

Business communications coach Carmine Gallo's latest book, "Fire Them Up: 7 Simple Secrets to Inspire Your Colleagues, Customers, and Clients," details strategies employed by business leaders that readers can use to motivate their own audiences. An edited excerpt of the chapter dedicated to Steve Jobs's announcement of the iPhone follows.

CHAPTER 11

WOW 'EM LIKE STEVE JOBS

Fire Starter: Steve Jobs

Role: Captivating Pitchman

Opportunity: Inspire employees, customers, and investors in new product presentations

Comparing a Steve Jobs presentation to most presentations is nearly impossible—he's in a league all his own. It would be like comparing a silent movie to *Independence Day*. Where do you start? In my opinion, Apple chief executive Steve Jobs is the most charismatic pitchman in business today. His presentations are brilliant demonstrations of visual storytelling that motivate customers, employees, investors, and the entire computer industry.

The Apple Web site streams his keynotes, which can be used as learning tools. After you read this chapter, visit the Apple site, select "Quicktime" and "Apple Events," and watch a presentation for yourself. You will find that Jobs has mastered all of techniques practiced by the world's most inspiring business leaders.

In January 2007 Jobs gave perhaps his greatest presentation to introduce the new iPhone. As I expected, the content of his speech met the qualities shared by inspiring leaders. Here are a few ways Jobs wowed the audience.

Simple Secret: Ignite Your Enthusiasm

Steve Jobs is passionate about designing cool, fun, and easy-to-use computers, digital music players, and now phones. And he's not too bashful to admit it. His words and phrases reflect his enthusiasm. These quotes are from the iPhone launch and from previous presentations:

“We're going to make some history together today...”

“Today we're introducing revolutionary products...”

“We've got amazing stuff to show you this morning...”

“This is an awesome computer...”

“This is an incredible way to have fun...”

“This is the coolest thing we've done with video...”

“We are so excited about this. It's incredible...”

Many of my clients will acknowledge that Jobs is exciting to hear, and most of them consider him to be a role model for their own presentations.

Rarely, however, do these same speakers take the opportunity to express their excitement about a particular product, feature, or service. Most people might be passionate about their story, but when asked to deliver that message in front of others, they fall into presentation mode: serious, glum, stiff, and formal. It's an old speaking style that will leave your listeners uninspired. If you honestly believe that something is “amazing,” go ahead and say it. As listeners, we are giving you permission to be excited and passionate and to have fun!

Simple Secret: Navigate the Way

Jobs has always been able to craft a vision so vivid and powerful, he rallies his listeners to the better future he sees and, in so doing, persuades them to go along for the ride. In a famous story, Jobs was attempting to lure then Pepsi-CEO John Sculley to lead Apple. Sculley was reluctant. Jobs turned to him and said, “Do you want to sell sugar water all of your life or do you want to change the world?” Jobs's vision is to change the world, and we believe him.

“This is a day I've been looking forward to for two and a half years,” Jobs said during the iPhone launch. “Every once in a while, a revolutionary

product comes along that changes everything. One would be fortunate to work on just one of these in your career. Apple has been very fortunate to introduce a few of these in the world.” At this point in the presentation, Jobs reminds his audience about Apple’s previous products that have changed entire industries, like the Macintosh in 1984 and the iPod in 2001. This gives listeners permission to believe in the vision he is about to describe: “Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone!” To reinvent the phone. This mantra, or declaration, is simple, bold, and reflects a concise core purpose that is easy for listeners to remember and to rally around. Note that the one-liner—Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone—is also under ten words.

Simple Secret: Sell the Benefit

Once Jobs reveals his one-liner—his core vision— he immediately launches into a discussion of why the world needs a new phone. A solution is inspiring only when it cures a real-world pain. Jobs sells the benefit of the phone by first describing the current state of the industry. The problem, he says, “is they [smart phones like the BlackBerry or Palm Treo] are not that smart and they are not that easy to use....we want to make a leapfrog product that is way smarter than any mobile device has ever been and super easy to use. That is what iPhone is.” Jobs continues to describe the problem on most smart phones as being the keyboard—an issue BlackBerry users are familiar with. According to Jobs, keyboards represent a problem because they take up more than one-third of the phone and are permanent, whether the person is using them or not. The Apple solution is to create a “revolutionary interface” that will get rid of the buttons and create one giant screen. This brings up the problem—how do you get around the screen with no scroll wheel or stylus? Again, Jobs sets up a problem and offers a solution: “We’re going to use the best pointing device in the world,” he says. “A device we’re all born with. Our fingers.” Jobs then describes Apple’s new “multi-touch” technology that accurately responds to the touch of a finger to bring up applications on the phone.

To recap, Jobs sells the benefits of the iPhone in three steps:

1. Review the state of the industry.
2. Describe limitations of existing products.
3. Explain how Apple has found solutions for these problems

Where most speakers describe the solution before the problem, Jobs flips it around. It makes the story more interesting and easier for the listener to follow.

Simple Secret: Paint a Picture

Jobs tells the iPhone story by using several techniques:

1. *Stick to the rule of three.* We remember lists in groups of three. Jobs unveils the iPhone and builds drama at the same time by saying, “Today we are introducing *three* revolutionary products [an image of each product appears on the screen as he mentions each one]. “The first is a wide-screen iPod with touch controls, the second is a revolutionary mobile phone, and the third is a breakthrough Internet communications device.” For added emphasis and drama, he repeats the three products and he repeats them three times: “An iPod, a phone, an Internet communicator....Are you getting it?” Jobs says. He then delivers the knockout: “These are not three separate devices. This is one device! Today Apple is going to reinvent the phone!” The dramatic buildup takes several minutes and is met with enthusiastic cheers. It is incredible to watch. Jobs conducts a presentation like a symphony, with ebbs and flows, buildups and climaxes. It leaves his listeners wildly excited.
2. *Tell personal stories.* During one section of the presentation, Jobs’s clicker to advance the slides suddenly stops working. He mentions it with a smile, knowing that somebody backstage will take care of it. Jobs kills time by telling a personal story about how he and Apple cofounder Steve Wozniak had built a TV jammer and used it to block TV signals at Wozniak’s college dorm. Jobs had turned a minor glitch into an opportunity to make an emotional connection with his audience. Personal stories or anecdotes show us his human side. The audience laughed, smiled, and was kept amused as technicians repaired the glitch. Jobs continues as if it had all been planned. Effortless but powerful.
3. *Keep it visual.* In a Steve Jobs presentation, you will not find bullet points on any slide; not one. You will not see slides filled with mind-numbing data, numbers, or words. The slides are highly visual. A photograph or image is all he

needs. When Jobs outlined the three products—an iPod, a phone, an Internet communicator—a slide with an image of each product appeared as he mentioned each one: one slide, one product (an iPod, a phone, and a computer). It struck a perfect balance between the visual and the verbal. The simplicity of the slides kept the audience focused on the speaker: Steve Jobs. When he discussed the “ultimate pointing device”—your fingers—all the audience saw on the screen behind Jobs was an image of the iPhone and a finger touching it. Every slide was big on images and low on text. Images are memorable and, more important, complement the speaker, where the audience attention should be focused. Too much text on a slide distracts from the speaker’s words. Strike the right balance between visual and verbal.

4. *Rehearse.* I know as a fact from speaking to people at Apple that Jobs rehearses presentations for hours. Nothing is taken for granted. He knows the flow of his story, how he is going to build up to a big moment, what he is going to demonstrate, and how he will open and close the presentation. He appears effortless but only after hours of rehearsal. Motivation takes preparation.

Simple Secret: Reinforce an Optimistic Outlook

Nobody launches revolutionary products without an optimistic outlook. Since his earliest days of tinkering with computers, Jobs has had an unshakable belief that his products would change the world. In each of his presentations, Jobs speaks the language of hope and opportunity. Near the end of his iPhone launch, Jobs said, “There’s an old Wayne Gretzky quote that I love. ‘I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.’ We’ve always tried to do that at Apple since the very beginning and we always will.” Always end your presentations on a hopeful note.

Simple Secret: Encourage Others to Reach Their Potential

Jobs asked a team to work around the clock for two years to create the iPhone. Participating in the creation of a revolutionary product certainly must have kept them energized. But Jobs capped off their effort by asking them to stand, publicly praising them at the end of his presentation. He recognizes the team behind his success and acknowledges them to others. How do you think his employees would have felt if Jobs had taken all the credit? It would have been demoralizing. Instead, they were praised in front of their families and thousands of media, analysts, peers, and partners who were assembled for the launch.

You owe it to yourself to watch a Jobs presentation on the Apple Web site. Jobs does not use a presentation merely to convey information. A Jobs presentation excites, inspires, and motivates and, in doing so, turns customers into evangelists.