



The ECHO™ — Your Weekly Presentation Tip

April 2, 2008

It's No Joke

As April 1 comes around, our thoughts turn to humor and jokes. We're often asked, "Should I tell a joke as an ice-breaker at the start of my presentation?" Here's our perspective on joke-telling - no joking around.

Comedians are professional joke-tellers. They spend years building their material, polishing the setup of their jokes, and perfecting their timing to deliver a punchline that gets the biggest laugh possible. Rodney Dangerfield, the stand-up comic, had a television and VCR in every room of his house so he could record anything he heard that he could build into a good joke about how he got no respect. Joke telling was his life's work.

For the rest of us, consider these thoughts:

- Are you really a good joke-teller? If your answer is not a resounding, "Absolutely," don't try to shoe-horn a joke into your presentation. The punchline may only deliver a fatal blow to your credibility.
- Humor is a great way to humanize information and make it accessible to your audience - if the humor is appropriate to the subject and to your audience, if the humor matches the content, and if everyone will get the point of your humor and find it funny. If not, leave it out.
- Don't make "jokes" about your content or belittle your visuals. Far from disarming your audiences, you trivialize the purpose of your presentation and undercut your power to persuade.

Concentrate on the purpose of your presentation and do everything to maximize your message for your audience, with or without humor. That way, you'll make sure the joke isn't on you.

Contact Communispond
marketing@communispond.com
800 529 5925
www.communispond.com