PRESENTATION EXCELLENCE

What is an excellent presentation? Some would say "One that wins over the audience," but there are very poor presentations where an audience is won over and excellent presentations where the audience is lost. Excellence could also be defined as the speaker(s) delivering their lines precisely as planned and rehearsed, however this is just mechanics and not excellence. A third definition could be "knock your socks off" graphics and visuals, but they are just tools for achieving excellence.

❖ The first step for creating an excellent presentation is setting forth a theme in such a way that it is believed and remembered by the audience during the interval between the presentation and decision-making. Audiences typically have short attention spans; most will not remember the details of your presentation, but will remember the points that have impact and are repeated throughout the presentation. So, the goal in planning an excellent presentation should be to develop three themes that are the most convincing reasons the audience should be persuaded by our presentation. These themes should address the audiences' main issues and be quantifiable. Developing the themes is the first step in an excellent presentation.

❖ The second step is to structure the presentation so that the themes are constantly reinforced. Knock your socks off graphics, examples of previous projects, proposed solutions for the issues, and the specific words all need to be crafted to relate to the themes. Any part of the presentation that does not relate to the themes should be a candidate for removal. Why consume valuable time with material that will not have an influence on the decision process, unless it is a requirement of the audience.

❖ The third step leading to an excellent presentation is to select speakers who are relevant to the themes, convince them of the importance of the themes and rehearse them so that they deliver the message effectively. Avoid cramming as many subjects as possible into the allotted time.