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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

You did all the right upfront legwork. You got the inquiry, submitted your proposal, passed the qualifications, and made it to the final cut of three companies. The last step was for your organization to make a final presentation to the prospect's review committee. You brought in all your heavy hitters, various company leaders and technical experts. Your team had 45 minutes in front of the committee. Everybody knew that was where the final decision was going to be made. A multi-million dollar contract was riding on the presentation skills of your team. Unfortunately, you didn't land the project. Sound familiar?

Like it or not, multi-million dollar projects have been won or lost based on a presentation. Yet a lot of business people don't think presenting is very important and don't give it much thought. They think it's enough simply to be an expert on their subject. Nothing could be farther from the truth! There's a big difference

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between a person's competence and their effectiveness—including selling products and ideas—based on their ability to present well.

Judging from the majority of presentations I've been subjected to, there's a strong need for this book. There are a lot people out there who:

- Wing it
- Don't understand their audience's background or needs
- Don't know the difference between features and benefits
- Can't do presentations of varying lengths
- Use terrible color combinations
- Use poor slide layout
- Have no graphics or use lousy graphics
- Have lousy speaking skills

Who Is this Book Written for?

This book is for sales, marketing, and technical personnel who have to make technical and sales presentations for products or ideas.

A variety of general presentation books are already available, but they focus on general speaking skills, slide layout, or use of presentation programs. While this book summarizes those topics, it focuses on technical presentations from a sales perspective. It's not an in-depth treatise on speaking skills, sales strategies, or slide layout, but rather a concise overview of many related subjects written for those who would rather not spend the time

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amassing and reading an extensive library. Like Joe Friday said on Dragnet, “Just the facts, ma’am.”

All it really takes to be a better speaker is a little bit of knowledge and practice.