspapers carried stories of large successful organisations (many of them our clients or clients of our clients) having to shed staff and cut costs. The mood was grim.

Fortunately, talkforce runs **Change Management** programs for organisations, so we have an opportunity to practice what we preach. Instead of physician heal thyself, it's facilitator facilitate thyself!

Here are some of our key coping strategies

Increase open, two-way communication

One of our key coping strategies is more regular communication. You have to keep people up to speed with open and honest communication. We have regular group updates with two-way information flow and 'check-ins' where people can openly express any concerns.

I also believe in communicating both in groups and with people individually. Face-to-face is better than just sending e-mails. Don't just *tell* people what's going on. Empower people to be part of the solution to challenges. Get their input and action.

Act decisively

It's vital to not make knee-jerk reactions – such as cutting cost without exploring the longer-term consequences. We've had to cut our spending too, but you don't want to push the panic button. It's better to assess a situation with a calm, cool head, explore the options and the short, medium, and long-term effects. When you have the information to decide, then you need to act decisively.

Change, Challenge and Coping Strategies for 2009

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Be responsive to clients' changing needs

We've also been communicating regularly and openly with our clients and responding to their needs that may have changed with the challenging economic circumstances. Most of our clients want to get the best results for their people and are still investing in "optimal learning experiences" - smaller groups, more individual attention and more time for activities and interaction.

Some other clients want and need our workshops, but have less money. We work with them to manage their budgetary restraints and come up with flexible solutions. Rather than our clients missing out on training altogether, we explore options of larger groups or shorter sessions (if the content permits).

We've also developed new modules based on our clients' new needs and requests. Leadership and Management workshops and coaching such as "**Leading and Managing through Tough Times**" are increasingly necessary. "**Effective Communication: How to Project Strength and Stability**" is also proving valuable for communicating internally and externally.

Use the "quieter time" positively

At talkforce we are making the most of the quieter time to catch up on important tasks we've been too busy to do throughout the year. We are running internal training workshops for facilitators and our support teams to develop our skills. We've also been using instruments such as LSI (Life Styles Inventory) to improve our awareness and performance as individuals and as a team.

I believe being pro-active rather than just reactive helps give people a sense of control. Positive activity and skill development keeps our team motivated and empowered and in a strong position to move ahead when business *does* pick up this year.

If we can help your leaders and managers get through the tough times, if we can improve your internal and external communication and boost your people's skills, call us for a chat. We know what you're going through! We can work together to find a way to get through the challenges of 2009.

Why digital compliance?

By Terence Priester

Compliance - most specifically policies, procedures and legislation - represents a specific aspect of some compliance programs, and in some cases a stand-alone element. talkforce digital builds and delivers compliance modules as well as assessments which give a clear determination of whether a participant does or does not comply. Examples of modules could be: OH&S, Dress Code, Facebook guidelines and EEO policies.

Compliance has become a more prominent element in setting workplace expectations, values and culture from the moment a new employee joins an organisation. However, providing all employees with timely, consistent and cost-effective compliance materials can be a major challenge.

When people join an organisation at different times across different sites, finding the appropriate time to bring them all together for compliance becomes a challenge. With several stakeholders running different elements of the compliance program, ensuring consistent access and review of policies and procedures becomes hard to achieve. talkforce digital provides the development and delivery mechanism to reach large numbers of team members in a timely and effective manner.

talkforce developed an online compliance program that allows one media company's new and existing employees to undergo their compliance process 'just in time' and on demand. This has resulted in greater efficiency and consistency across the compliance process. Additionally, online documents such as superannuation forms can be printed and completed from home. All of the media company's compliance requirements were met with the following online structure:

- **Welcome** page with proprietary video
- **Induction** page with general company and department information
- **Policies** page with policies and legislation
- **Forms** page with 12 downloadable company forms
- **Training Calendar** page with access to a dynamically generated schedule of upcoming training schedules

The successful implementation of this online compliance programme demonstrates talkforce's commitment to designing digital solutions that complement, not replace, the key face-to-face elements of compliance. By building consistent and efficient interactive modules which can be delivered anytime and anywhere, talkforce is able to effectively on-board new employees in a multitude of industries.

For more information on our digital offering please call us on 02 9844 2999.

Do you need to unlock your potential? We still have places available in our 2009 public programs. For more details and to register please go to www.talkforce.com.au/publicprograms

Media Skills	10 February
Facilitation	25/26 February 12/13 May
Presenting with Impact	3/4 March
Effective Email Writing	23 March
Effective Writing	6 April
Influencing without Authority	7 April

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