

MOTHERS *of* INVENTION





KAREN FRIEDMAN

A casual lunch conversation led to the development of innovative iPad-based presentation technology for speakers.



CINDY HOFFMAN

BY KAREN FRIEDMAN

It happened by accident. We didn't meet in an airport or exotic locale even though both of us were spending more time up in the clouds than on the ground. Rather my business acquaintance and I reconnected over salads at a hometown eatery near Philadelphia on the rare day that we were both in the same time zone.

Like me, Cindy Hoffman also comes from the world of television news. I'm a former reporter. She was a producer. Yet we never sat side by side or realized how much we had in common until lunch that day. That's when we discovered that we're both the mothers of boys, and we left the news arena to launch communications coaching businesses.

Munching on ideas that would allow us to use technology to expand our expertise and reinforce what we both teach, the "a-ha" moment came as we joked that clients are always asking us to "bottle what we teach."

Realizing that bottles are breakable, we wanted to create an indestructible modern-day communication toolkit that can withstand the test of time. That inspired us to develop an innovative iPad/web-based system that distills everything we've learned about engaging, motivating and inspiring listeners into a fun, concise format that allows even the most seasoned speaker to create powerful presentations.

Think about it. As speakers, most of us like the spotlight. Even if we get jitters from time to time, we enjoy being on especially if we can provide value to

our audiences. For us, the toughest part typically isn't presenting. It's organizing and condensing content into compelling messages and lessons learned that people can apply to their own lives. It's simplifying information without 'dumbing it down'.

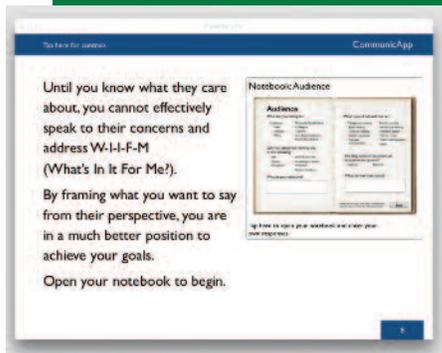
That's where Presenter's Pal™ comes in (www.presenterspal.com). From opens to outcomes, the step-by-step, fill-in-the-blank presentation program makes organizing easy. At the start, you're prompted to pinpoint your purpose, think about your audience and identify the story you want to tell before ever creating content. Peppered with instruction, visual examples, checklists, quizzes and how-to videos, your virtual pal then helps you develop key messages to reinforce your story.

Tailored templates allow you to make it easy to create your work, save it and then review opens, closes, analogies, examples and transition lines while ensuring your presentation flows logically and smoothly. When you're done, not only have you created a presentation, but you have ready-to-use speaker notes to go with it.

"I wish I had something like this when I was in college because it's so hands-on." said recent Penn State graduate Jake Ingber. "Unlike the typical boring overwhelming textbook, this is like having a coach on your shoulder to guide you from start to finish."

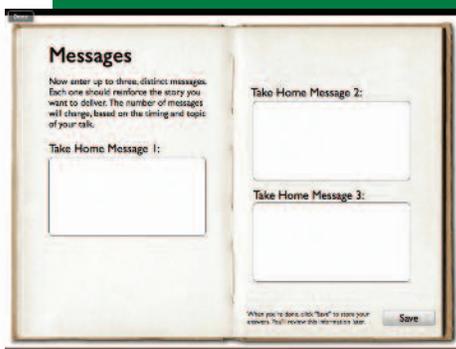
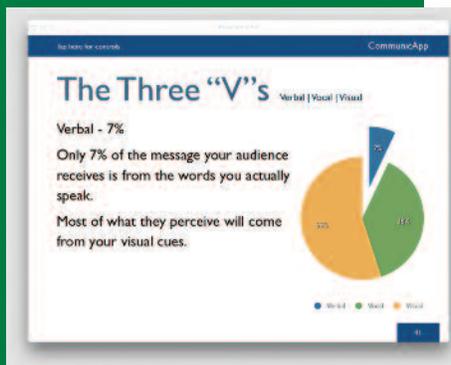
While Presenter's Pal™ is being used by giants like Hilton and Plastic Omnium and will be piloted at a school next fall, it was far from an easy sell. Since we formed the business in 2013, we've had more than a few hurdles

TIPS TO PRESENT LIKE A PRO:



- Organize thoughts and key messages into concise compelling storylines tailored to specific audiences
- Craft engaging opens, closes and transitions with easy-to-use fill-in-the-blank templates

- Save, print and access presentations anywhere anytime with the web-based stand-alone notebook
- Rely upon a toolkit of interactive resources including quizzes, checklists, how-to-videos, articles and visual instruction
- Review practical examples and illustrations to keep your presentations flowing smoothly



- Work with Presenter's Pal every step along the way to take the stress out of preparing so you can enjoy the process and look forward to creating your next presentation with confidence

along the way. There was the vendor who disappeared with our money and source files. There was a client who tried to reinvent our invention. There was a developer who couldn't develop.

As parents, we keep reminding ourselves that we're used to things being broken. The key is fixing them.

After the vendor disappeared, we were feeling a bit helpless so we did what any savvy entrepreneurs would do. We went online looking for a novel idea. Enter Brad Kozak, founder and Chief Creative Officer of the firm Novel Idea.

From the first call, there was instant synergy between Kozak and the two of us, despite the fact that our stark political and geographical differences probably would have doomed most relationships. Though we've never met our Texan partner face-to-face, after hundreds of calls, texts and emails, we found that Kozak's and his firm's name truly are synonymous.

We wanted to expand the capability of our system, and asked Novel Idea to help us create a complimentary, stand-alone, web-based workbook. His novel idea to rethink the user interface, focusing on an accordion control to make the stand-alone workbook quick and easy to use.

The Presenter's Pal workbook differs from its iBook counterpart, in that it eliminates everything but the fill-in-the-blank forms so you can save and print multiple presentations from your iPad, iPhone, laptop or desk computer. If you have web access, you have access to the workbook.

In the January 2013 issue of *Speaker* magazine, Patricia Frupp, CSP, CPAE, shared her views on changing the game. I saved that article because she encouraged readers to stay relevant. I wanted to make sure I never forgot that message.

Frupp talked about icons like Cher, Elton John and Tom Jones who have not only managed to maintain their fan base, but seem to always attract new fans who weren't even alive at the beginnings of their storied careers. "How do you do that?" is a question that all speakers should ask themselves every day.

HOW IDEAS ARE INSPIRED

Technology helps, but technology alone is not the answer. Listening is.

Listen to what your clients are saying.

They'll tell you what they want. They may not say "we want technology." Instead, they might wish there was a fun way to keep the learning going when you're not here to help us. Then, find a way to make that happen.

Listen to younger colleagues who may have fresh ideas.

Instead of thinking "I know more than you and I've been doing this before you were born," perhaps your thought should be what a novel idea! How can we work together to make this happen?

Listen to the news. It will help you leverage trends and events to keep your content current. Listen for lessons in life's everyday moments. When you pay attention, the pieces often fall into place.

That's really what happened with Presenter's Pal™.

Truth be told, when Cindy and I had lunch, we talked about staying relevant in today's workplace where technology seems to advance every 30 seconds. While we think of ourselves as savvy communicators, there is always someone younger or hipper who unlike us was born when the Internet already existed.

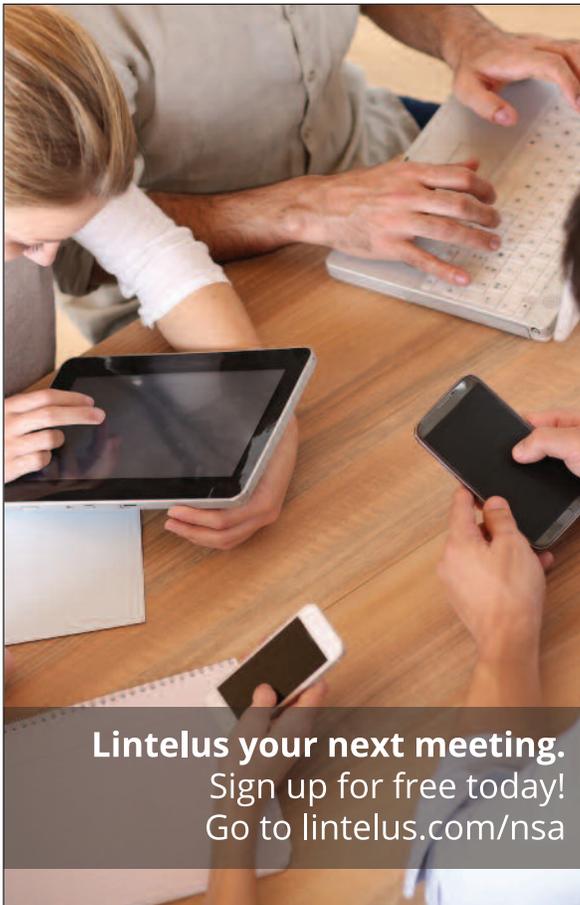
We view this as an opportunity because finding the right people who understand coding, source data, mobile responsiveness and things we knew nothing about before this journey can only help us breathe new life into our expertise.

Since the iPad-based technology launched this spring, we've been listening closely to our own clients, including a pharmaceutical company who asked for a version that could integrate or utilize slides. That led to an enhanced version, which is currently in develop-

ment and will allow users to upload PowerPoint® or create slides within their presentation.

Yet, like the speaking business, it takes a long time to build a brand so we have no plans to quit our day jobs anytime soon. Besides, since we're not in the same place very often, we rarely have a chance to lunch together. So for now, we're relying on hotel meeting rooms, emails, texts and phone calls across time zones to help us come up with even more novel ideas.

Karen Friedman is an international communication coach who heads Karen Friedman Enterprises in Philadelphia. Best-selling author of Shut Up and Say Something, her Philadelphia Business Journal columns are syndicated nationwide. An award winning former television reporter, she's adjunct faculty at Smith College where she teaches leadership communication for executive women.



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