

## CUSHION YOUR FALL

The only problem with a great vacation is that you come back to a dozen projects that are all due at once. So you probably won't get a chance to read this newsletter until Halloween. But in case you do, here are some suggestions that may make your reentry a little easier.

- [1] Speeches: Hook 'em with the news.
- [2] OpEds: Reuse, recycle
- [3] PowerPoint: A single key can make a difference.

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### 1. Speeches: Hook 'em with the news.

Every speechwriter wrestles with how to start a speech in a way that grabs the audience's attention and creates a connection between speaker and listeners. Andrew Gilman, president of CommCore Consulting Group, ([Commcoreconsulting.com](http://Commcoreconsulting.com)) has some great advice, based on his years of working with corporate CEOs. "Start by mentioning or even reading from a newspaper article the audience has seen or has easy access to," he says. The folks who've read the article already will be hooked into the speech. Those who haven't seen the item will pick up the paper later and be reminded of what your speaker had to say. And finally, "relating your topic well to a news event can increase the credibility level of the presentation," Gilman says.

Of course, don't just pick any article. In addition to the obvious--pick a piece that relates to the topic of the speech--take care to ensure that the audience can get a hold of the article easily. It should be in the local paper, or in a national paper like the NY TIMES, or USA TODAY. Also, screen the article as carefully as you would anything else you would use to start a speech. You don't want to get off on the wrong foot by pointing your audience to an article that puts them off.

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### 2. OpEds: Reuse, recycle

Congratulations! A major regional newspaper has accepted the OpEd you drafted for your boss or client. After you celebrate, should you just move on to the next assignment? Definitely not. That published piece can be recycled. The obvious thing to do, if the paper that printed it gives the okay, is to submit it to a paper in another region. But wait...there's more.

A printed OpEd gives credibility. So if you are trying to set up meetings for your client with editorial boards, be sure to include the published OpEd in the

packet of materials you send pitching him. Do the same if you're pitching him or her as a speaker to a large group. The OpEd is a great thing to include in a press packet for a press conference.

And here's one you may not have thought of: when you're trying to battle the odds and get your client published in the New York Times or Wall Street Journal, you can send the published OpEd to the NYT or WSJ editor with whom you're talking. Again, it helps your credibility.

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### 3. PowerPoint: A single key can make a difference.

We've discussed in these pages the dos and don'ts of PowerPoint, but one important tip is so simple, it's embarrassing: hit that letter B key. When you do that in VIEW SHOW mode, you blank the screen. What a great way to get the heads of your audience to swivel away from the slides back to your speaker. Hit B again, and the slide pops back on. As PR guy Andy Goodman ([www.agoodmanonline.com](http://www.agoodmanonline.com)) says. "The B key won't help you design better presentations, but it sure comes in handy when you need all eyes on you."