

Speak up for yourself

The following notes are taken from a training session on negotiation skills, run by Jan Farmery Associates.

Jan specialises in presentation and communication skills training and has considerable experience of working in multi-national corporate environments and with creative practitioners.

This training event was held as part of **making art work**, the professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk. For more information about the scheme, please visit the Suffolk County Council web site at www.suffolkcc.gov.uk and follow the link from Leisure and Culture to the Arts.



making art work is a professional development scheme for visual artists in Suffolk, devised and managed by Suffolk County Council and part financed by the European Union European Social Fund and Arts Council England Grants for the Arts.

As part of the **making art work** professional development scheme for visual artists, Jan and her colleague, Marjorie Butters, ran a day-long training session on negotiation skills. The aim of the day was to —

- encourage artists to focus on areas of their practice where they needed to negotiate (e.g, with curators, commissioners, clients, etc)
- identify areas where they felt disadvantaged in those negotiations
- develop skills to help them overcome those disadvantages
- gain confidence in their ability to negotiate.

The following notes are taken from handouts provided on the day.

WHY ARE WE SPEAKING?

We may enter into a negotiation with another person to: —

- Inform
- Convince
- Persuade
- Entertain
- Impress
- Stimulate
- Motivate

It is important to focus on the aim of your conversation — are you trying to persuade a curator to accept an exhibition of work, or convince a potential client that you are the finest sculptor in East Anglia?

The difference may not be immediately obvious, but the language you use and examples you provide will differ. If you focus on what you are aiming to achieve BEFORE you begin the conversation, you will be better prepared to say what you need to say - and better able to achieve the end you desire.

This is particularly important if you are telephoning. It is easy to get side-tracked and diverted from your aim — how many times have you put the phone down only to realise immediately the million and one things you wanted to say, should have said — but didn't.

MAKING PRESENTATIONS

Presentation Content: Preparation

This is the key to an effective presentation/pitch/interview/workshop.

The presentation is often won or lost at the preparation stage.

It is extremely difficult to rise above a poorly prepared content.

Here is a formula to aid this process: -

AIM This has two elements: —
What is the overall goal?
Who is it for?

OBJECTIVE

Why is it being done?

CONTENT

What should it contain?

FORM

How is it to be presented?

AIM

This is your intention - your overall goal.

It is also about the identification and nature of your client/team/audience.

It is crucial to be aware of the following: —

- Numbers expected
- Gender
- Age range
- Status
- Levels of expertise
- Multi-cultural/multilingual
- Length of time allowed for the presentation/pitch/interview
- Time slot in the day
- Has the audience/client received any information prior to the presentation

NB: depending on circumstance it is sometimes possible to devise a pro-forma which can be sent in advance to supply this information.

OBJECTIVES

These are the heart of the process.

The main challenge here is to identify clearly what the audience needs to know and understand by the end of the presentation.

There will be several objectives. Once identified, and after some reflection, they may be re-arranged to ensure a strong sequential train of development.

Introduction

- The welcome
- Who you are (if necessary)
- Concise statement outlining the nature of your presentation
- Any other requests, instructions or information deemed relevant

NB: The energy and clarity of your introduction sets the tone for all that follows.

Overview/agenda

This should be focused and brief

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 st objective | To impress with a display of your portfolio. |
| 2 nd objective | To inform about exhibitions & achievements etc. |
| 3 rd objective | To persuade/convince (depending on mindset of audience/client) that you are the person for the job/exhibition/workshop. |
| 4 th objective | To stimulate/motivate your client to have no doubt about the rewards and excitement attendant upon them, should they go forward with you. |

NB: This is a hypothetical example, of course. The vital insight demonstrated here is to use a specific word against each of your objectives which will keep your thinking clear and the trajectory of your thought process on track.

CONTENT

This contains all the information/practical material/examples needed to support your objectives adequately.

Always refer back to your objectives throughout the compilation of the content.

Never add or pad out — if you are satisfied with your objectives you should not alter things at this stage. If you are in any doubt, go back and re-think your objectives.

FORM

The choice of method in presenting material depends on what serves your objectives best.

Formal — presentation delivered whilst standing in front of the client

Informal — presentation delivered sitting at table with client

Visual element slides — video — power-point — demonstration — portfolio — photographs

Other considerations =

- will a handout or publicity pack be required?

- will business cards be required?
- will sufficient time be available for a question and answer session?

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO CONTRACT

These are the important issues to be resolved and clearly outlined in writing whenever a job is undertaken.

Your contract is a combination of: —

- a clear outline of your understanding of the brief
- a clear statement of your terms and conditions

Issues for consideration when compiling Terms and Conditions

Insurance:

Do you have Public Liability Insurance?

Is your work insured in transit and whilst in the care of other individuals or establishments?

What is the Insurance cover provided by a gallery/ school/delivery services etc.

Site:

Site visits need to be attended by artist and client

Artists must be sure this done before any agreement is signed in case there are any problems of space, access of the possibility of an unacceptable compromise.

Schedule of work:

Always have a Schedule of Work, showing the stages of the job/workshop/conditions under which they are conducted.

Explain what these stages might be.

Be sure you are not compromised by unreasonable demands which are unworkable.

Access:

Outline when the client might see work in progress in order to make sure things are on track.

If client does not wish to see work in progress and you are insecure about the situation, your terms must be that photos or a visual equivalent will be sent and work will continue.

Costs:

Be sure to cost in all travel, publicity material, production of photos, etc to show work in progress.

All material relating to the work

Foundry costs

Support workers and/or finishers

Fees:

To be worked out based on your knowledge of charging generally for similar work.

All fees should be inclusive, no hidden extras which take the client by surprise.

Always ask for a 20 - 50% up front. Make it clear this is to cover cost of materials you need to start the work.

You should not fund a job from your own pocket.

Deadline: Be sure everyone is clear about the date of completion.

This must be in writing.

Payment and Disclaimers:

Name a date by which you expect payment in full.

Make sure you have a disclaimer which obliges a client to pay for all work, whether they accept it or not.

NB: The most difficult element of outlining terms and conditions is making sure you always produce them as a matter of course, regardless of your relationship with a client.

If the client is a friend or relation it must not make any difference.

You are a **professional artist** and once you **'know'** this and put professional practices into operation, you will be respected, protected, have an advantage and feel confident.

You may have to turn down work sometimes if you cannot achieve the working conditions you request.

How you respond to that is a personal matter for you

Always know your bottom line