

Verbal **V**isual **V**ocal

Instructor Manual

Items* Needed for the Seminar:

- Workbooks for all attendees
- PFCI membership brochures for all attendees
- Nametags and tent cards for all attendees
- Pens or pencils for all attendees
- AIFD Book of Floral Terminology
- The Words You Should Know – 1200 Essential Words Every Educated Person Should be able to Use and Define
- 50 slips of paper – each with a different word and definition
- 4 small cassette recorders with blank tapes and batteries
- Sample professional packet
- Sample speaker notebook
- Graduation certificate

* These items will be stored at SAF Headquarters and shipped to each program.

This program was written and developed exclusively for PFCI by David Shover, AAF, AIFD, PFCI (2002).

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SEMINAR OUTLINE

Synopsis: Speakers reach plateaus. They work hard to achieve a certain level and then – phhht – nothing. No place to go for inspiration or stimulation. Nowhere to go to learn more. **Until now.** Even the greatest speakers admit that when they want to improve a skill – they revisit the basics.

Section I **Getting to Know You**

Each participant tells their name, where they are from and then answers the question: If you weren't here today – what would you be doing that you're glad you don't have to do?

Section II **Present the Subject**

Verbal: What you say – the content – is 7% of the message

Vocal: How you say it – your voice – is 38% of the message

Visual: What the listener sees – your body, stance and enthusiasm – 55% of the message

Section III **Verbal Skills**

Part One: Vocabulary

The messages you deliver whenever you speak (the actual words and content) are the most important thing you communicate to an audience. They make you credible/believable.

Participation Exercise: Select a new word from the hat. Read and internalize the definition. Write a sentence using the word. In turn, each person stands and reads the word, definition and the sentence they wrote so entire group learns a group of new words.

Part Two: The Content

How you organize, edit and present the content is critical to having your message received and understood by an audience.

Participation Exercise: Think of an industry myth – some old wise tale that has been handed down in the flower business. Prepare a brief presentation of the subject.

Section IV **Using Your Voice**

The six aspects of voice: articulation, pitch, inflection, resonance, projection, rate of speech.

Group Participation Exercise: Break into 4 small groups. Each group has a small cassette tape player. Each member of the group tapes themselves (one right after the other) reading a provided paragraph.

Section V **Visual – Creating a Professional Image**

An audience is said to make an instant judgment about you as a speaker in 6 seconds or less. This impression is created by what a participant sees, including how you are dressed (attire) and your persona – how you conduct yourself, how you treat people.

Section VI **Marketing Yourself to Prospective Clients**

Create a professional packet about yourself to present to prospective show contacts.

Group Participation Exercise: Get together in small groups and create lists of marketing ideas, professional image ideas and branding ideas. After 15 minutes have a designated person report for the group.

Section VII **The Paper Chase**

Staying organized, creating research information files, paperwork checklist.

Wrap Up **Course Summary**

The Ten Most Common Problems for a Communicator

Group Participation Exercise: Everyone set a goal of one thing (from the above list) that you plan to work on in the next 3 months. Write it in your notebook.

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Section I: Getting to Know You

Ask each attendee to...

Stand and tell everyone what their name is, where they are from and the answer to the following question:

If you weren't here today, what would you be doing that you're glad you don't have to do?

Section II: Present the Subject

A very famous researcher, Professor Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D. of UCLA, conducted a study in which he assessed a numerical value to how people receive communication – or what verbal, vocal and visual influences help communicate a given message. This was a groundbreaking concept in its time as no one had successfully analyzed the communication process in quite the way he did. The study resulted in these often-quoted statistics:

Verbal: What you say (the content) is 7% of the message

Vocal: How you say it (your voice) is 38% of the message

Visual: What the listener sees (your body, stance and enthusiasm) is 55% of the message

Section III: Verbal Skills

Part One: Vocabulary

The messages you deliver whenever you speak (the actual words and content) are the most important details you communicate to an audience. They make you credible and believable.

Words are the start. How do you build your vocabulary?

- AIFD Book of Floral Terminology: floral terms with easy to repeat definitions
Visit www.aifd.org or call (410) 752-3318

Show the book to the attendees and give a few examples of the terms found in the book.

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- Webster's Word of the Day: general vocabulary
Visit www.merriam-webster.com/service/subinst.htm

Subscribing to the Word of the Day e-mail list is free. Each day you'll receive a different word, along with an example sentence demonstrating how the word is commonly used, plus a "Did You Know?" paragraph that includes interesting facts about the word's history or usage.

- Book Reference: "The Words You Should Know – 1200 Essential Words Every Educated Person Should be able to Use and Define" by David Olsen
ISBN # 1-55850-018-9

Show the book to the attendees and give a few examples of the words found in the book.

Participation Exercise

Have everyone select a word from the hat, read and internalize the definition, and then write a sentence using the word. Once the sentences are written, ask each person to stand and read his or her word, definition and sentence so the entire class will learn a group of new words.

Part Two: The Content

How you organize, edit and present the content of your presentation is critical to your message being received and understood by an audience.

Follow these simple steps when developing a presentation:

1. **Think through the message.**
 - What is your point of view on the subject?
 - Do you have enough information to form a solid opinion? (Most words are based more on opinion than fact.)
2. **Check the accuracy of your information.**
 - Substantiate sources and do your own research. You might be surprised at what you discover!

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3. **Build your case.**

- Brainstorm ideas.
- Write a list of benefits and cite personal experiences with the subject.

4. **Edit your content.**

- Present it in a logical order.
- If you present too much information you will lose your audience.
- It's better to edit down a lengthy explanation (or better yet, provide more detail in a written handout) than to lose 90% of the crowd because you are too technical.
- Say enough to get people thinking. (Most people think that someone giving a technical talk is just trying to show off his or her intelligence.)
- **Practical application:** Develop and internalize one-line definitions of the principles and elements of design. These are great tools to have when you are commentating.

5. **Do a gut check.**

- Make sure that you believe in your content and are committed to being a crusader for the cause. If you're not, find a subject about which you can be passionate.

Participation Exercise

Ask each person to think of an industry myth – an old wife's tale that has been handed down in the flower business. They should then follow the six steps we just covered to prepare a brief 1-1.5 minute presentation of the subject.

Sample Ideas:

Vodka makes flowers last longer.

Put pennies in the water to make tulips last longer.

Pound a woody stem to smithereens so it takes up more water.

Add aspirin to the water to make flowers last longer.

Try to analyze or reason the following:

- Where did this myth come from?
- What factors contribute to the myth's perpetuation?
- What can be done to dispel the myth?
- Is it really a myth or is there a measure of truth to it?

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Content Summary:

- Think it through
- Check the facts
- Build your case
- Edit your content
- Check your gut

Section IV: Using Your Voice

The six aspects of voice

1. **Articulation** – the way you shape your words by using your tongue, teeth, lips and soft palette.
 - A speaker can make his or her voice sound sloppy by not pronouncing certain sounds, especially “th,” “ing” and “s.”
 - Articulation will improve when the rate of speech slows down and the speaker concentrates on pronouncing the words.
 - Proper articulation basically means dotting your i’s and crossing your t’s.
2. **Pitch** – the natural highs and lows in your voice.
 - Relaxation is important to maintaining your pitch at a normal level.
 - Singing low notes will help lower your pitch permanently.
 - Nervousness causes the pitch of your voice to become higher.
3. **Inflection** – Webster's dictionary defines inflection as a change in the tone of voice.
 - You can ask for approval while speaking with a rise at the end of your sentences.
 - Making the end of your sentence goes down is a sign of strength and assertion.
 - Middle inflection is a monotone voice – this is boring to the audience.
4. **Resonance** – the way the sound bounces around in your throat, mouth and nasal cavities.
 - An artificial means of adding resonance to a voice is to use a good sound system and increase the bass control.

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- Two extreme resonance sounds are:

Nasalizing: when too much air is forced through the nose while pronouncing words especially vowels. The only sounds that should be drawn through the nose are “m,” “n” and “ng.”

Denasality: when not enough air is drawn through the nose. This creates a very flat, stuffy sound.

5. **Projection** – the natural volume of your voice is based on several factors:

- Background noise (ambient noise) in the room.
- Distance between you and your audience.
- Quality of your sound system and the acoustics of the room.
- Your subject matter at hand.
- To increase your projection, speak from the diaphragm, not the chest (just as you would when singing). Many speakers get nervous and start breathing very shallow from the chest.
- Always test the microphone system. Make sure that it enhances your voice and that you can be heard properly.

6. **Rate of speech** – the speed at which you deliver your presentation. The duration of each sound and the number of pauses are combined create your rate of speech.

- Conversation and platform speech are not the same.
- Animated speakers speak 200-250 words per minute.
- Your goal for a group presentation should be 120-150 words per minute.

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Section V: Visual – Creating a Professional Image

An audience is said to make an instant judgment about a speaker in 6 seconds or less. This impression is created by what a participant sees, including:

- How you are dressed (attire)
- How you conduct yourself, how you treat people (persona)

Attire

- Creative people dress more creatively.
- Always err on the side of conservative dress.
- Make sure your attire is “situation appropriate.” (Be careful of costumes!)
- Pay careful attention to accessories (this is one area where most floral-designers-turned-speakers seem to err).

Persona

Facial Expressions: Your face tells an audience a lot – it communicates how you are feeling, your comfort level and your ease. Watching your audience members’ facial expressions and body language can tell you everything you need to know.

- Eye expressions (raised eye brows, deep concentration) express interest, surprise or shock.
- A nod of the head can say “I understand and agree.”
- A smile is sign of confidence and security.

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Eye Contact: Through eye contact you will develop a personal relationship with your audience. It's very important to be sincere.

- Make sure you look at each individual for 4-5 seconds.
- Gain strength and encouragement for your message from enthusiastic audience members.
- Your audience will tell you when they do not understand, when they need to take a break or when it's time to stop.

Body: Are you in control of your person?

- Posture is important. Be careful not to slouch! Use a trio of mirrors to check your posture.
- Movement during your presentation adds energy to your presentation.
- Purposeful movement relaxes you, teaches you to pause and breathe, and allows you to feel natural.
- Be cautious of movement that has no purpose – like swaying or rocking. These movements can make you appear nervous or unsure.

Section VI: Marketing Yourself to Prospective Clients

Create a professional packet about yourself to present to prospective show contacts. Include the following:

- A letter of introduction
- A one page biography/synopsis of your career
- An outline of your preferred types of shows or special abilities
- A photo or digital print of a photo (head and shoulders shot)
- Industry references

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Other Marketing Ideas:

- Produce a short videotape of your presentation (not longer than 5 minutes) to send to prospects.
- Invest in having a Rolodex card made with your contact information.
- Be sure to have your e-mail address printed on everything you send out.
- Create your own Web site and put your brochure online.
- Brand your work. Choose a color harmony for your stationary and/or Web presence. Use something distinctive and classy, be careful not to go over the top. Create a logo for your speaking business.
- Beware of blanketing the industry with propaganda about yourself. Instead, make a personal phone call to show contacts, and then ask permission to send them an information packet for their files.
- Keep in touch with contacts periodically through out the year to keep yourself top of mind.

Group Participation Exercise

Ask attendees to gather into in small groups and create lists of marketing ideas, professional image ideas and branding ideas. After 15 minutes, ask each group to designate one person to present their ideas to the entire class.

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Section VII: The Paper Chase

Stay Organized

- Keep an organized notebook that lists all of your upcoming and past floral events. Create tabs in the notebook for each event.

Review the sample notebook.

- Keep your calendar up to date at all times!
- Create an Event Information Sheet – a form to complete when you are contracted or confirmed for a job. Be sure to include all contact names and information, as well as your speaking fee.
- If the client does not supply a written contract, you should create one and submit it to the client.

Creating research information files

- Background information for all events
- Clippings from magazines and newspapers
- Outlines/illustrations of your events
- Copies of every program handout you create

Paperwork checklist (from the initial contact to the follow-up thank you notes)

- Introductory letter
- Bio and floral history
- Event information sheet
- Program outline and research information
- Introduction bio for the MC of the event

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- Copies of airline tickets, hotel confirmation numbers, etc.
- Invoice for your client
- Thank you notes to all the individuals that helped you during your job

Wrap Up - Course Summary

Ten Most Common Problems for a Communicator

- Lack of rapport with the audience
- Stiffness of body parts
- Presentation material too technical
- Speaker's insecurity/fear is showing
- Poor eye contact/facial expressions
- Lack of humor
- Rambling (unorganized) content
- No silence (pauses)
- Speaker lacks performance energy
- Boring language/subject

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Group Participation Exercise

Ask the attendees to set a goal of one thing (from the above list) that they plan to work on in the next 3 months and write it in their notebooks. After 5 minutes, ask for a few volunteers to share what they plan on working on and have them quickly explain how they plan on accomplishing it.

Instructor Summary/Wrap Up of Seminar:

“I have enjoyed being with you today to share some ideas about speaking and presentation.

In order to graduate, I’d like each person to stand and quickly tell everyone the most important thing you learned here today.

We have a special gift for each of you.

End with a PFCI Commercial:

“PFCI (Professional Floral Communicators – International) is an organization of speakers who are dedicated to raising the level of professional speaking in the floral industry. The membership process involves filling out an application and submitting a 30 minute tape of a live floral program you have presented. You have a PFCI membership at your seat. Please feel free to ask me any questions you might have, or you can also call the SAF Headquarters for more information on PFCI.”

Remind them about the Evaluation Sheet:

Ask the attendees to please take a moment to fill out the evaluation sheet in the back of their workbooks and return it to you as they leave.

“Your comments will help us improve and develop future seminars for PFCI.”

“Thank you for sharing your day with PFCI and especially with me.”

Collect all props and evaluations. Send everything back to Jenny Stromann at SAF Headquarters.