



# focalvocal

Welcome, Bienvenue and Herzlich Willkommen to

## VocalPoint

### FocalVocal's Free Monthly Newsletter

#### VocalPoint: **Issue 5: January 2007**

Welcome to the fifth issue of VocalPoint and happy new year!

The FocalVocal team and I are delighted that you are interested in receiving up to date news about FocalVocal and reading articles written by us about current issues within training today. If there are specific questions you have regarding your training needs or areas that you think are worthy of investigation, we would be happy to hear from you and see if we can help out by doing some research and writing an article.

In this month's issue of VocalPoint, apart from giving you details regarding what's on, what's new and what's coming up, Geoff Cotton, FocalVocal's presentation coach and will be writing about 'Presentations, Traps and Tricks™'. How to avoid the traps and improve the delivery of live presentations.'

However, in the meantime

#### **What's on?**

##### **In-house taster sessions**

FocalVocal is currently offering free of charge in-house taster sessions, a perfect opportunity for you to test drive FocalVocal's method of training and our skills. If interested please e-mail [monica@focalvocal.co.uk](mailto:monica@focalvocal.co.uk)

A recent two-hour taster session conducted at PKF (UK) LLP proved hugely successful and thought provoking dialogues regarding combating nerves by 'thinking in pictures' when presenting ensued.

*'PKF invited FocalVocal to deliver a taster session on Beginners Public Speaking. The attendees found it to be informative, developmental and fun. The presenter and actors struck the right tone from the very start and allowed the participants to contribute which helped maintain their focus. It was a thoroughly worthwhile session.'*

John Watkins Director of Training and Development PKF (UK) LLP  
Accountants & business advisers

##### **FocalVocal Taster Sessions 2007**

1. Beginners Public Speaking with Monica Lowenberg
2. Assertiveness with Helen McNeill
3. Managing Change with Chris Robinson

4. Giving and Receiving Feedback with Chris Robinson
5. Work/Life Balance Helen McNeill
6. Media Training with Gareth Rubin and Monica Lowenberg as from April 2007  
FocalVocal taster sessions are two hours and fifteen minutes in length, conducted at your premises by one trainer and two actors, one session can train up to 18 persons.

## **What's New?**

### **Corporate Entertainment**

'Raise the Spirit' a light-hearted look at the world of wine, led by wine expert (or so he thinks) Angus Tarte. The inflated and flawed ego of Mr Tarte visits wine growers, sommeliers and marketers from the new and old world regions.

If you would like an opportunity to see FocalVocal's Karen Bartholomew in this production, you are invited to attend a showcase evening on:

Wednesday 24th January 2007 8.00pm  
at the Concert Artistes' Association  
20 Bedford Street, London  
WC2E 9HP.

If interested please email [monica@focalvocal.co.uk](mailto:monica@focalvocal.co.uk)

### **What's coming up?**

- **New workshops for small groups**
- **Forum theatre**
- **Role-Players for assessment days and pilot days**
- **New website**
- **New brochure**
- **February VocalPoint with Gareth Rubin 'How to approach an interview'**

Gareth is one of FocalVocal's media trainers, he currently works as a journalist and actor. He has reported live from the scene of the London bombings, interviewed Tony Blair and been entirely unsuccessfully sued by Mohamed al Fayed. He now works in news for the Observer and writes about architecture for the Guardian and large-scale mergers and acquisitions for Financier Worldwide. He also trains journalists on an NCTJ course.  
break.

However, in the meantime Geoff has some tips about:

### **Presentations: Traps and Tricks™**

For many people in business, making presentations is the least enjoyable part of their job. Given a choice between that or a visit to the dentist, a large number would choose the drill...even though they are thoroughly professional and competent in every other aspect of their job.

As a presenter and presentation coach, I meet these people all the time in my talks and workshops. In the course of my work, I've noticed that there are many traps which we all fall into – myself included – when we are making a presentation in front of an audience.

I've been able to pass on some tricks – tricks of the trade – to help these people avoid the traps and become more confident and more competent in their presentations. Here are some of the most common traps I see:

### **Preparation**

It's very tempting to prepare our presentation in the way which suits us best: sitting down,

head over our notes, reading in our head or mumbling in a semi-comatose voice and stopping for every possible opportunity to take a break...phone calls, emails, colleagues, water cooler, anything...

The trick is to practise the presentation in **exactly** the way it's going to be given: head up, speaking out, against the clock, not stopping and preferably into a tape recorder.

When you play back the recording, you'll be horrified...but far better to be horrified at that stage, rather than in the real thing.

Of course, you'll feel self-conscious practising your presentation in front of a wall in your office or your home – but where would you rather feel self-conscious, there or in front of your audience?

## **PowerPoint**

PowerPoint is a fantastic piece of software and has revolutionised the way business presentations are made...especially if you remember Kodak Carousels and 35ml slides, or OHP's. But PowerPoint brings with it several traps, which I see people falling into all the time.

Firstly, they try to make PowerPoint give the whole presentation, and pour out everything on the screen...as a general rule, your slides should be designed on a 5/5 basis: maximum 5 words per bullet point, maximum 5 bullet points per slide. The bullet points should be a 'trigger' for you to raise your head, look at the audience and talk about that point.

If you've ever suffered 'death by PowerPoint', where the speaker spends all their time talking to the screen or their laptop, you'll know why I say this...

The second PowerPoint trap is easily avoided: most people change slides by using the arrow keys on their computer. But this means they are constantly returning to the keyboard and therefore 'tied' to the computer.

The trick is to spend £19-95 on a Targus Wireless Presenter ([www.shoptargus.com](http://www.shoptargus.com)). This is a 'remote' control for PowerPoint and works up to 45 feet away from the computer – thus freeing you from the 'captivity' of PowerPoint. It will move slides forward and back; in addition, it includes a laser pointer and a very useful 'black screen' button, so you can 'kill' the screen at appropriate times.

Using this Targus Wireless Presenter – and no, I don't have shares – you can move around as you make your presentation. In fact, if there's a section of your presentation where you'd like your audience to focus on the screen rather than you, you can even go to the back of the room and give that section of the presentation in 'voice-over' mode. This can be a particularly good idea if you're giving a long presentation...it gives the audience a break from you and, just as important, it gives you a break from the audience!

The Targus Wireless Presenter is 'Plug 'n' Play', which means there's no software you need to load before you use it; a team of presenters can pass one around from laptop to laptop, so you only need to buy one for several people.

There are many other traps and tricks which I talk about in my talks/workshops... they include nerves, voice, body language, hands, taking questions, holding the audience's attention and the all-too-common 'Er, Erm and Ah' trap...but that's for another time...

Geoff is a presenter, speaker and scriptwriter with extensive experience of conferences, live events and corporate videos. Since 1987 he has anchored and presented a wide variety of corporate events, working in the UK, Europe and North America.

*For more details regarding Geoff Cotton's 'Presentations: Traps and Tricks™' talks and workshops, contact [monica@focalvocal.co.uk](mailto:monica@focalvocal.co.uk)*

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*FocalVocal works with businesses in the private and public sector who wish to improve their communication and management skills. Businesses who*

- *know that a dynamic, interactive learning environment is the most successful in helping you to retain newly acquired skills and be confident to apply them*
- *are bored with courses where you get to sit, but don't actually get to do*
- *have found it to be a bonus to have trainers and actors who are native English speakers but are also bilingual in German and French*
- *like the challenge of working with professional actors to test out new skills in a fun, non-judgemental environment*
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*If you think the same, then get in touch with FocalVocal today!*

*Please feel free to forward VocalPoint to anybody you feel would find it of interest.*

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