



**Deltic Training**

Book Review : ***How to speak so people really listen.***

By Paul McGee

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Potential buyers please note: the title of this book could be made clearer, as in this context how to *speak* means how to address a captive audience effectively, rather than engage in talking, negotiations, or general two-way communication. And even then we're looking at business type presentations, rather than after-dinner speeches and the like.

Once we go past this (somewhat ironic) lack of clarity with the title, and accept the book for what it is, in about 200 pages we have some very useful pointers, hints, tips and reminders for those finding themselves in front of others.

Starting with part 1 "The seven great sins of speaking", Paul McGee identifies many of the common mistakes made with presentations, though failure to focus on what is trying to be achieved by the presentation might have provided a useful eighth sin.

Part 2 ("Eight great ways to speak so people really listen") is full of useful suggestions, and - as with the rest of the book - the numerous speech bubbles provide the reader with points to ponder and quotes to remember.

If anything is missing from the book (though it is accepted that audience size may impact on this) it is that the potential of the audience themselves to engage with the presentation is largely overlooked. Stories can come from delegates and other participants, not just from the speaker. Likewise, the section in part 3 about humour could identify the wit and joking which invariably can come from others in a room, and which - when appropriately harnessed and controlled by the presenter - can make a big impact, and saves the presenter having to attempt introducing humour themselves.

The author rightly identifies the problems with slides and PowerPoint, but rather than leave it there, provides helpful tips on how they can be used to best effect.

There are a couple of niggles. In this globalised world, some cultural aspects of effective presentations would have been useful. And a few of the suggestions lack support: using phrases such as "It's been suggested..." or "Some say..." (both from p110) would benefit from being referenced, particularly when some might not agree what is being said based on own experience. Still, these are minor issues compared to the strengths of the book.

For those wishing to communicate with their boss/colleague, on a one to one basis, or in a variety of situations, this book is probably not for them. For those looking for active listening, or how to apply role-reversal techniques for meeting planning will be better served elsewhere. But even then, many of the nuggets based on experience within this book are well worth bearing in mind.

Clearly written from Paul's own experience as a presenter, this is an enjoyable read, and a good investment for anyone finding themselves in that same situation.

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