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~~~~~ THE PORRO PASSAROUND - TIPS FOR COMMUNICATORS ~~~~~

Summer 2008  
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THOSE LAZY, HAZY DAYS...

The Passaround began summer vacation early, but now we're back to fight the heat and humidity with some breezy tips.

- [1] Speeches: The speech as novel
- [2] Speeches: Tough times demand good CEO speeches
- [3] Speeches: Grading candidates as speechmakers

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**1. *Speeches: Iacocca says "A speech is like a novel."***

This fall, the journal DIRECTORS & BOARDS will be publishing an article I wrote on how CEOs can use first-person communication effectively to turn companies around (an especially relevant topic in tough times). During my research and interviews, I came across some great thoughts on speech making from the legendary Lee Iacocca. "Effective communication has to do more than deliver information," he said. "It has to motivate. . . You can deliver information in a letter or tack it on a bulletin board...a speech is the best vehicle for one person to motivate many."

Then he added this interesting thought, "A good speech, like a good novel, is constructed around conflict. . . Usually the conflict is between something that is comfortable but wrong and something that's disturbing but true."

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**2. *Speeches: Stories, stories, stories***

As anybody who has read past issues of the "Passaround" knows, I am a big believer in the power of storytelling in speeches. But after being part of a panel on storytelling led by Susan Peterson of the Communication Center ([www.thecommunicationcenter.com](http://www.thecommunicationcenter.com)) I've learned that I've just scratched the storytelling surface.

Susan and colleague Jan Fox offered some great advice on the elements of storytelling (be personal, be engaging, be thoughtful, and many more), how to make your stories more effective, and how to connect them to the goals of your organization.

She also introduced all of us to a terrific book, WHOEVER TELLS THE BEST STORY WINS, by Annette Simmons. It should be on every speechwriter's bookshelf.

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3. **Speeches:** When a presidential candidate needs a speech coach

Way back before he was an official candidate for president, I heard John McCain speak to a large audience of high-tech executives. During the first part of the presentation, he spoke off the cuff . . . and he was brilliant—relaxed, funny, insightful. Then he started presenting his prepared remarks . . . and he was terrible—dull, dull, dull.

The problem has continued on the campaign trail, where he shines in informal forums but still delivers leaden speeches. The problem is not the speeches—he's got a great team of writers working for him. But here's a case when good writing cannot overcome poor performance. He clearly needs a speech coach. His campaign knows it, too, but does the senator? We'll check back later in the campaign to see how he's doing.