

What's Your Personal Speaking Style?

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Carly Fiorina, President Bill Clinton, John Chambers, Steve Ballmer and Senator Barack Obama are well known for captivating an audience. They are what most of us would categorize as rock star communicators. Yet, each of these individuals is very different from the other. They have their own personal speaking style.

Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, is well known for wildly and enthusiastically expressing himself. Not only is he flamboyant in his attire, but does what ever it takes to invigorate his audience, sometimes chanting one word over and over, sometimes dancing on stage in a costume or sometimes even throwing things. His over the top, on-stage theatrics at Microsoft events are eagerly anticipated and get him the desired results.

Bill Clinton's style is very different. He is more of a down home speaker. His style is characterized by warmth and approachableness. He explains very complicated topics, like the national deficit, in a way that even the ordinary person grasps. People feel they can sit down and have coffee with him and question him about our government.

After his speech at the 2004 Democratic convention, Barack Obama, the junior senator from Illinois, catapulted himself into the limelight. His communication style is described as eloquent— somewhere between John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King's style. His eloquence and charisma are charming audiences around the globe.

Carly Fiorina and John Chambers are no slouches either. Both are passionate. They are known for being clear and easy to follow. They believe in what they say and convey it. They communicate on emotional level.

While each of these five people is a great communicator, their styles vary from flamboyant and humorous to folksy and eloquent. If you were to ask them to describe themselves as a communicator, they would probably answer, "I'm just trying to be honest. I'm just me!" None of them try to be someone they are not. They are authentic. That is the key. Being an effective communicator means that you focus on getting your message across through your own personal speaking style.

When we hear someone who is a great communicator, it is easy to conclude that they are "just a natural." There are no natural, born communicators. Strong communicators hone their skill. They determine what works for them and what doesn't. Then, they practice— a lot! They also get coached on how to do it better, while still maintaining their own authenticity.

The number one skill for success in business today is communication skills. Uncover your personal style, and then shore it up by eliminating distracting behaviors or by adding some new skills. Finally, look for "low stakes" opportunities to practice whether it is giving a toast at your brother's wedding or introducing a new member to your condo board. When there is an all important presentation, remember to let the real you out. Don't try to hold back and be "more professional." It's a mistake. You'll come across as stiff or mechanical. The more you give yourself permission to be you and the more you practice, the better you will get. Who knows, some day, people may also put you in the rock star communicator category.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.