



CASE STUDY – Presentation Skills Training - MADE

The Situation:

When Bianca joined MADE (www.made.org.uk) she was in an administrative role, and rarely found it necessary to be client-facing, or even to present in front of colleagues. Most of her external communication was done over the phone in an informal manner, and she tended to be in the background of meetings. This situation was partially intentional, due to her fear of public speaking, which she admitted 'made her feel physically ill' at just the thought of it.

However, the restructuring of the company led to Bianca being offered a promotion to a management position – a brilliant opportunity, but one which she accepted with some trepidation due to the fact that this new role would require increased networking, and the need to present to the board. There was an obvious issue here: that her concerns over public speaking may hold her back from being effective in a management position.

It was suggested that she and another member of MADE facing a similar situation attend Presentation Skills Training with Creative Shift.

What We Did:

The session, entitled 'Killer Presentation Skills' addressed two key points of Bianca's concern – firstly, how to actually structure a successful presentation, and secondly how to deal with the emotional side of her fears over public speaking, which in her case were manifesting in physical symptoms - *"I'd feel physically ill, and start shaking at the thought of public speaking"*.

She learned some top tips for how to put together a presentation - *"I discovered what goes into a presentation, how to use images both as visual prompts for myself, and to prevent the audience from being bored by lists and lists of bullet points and text, tips that work whether you are speaking to 5 people or 50"*. Helga also reminded her that in a presentation situation, the people are essentially on your side. *"It dawned on me that generally, people are not there to see you fall flat on your face!"* Bianca now felt confident that people were interested in what she had to say.

As for the fear issues – these had been somewhat alleviated by her growing confidence about putting a presentation together and confidence in being able to keep the audience's interest, but she was also taught some quick relaxation techniques –



“Helga showed me a simple exercise to release my anxiety before speaking to a group, which I still use today, although I have found that I need it less and less as my confidence grows every time I successfully deliver a presentation.”

The Results:

The results have been a positive impact both for Bianca individually and for MADE.

“Before working with Creative Shift I would have made literally every excuse in the book not to do a presentation, but now I am genuinely happy to do them. I've been able to host a number of events and seminars, which has meant that the Chief Exec. has been freed up to concentrate on his role rather than having to present in my place”

Her manager is now happy to delegate more to her, enabling her to take on more responsibility within MADE, and take on more of the work the Chief Executive would have had to do previously, again freeing his time to be more effective in his role.

There has also been a knock-on effect within the company – when junior members of staff are required to present, Bianca is able to coach them successfully through the experience using the techniques that she has learned.

“[My colleague] and I felt so motivated following the session with Creative Shift that we felt like we could stand up and talk in front of everyone – and immediately informed our boss to that effect! It completely changed the way that both of us worked. The way that Helga delivers so inspiring – she's one of those people that you can warm to instantly, and oozes confidence. I almost felt like I absorbed some of that confidence just by being in a room with her! It was obvious from the start of the session that this was not your ordinary dull training course. I would definitely recommend Creative Shift (and have!) to anyone dealing with similar issues.”

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