

# Key issues when teaching International Presentation Skills



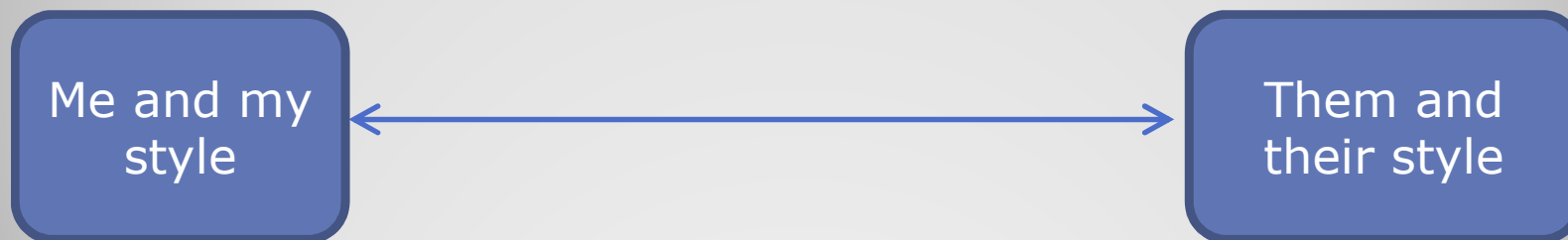
Mike Hogan 10/11/2013 BESIG Annual Conference, Prague.

# Preparing for a presentation



# Language & Communication vs Cultural Influences

- We either
  - bring our own culture with us,
  - adapt to the other culture  
or
  - meet somewhere in the middle.



## So, where can begin?

- What's the difference between learning 'English for Presentations' and learning 'How to present to an international audience'?
- We need to transcend mere lexical items and consider the expectations the audience might have and the cultural implications.

# Presentations across cultures?

- What are presentations in your country like?  
What do the audience expect?
- Have you been to a presentation by someone not from your country before?

How was it different?



## Other factors

1. How is information presented?
2. What sort of audience participation can I expect?
3. What about using humour?
4. How should I prepare for questions?

# 1. Information

- Strong foundations & supporting docs leading to final argument  
or  
time-conscious get-to-the-point, show me the solution and benefits, and focus on the future?
- Lively & interactive  
or  
formal and without interruption?

Culture influences how people in different countries prefer to receive information.

## 2. Audience participation

- What's usual in your culture?
- Engaged and willing to participate in exercises and Q&A sessions?
  
- How is respect shown?
- Applause?
- Eye Contact (or avoidance thereof)?



## 3. Humour

Humour can relax the atmosphere. However, in some cultures laughing aloud can be a sign of nervousness and may not be appreciated.

- What's it like in your culture?
- What's it like in your business partners' culture?

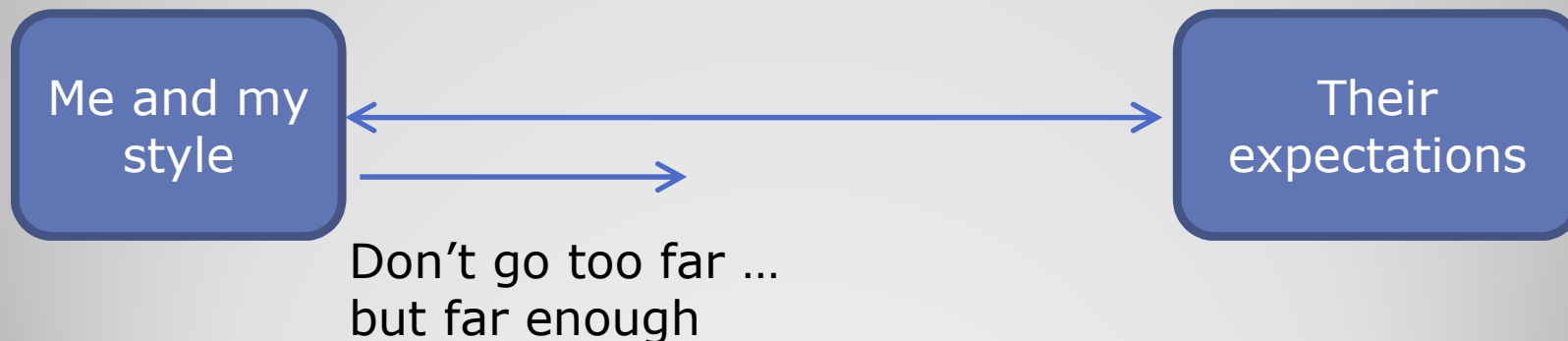
## 4. Questions

Ways of handling questions are very different across cultures.

- Some cultures will be challenging and others will say nothing at all.  
(out of respect or not wanting to stand out?)
- What's the norm where you are?

# Who am I?

- No dos and don'ts lists.  
Don't reinforce (negative) stereotypes.
- Understand your listeners and be sensitive to their values and ways of communicating.
- But don't lose your identity.



## Aspects to consider

- **Key presentation types:**
  - Informative – Persuasive - Instructional
- **Key cultural indicators (when it comes to presenting):**
  - Group or Individual thinking
  - Explicit / Implicit communication
  - Fact or Emotion/Experience driven
  - Time fixed or time fluid

Take advantage of local customs and traditions and avoid pitfalls, e.g. certain names or numbers

## Preparation grid (flash cards activity)

Informative	Persuasive	Instructional	
			Group/Individual
			Implicit/Explicit
			Fact/ Emotion driven
			Time fixed/ Time fluid

## Your target culture: key questions

- What are their presentations like?
  - Why? What's important there?
  - What's likely to work? What can I bring with me?
  - What's likely to crash?
  - How should I adapt?
- 
- Who can help me?



## Culture and you

- **Describe your experience** of presenting across cultures.
- Where will you be presenting next?  
**Are you aware of your own style** and the effect it can have on others?
- **How will you adapt your style?**

Build on or limit elements of your style according to how you think the audience will react.

# The key to successful presentations

- Connecting with your audience
- Managing their expectations
- Achieving your goal



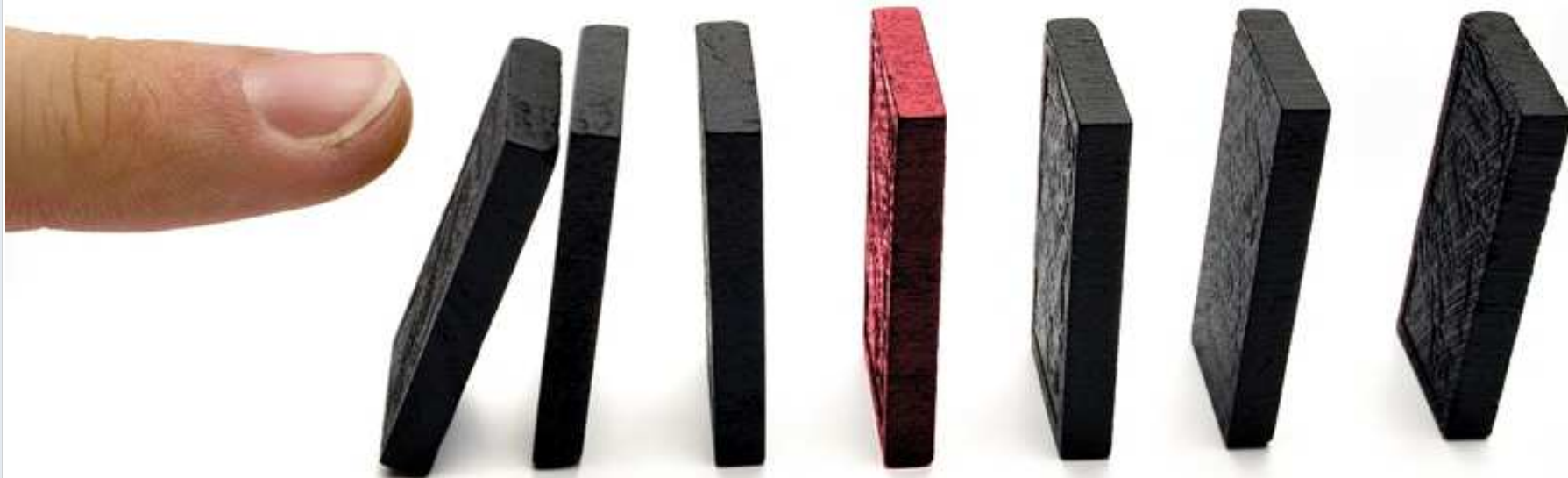


## References and further reading:

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