

## **Effective Presentations: How to Develop and Deliver a Farmer-Friendly Talk Webinar by Seth Wilner, September 10, 2013.**

### **Ideas from the audience in answer to questions posed by Seth Wilner:**

**Think about one of the best presentations for farmers you've been to or conducted. Write what you think made it effective.**

- Hear from farmers who can use words other farmers can relate to
- Hands on group demos
- Making presentations participative
- The presenter was able to provide a framework of understanding that was useful and relevant to the audience
- Clearly communicated and involved the audience
- Stories, anecdotes, humorous
- Anyone who links their findings with a farmer's bottom line has their attention
- Pictures!
- Interactive, humor, personal
- Humor, connection with local issues
- Involved a variety of experts in telling the story
- Good props and visuals
- Enthusiasm
- Photos, photos, photos in social media
- Creating opportunities for farmers to exchange information with each other
- Hands on exercises and discussion circles based on the presentations of the day
- Speakers that engaged the audience through ice breakers or the link, and lead to sharing that promoted peer to peer education
- Knowledgeable presenter. Real world experience about using the practice on a farm
- Dynamism
- Farmer to farmer

**Think about one of the worst presentations for farmers you've been to or conducted. Write what you think made it ineffective.**

- The instructor spoke more about herself than the subject
- Speaking to the wrong audience
- Too big of a group, not everyone could hear the speaker
- Not being prepared for the event
- Language barriers

- No interaction, just a monologue
- Top-down presentations with unasked for advice
- Presenter didn't make an attempt to connect with the audience
- Information from presenters was data, not practical info
- Boring, information not relevant to me. Monotone and presenter read information and did not have eye contact.
- Examples were overly simplistic; not realistic enough for producers to relate to
- Biased position
- Forcing the audience to listen to a dumb song
- Too technical for the audience
- Telling bad jokes
- Person talked and had no sense of direction
- Complicated graphics with small legends
- Can't hear the speaker, talking above crowd's knowledge level, monotone voice
- Too esoteric, differing vocabularies, unrealistic to a farmer's perspective
- Not having enough time to get across a concept
- Too many animations in the PowerPoint
- Too much jargon
- Being talked "at", condescending manner
- Lack of thorough knowledge of the subject
- Trying to fit too much into a presentation and reading from slides
- Straight PowerPoint, no discussion
- Ivory tower speakers
- Too long and not on point
- Text-filled PowerPoints
- Scientifically dense language
- Lack of interaction with the audience
- One speaker vs. multi, monotone delivery
- Too much information
- Livestock enterprise budget workshop where the person sped through an Excel spreadsheet that he built in advance of the workshop
- Lecture format, not understanding what info the audience was truly seeking, unpopular topics

**Describe times you have facilitated learning instead of telling information.**

- Open circle format that the farmer felt close to the presenter and could ask when questions arose
- Practice in advance, not too much text on slides, repeat the major concepts. Writing articles in basic language that anyone can understand.
- Sometimes I have learners share in small groups how the information affects their business
- Do a demonstration

- Research the answers to questions
- Practiced with a variety of audiences including kids to get feedback
- Soybean weed control demonstration: soybeans planted at different seeding rates showed how effective this could be as a weed control measure
- Good demonstration plots that show the message that is being talked about
- Facilitated farmers sharing challenges in small groups with other members offering feedback and ideas
- Set up stations at a field day or in a classroom and have the participants go through them
- Did a dance showing where plant nutrients are going
- At a legume N-fixation presentation I gave in Africa, we asked farmers to each share one way they might try to integrate legumes in the coming season, or get more out of the legumes they were growing.
- Poultry 101 course in which we dissected a chicken
- Branding workshop wherein participants chose a commonly known product and described and/or drew its brand personality

**How would you incorporate John Medina's brain rules into your work as a farmer educator? (From book Brain Rules by John Medina) For example: We don't pay attention to boring things, Repeat to remember, Remember to repeat, Vision trumps all other senses, We are powerful and natural explorers**

- Give workshops in a series instead of stand alone
- I like to bring in farmers to start the program, giving their perspectives. It sets the tone for the meeting (hopefully a positive one)
- Be concise: tell what they need to know
- Field Demonstrations: I'd have them help with plantings and recording info and have a blog for them to ask questions
- Diversity trainings
- Focus on the parts of the problem they can affect and control
- Connecting on a personal level—find common values
- Showing people a particular site up close and personal
- Using examples that people could relate to or connect to
- Provide opportunities for hands on exploring
- Was able to offer a series of open ended questions on a topic that allowed participants to explore the topic
- Ask the audience the question before you provide the answer. Allow them the opportunity to provide their experiences and a better discussion comes.
- Have an organized agenda to show the points for the talk and remember to start and close with it
- Use the first 5 minutes to tell what the presentation is about and the last to conclude
- Needs to be interactive

- Breakout groups for peer to peer understanding
- Talk 10 minutes, do 10 minutes
- Passing around physical examples
- 10 minute chunks
- More pictures in the slide show, more audience participation
- Important to keep presentations short and visually interesting on farm tours
- Make lots of visuals
- Draw pictorial meanings of your message
- Hands on, you actually do the work
- Pictures or comics
- Give the group a short assignment—outline (verbal, written or picture—their choice), a standard operating procedure for own farm that incorporates the new concepts
- Discussion and hands on activities
- Visual aids, link information to farmer profit
- Introducing something they can relate to
- Question what is already regarded as true
- Good pictures, colorful and high quality pictures
- Repetition by different means
- Have students draw diagrams so that they can get a visual AND are active
- More photos if the workshop can't take place outdoors
- Hands on training sessions, such as a workshop on recordkeeping
- Understanding my audience; adjusting my expectations of my audience and myself, interaction between me and audience

#### **How do you think emotion impacts peoples' learning?**

- It's critical to learning
- If they feel comfortable, they are going to be willing to share their ideas
- Emotions are part of being human and the chemicals in the body that affect the brain can be a rush of reactions
- I know that when I'm stressed or anxious, my ability to focus, concentrate, etc. is significantly impacted.
- Engaging emotion can make people care about what's being presented
- A safe learning environment helps the learner to focus and be engaged
- Can enhance if excited, can detract if put off
- Negative emotions (fear, anger) inhibit learning
- Makes them open to learning or unwilling to try to learn
- Can prevent people from being open minded
- When people feel defensive, they stop listening to others
- It closes a door if they are uncomfortable

- Enthusiasm for a topic can help people be open to learning more. Fear of a topic (such as math) causes them to shut down
- It triggers memory, but is also distracting
- If they feel attached, I think they resist/reject info
- If they feel respected/welcome, they tend to be more open to new info
- Huge—impacts how safe people feel to learn, how comfortable they are to share and ask questions, how collegial they are to others in the audience

**What assumptions did you have about participating in this webinar in the days leading up to it?**

- The online interface would make it difficult to glean real information that could help me; that the topics wouldn't address the "touch issues of slow-adopting farmers"
- I thought I'd be a fish out of water, since I don't teach ag agents. This has been a very pleasant surprise!
- Was hoping for more specific tips on working with the grower clientele
- Not many, truthfully. I try to keep an open mind
- I assumed I probably already knew the content in another form (erroneously)
- I expected more practical applications
- Excited I was going to learn something new and I would use
- I hoped the information would be relevant to me as an ag educator
- That it would focus primarily on farmer learning—specific concepts relating to farmers
- Wasn't sure if time spent would reap a "payoff"
- Will learn good content, will be addressed to farmers (can't wait to read Dr. Bell's paper)
- In addition to presentation tips, I thought this talk might help presenters relate to farmers more
- That it would be useful for my job, thinking generally about upcoming presentations
- It was my first webinar. I thought it might be boring (but it wasn't)
- I expected lots of conversation about adult learning
- That it might focus too much on principles and not provide specific examples
- Knew this session would have useful information: thought there would be some tools and tips I could use for future efforts