Quadruple your impact...

...think fast and communicate clearly...

...even when you don’t have a chance to prepare!

Think (and Speak) on Your Feet Guide

featuring Think on Your Feet®

Think On Your Feet® is the world’s leading verbal communication skills course that focuses on developing the vital skill of thinking on your feet.
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When most people think about improving the impact of their verbal communication, they probably think about how to improve their presentation skills. That’s because most people would consider a formal, pre-prepared presentation to a specific target audience as the most common situation in which verbal communication creates an impact.

In reality this is simply not the case. Most communication takes place on an informal, impromptu basis; probably only 10% of communication is in a formal situation. The vast majority of the time, as much as 90%, individuals will find themselves having to communicate in some familiar but unplanned situations such as: the boss or colleague calls for a “quick update”, a prospective customer calls out of the blue to ask about their latest proposal, a client calls unexpectedly to complain. Most of the skills learned on a communication or presentation course will be of little help in these situations - what is required is the ability to think (and speak) on your feet! After all, how often have you:

• Been asked to summarise a technical report into a 3-min concise and brief verbal update during a meeting?
• Found yourself in a situation where you needed to answer important questions on the spot and you were not able to find the right words or the right structure to present it well?
• Had problems when trying to get your ideas across to your peers and your superiors in a structured way when it mattered most?

Any of these situations seem familiar?

Think on Your Feet® is the programme that will help you to get your point across clearly, concisely and persuasively. Find out more at www.illumine.co.uk/toyf
THE CHALLENGE

This is your next challenge. You have to stand up in front of a sceptical audience and make a presentation to them about a new product development. You have to make it compelling because your career might depend on it. You have to be persuasive and credible because they are looking for holes in your argument. And you have to make it memorable because you are just one of a number of people communicating to that audience that day.

Of course this is the basic script for the TV reality show Dragons Den - but it is also the set up for many business presentations. So how well equipped are you to deliver?

If you are a viewer of the TV programme, you will have seen the many deep holes into which participants on the show regularly fall. Budding entrepreneurs on the show fail to influence the panel of would-be investors because they haven’t worked out their pitch and they don’t know how to answer questions clearly and sometimes they just lose their nerve. After careering wildly off track or simply failing to get their message across, they quickly get booted off the show.

Of course it’s easy to be an armchair critic - but there are important lessons in programmes like these. If we want to succeed and influence people we have to remember that it isn’t only the content that we have to get right, it’s the manner in which we interact with our ‘listener(s)’ that is crucial. And whether we are business leaders, project managers or customer facing staff, it means we have to learn how to speak off the cuff, to improvise, even to wing it.

Get beyond the basics of presentations so that as a leader, manager or member of front line staff you can Think (and speak) on your feet. Find out more at www.illumine.co.uk/toyf
Who wouldn’t want to have the ability to say the right thing at the right time... to speak off the cuff, to improvise, even to wing it? We admire greatly those people who have this ability to be spontaneous - and rightly so. If you want to become a dynamic leader, a silver tongued sales executive or an engaging speaker, then you need to master the ability to think (and speak) on your feet.

But what is this gift of the gab, and can anyone do it? One way of explaining this quality is that it allows you to go ‘off piste’ but stay in control when speaking one-to-one or in front of an audience - you don’t have to have kissed the blarney stone before you are successful at it.

Having defined this quality, let’s ask the question ‘Is it important?’ We believe it is. You only have to think back to the last presentation you had from someone who was reading from a pre-prepared script, speaking only from a series of PowerPoint slides, to get a sense of how stilted communication can be when it is being driven by inflexible thinking.

But would you dare to wing it when running your next meeting or giving your next presentation? Most people wouldn’t, but we know you might completely change your mind if:
   a. You felt confident about doing it.
   b. It gave you a much better chance of achieving the outcome that you wanted.

In fact if you felt confident of success it would be hard to argue against such an approach.

Think (and speak) on your feet and say the right thing at the right time.
Find out more at www.illumine.co.uk/toyf
FEAR AND EXCITEMENT

Before we explain how you can wing it, let’s deal with any fears you might have about improvising.

Think back to those eager Dragons Den or Apprentice candidates. They were regularly caught off guard by what appears to be very reasonable questions which can be entertaining. But remember, they were under pressure. So what should they have done? The answer is this - they should have learned how to improvise whilst still knowing exactly where they were heading. We’ll explain.

Your ability to speak persuasively and spontaneously needs to be underpinned by a better understanding of how your brain works. The relevant information here is that there are two sides to your brain - the logical left side and the intuitive right side. As someone who wants to be able to improvise, all you need to do is to learn how to use both sides together; in harmony. You can compare this skill to that of being a pilot. What you need is a computerised flight path which will get you flying in the right direction. That’s the left side of your brain. Meanwhile, at any time, you can override the computer, make mid-course corrections and even go and talk to the passengers. And that’s the skill of the right hand side of your brain. Translate this into the area of communication and you have disciplined eloquence or even, perhaps, reliable excitement!

Of course some people are concerned that any structure will limit their spontaneity. But this isn’t true. The mind processes information extremely quickly and presenters, in giving themselves structure to improvise, are actually helping themselves and their listeners in two extremely important ways. Firstly, structure provides a clear focus for an audience. It imposes order on the mass of information that communicators have at their fingertips. Secondly, structure is liberating. Much like driving a car, when you know where you are going, you can then make decisions about whether to listen to the radio, make conversation or engage in some creative thinking, whilst knowing all the time that you are travelling on the right road.

There is one other point to note here, and that is to remember that the most powerful communicators are always less interested in what they are saying, and more interested in what their listeners are receiving. Communication is the response you get, and anyone who is in the business of communicating and ignores this reality, will have a painfully hard path ahead of them. People who want to introduce spontaneity into their speaking must be especially aware of this. It may be exciting for you to talk from your expertise or your enthusiasm, but in order to get your message across you will still need to be precise, unambiguous and clear.

Powerful speakers are less interested in what they are saying and more interested in what the listener is receiving. Find out more at [www.illumine.co.uk/toyf](http://www.illumine.co.uk/toyf)
PITHY AND PUNCHY

So let me now talk about the way you need to plan for any meeting, talk or presentation that you are giving.

The three ‘must dos’ are:

• **Find the right theme for your listener** - in the case of the main theme around which you are talking, it is extremely helpful if you have a pithy and punchy headline which sums up your topic. This may sound obvious but even at this initial stage you should be engaging your creative right brain. What will add colour, imagination and excitement to your words? Get creative and find a headline that stimulates your listener curiosity, so that they arrive in an inquisitive frame of mind.

• **Structure your plan so that you can deliver on that theme persuasively** - As to how to structure your words, this is even more critical for anyone who wants to be able to improvise. The reality is that when it comes to thinking on your feet, your plan will help with engagement by imposing order on your communication. And the three essential planks of your planning process are to define the central core of your topic, to separate ideas out distinctly from one another, and to create momentum in your words so that you move your listeners smoothly from point A to B to C.

• **Adapt to listeners’ reactions as you speak** - don’t slavishly prepare a script; rather base your communication around the knowledge you have, ask questions and trust that it is in the interaction that the power and memorability of presentation occurs.

As to what precise structures to use when planning, here are two which have proven to be highly effective and which you can use for almost any communication you need to execute:

1. **The Clock plan.** This plan is one that divides your communication into chunks of time. If you are running a project, for example, you might therefore structure your team briefings into the following phases - i) where we are now ii) the next six months and iii) the situation in 12 month’s time.

2. **The Globe plan.** This plan packages the key topics into chunks of space. So, for example, in this plan you might have as your main theme ‘Doing business across the world’. It may then be broken down into i) existing customers in the UK ii) opportunities for expansion in mainland Europe iii) untapped potential in South East Asia.

These are pretty straightforward plans which can help anyone communicating to marshal their ideas. There are many more to discover on the Think on Your Feet® Programme.

Add colour, imagination and excitement to your words. Find out more at [www.illumine.co.uk/toyf](http://www.illumine.co.uk/toyf)
However, whatever structure you use, the point when it comes to improvisation is that it allows you to stay on track. Without structure, any improvising can derail you and your listener(s). Billy Connolly might get away with wild digressions but only because he’s extremely entertaining. For most of us we need our structure to support our spontaneity. Then we can start to have fun, using our intuitive brain to bring images, stories, sensation and imagination into play.

Now this technique, where you use structure and imagination, is extremely effective and is ideal for any communicator who wants to improve their ability to improvise. However here is a handy hint for first time users, (especially useful if you are giving a project brief, sales meeting or presentation). Try numbering your sections as you go through your presentation so that you can remember where you are. This really is as simple as:

1. The heading.
2. The main chunks - a, b and c.
3. The conclusion with its reminder of how it fits into the main theme.

Numbering won’t only keep you on track, it will also help your listener(s) to see exactly where you are heading and where you have got to.

Of course it is also worth remembering that not all improvisation happens when you are ready for it. You may also want to be spontaneous when answering on-the-spot questions. Whatever the situation, however, just remember that thinking on your feet isn’t about having every single possible fact at your fingertips. Rather it’s about becoming more efficient, by using your understanding of how the brain works to significantly improve your performance. Often it’s about less rather than more. So don’t try to cram everything into your sessions. Keep your message simple and clear and use appropriate colour to make it memorable.

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RELATING GIVES YOU WINGS

The point to underline here is that structure is not enough. It will be a dead weight if it is all you rely on. You need to take managed risks. If you know your subject then you have to remember that you have all sorts of anecdotes, bits of research and associated ideas on which to call. More than that, what every listener really wants is interaction. So provoke them with your insights and give them a chance to ask you questions. Trust that your store of knowledge will be enough and build up awareness that your listener wants you to do well and isn’t anticipating your failure. More than this, nobody expects you to know everything - so be playful and engaging and turn the interaction (communication) into more of a relationship than a talk. Then, when the time is right, bring it back to the subject in hand and move on.

So remember, improvisation is only another way of saying that you need to be flexible. Your challenge, if you want to be engaging, is to find a way to be authentic and to use structure to support you. Your confidence in knowing where you are going will transmit to the people you are speaking to and, the ability you have for interplay between you and your listener will be critical. That is why people want to learn the skill of thinking on your feet. It builds intimacy and trust and creates intellectual and emotional bridges between the communicator and the listener, whether they are a colleague, your boss or a client. This form of ‘winging it’ is truly skilful and in comparison, reading from detailed notes, eyes glued to the text, is like flying blind.

Think on Your Feet® provides you with techniques to home in on issues, organise ideas, reduce preparation and response time and handle awkward questions. Find out more at www.illumine.co.uk/toyf
The knowledge worker works with information and insight to formulate ideas: ideas about projects, processes and proposals; ideas about ways to proceed.

Working with ideas means not just ‘having’ them, but also presenting, discussing and explaining them. Successfully ‘getting ideas across’ - whether on the phone, across the desk, in the conference room, in e-mail or voice-mail, or across language barriers - demands clarity, brevity and impact.

Think on Your Feet® is a two-day workshop which teaches these skills to knowledge workers.

- **Clarity means being understood** - while 100000000 is ‘unclear’, 100,000,000 isn’t. Structure makes the difference. Learning how to structure ideas, using both left and right brain processes, makes even technically complex topics accessible to listeners.

- **Brevity means ‘getting to the point’** - ‘getting to the point’ requires focus. Structure forces focus. In an era of information overload, brevity is valued. Less is more.

- **Impact means being persuasive** - persuasion stems from relevance; and anticipating listeners’ interests is the secret of relevance. Add memorable structure and you have lasting impact.

Think on Your Feet® teaches clarity, brevity and impact in the presentation of ideas. This is why it is now considered a core competency for knowledge workers.

“Very interesting and informative. It certainly provides you with robust processes for articulating your answers... helping you think on your feet.” Michael Greenhalgh, Head of Management Development, Coca-Cola Enterprises Ltd.
**COMMUNICATE WITH IMPACT, EVEN WHEN YOU’RE NOT PRESENTING**

*Think about it. If you could communicate in the 90% of informal situations, as well you do in the formal (10%) environment, you would increase your impact by a multiple of 4!*

The skills required to handle formal, planned presentations to groups are typically learned on presentation skills courses, while the skills to manage formal one to one meetings are often covered by NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) training. So, what can you do to learn the skills required to communicate well in the remaining 90% of verbal communication situations?

**The answer is Think on Your Feet®.**

The Think on Your Feet® course is a globally recognised communication skills course which addresses not only the needs of formal presenters, but importantly, teaches effective communication tools for the majority of informal, unplanned communication situations. The diagram below shows how the different communication skills courses match to communication situations:

The diagram (right) is a visual representation of the estimated proportion of time spent on different types of communication. You may be surprised at how much communication takes place on an informal, unplanned basis - yet it still counts when it comes to making an impact.

Most communication courses only cover 10% of how we communicate (formal, planned and group). Think on Your Feet® covers the 90% (informal, impromptu and unplanned). [www.illumine.co.uk/toyf](http://www.illumine.co.uk/toyf)
There are many situations where you need to think fast and ‘get your ideas across’: in the boardroom; in management meetings; during sales or technical presentations; via emails; voicemails and in all situations that require clear and agile thinking.

Think on Your Feet® covers 100% of the communication spectrum – it will help you to communicate more effectively in all areas of verbal communication.

It will help you:
- Structure ideas simply and persuasively.
- Always give a relevant response by identifying your listeners’ interests and concerns.
- Structure your thoughts by organising them even whilst verbally communicating.
- Lose the fear of dealing with tough questions, objections, hostile situations and emotional issues.
- Turn ‘nerves’ into positive energy.
- Get to the point easily and be remembered for what you say.
- Answer questions quickly and coherently.
- Improve strategies for answering impromptu questions.
- Never be lost for words again.

Think on Your Feet® seeks to develop communication based on clarity, brevity and impact. These three objectives are achieved by working on the principle that you need to organise your thoughts into a sort of mini-plan prior to delivering communication. In other words, clear thinking is the route to clear communication.

Think on Your Feet® will help save you an estimate 50-90% of your preparation time when communicating, (especially when caught on the spot in meetings, group discussions or presentations). Typical situations include:
- Communicating with teams.
- Briefing clients, teams or management groups.
- Handling the media.
- Ensuring you get your ideas across in meetings and discussions.
- Answering those ‘on-the-spot’ questions.
- Explaining complex information clearly.
- Promoting and selling yourself, your organisation and its products.
- Defusing issues and objectives positively.

Structure your ideas, get to the point and be remembered with Think on Your Feet®

Find out more www.illumine.co.uk/toyf
You will need a different mini plan for different situations. The workshop teaches 10 plans that help you structure your thoughts quickly to get your point across clearly, concisely and memorably. These 10 plans are known as “capsules of persuasion”.

These 10 capsules are divided into three groups

**The three basic plans**
- The Clock plan
- The Globe plan
- The Triangle plan

**The three Assertive plans**
- Zoom lens
- Pendulum
- Benefits

**The four sub plans**
- Picture
- Opposites
- Domino
- W5

The course will help you understand each of these plans - then by learning and practising when to apply them, you will sharpen your communication skills for any situation. This is especially valuable to your organisation if you deal with external parties. Of course, the whole organisation benefits if everyone is communicating with greater clarity and brevity.

Think on Your Feet® isn’t just another presentation skills course. It’s a thinking and communication skills course, and if you communicate verbally in your working environment, then you can benefit from the proactive skills you will learn.

Speak, present, write, persuade and negotiate with Think on Your Feet® - the core communication competence. Find out more [www.illumine.co.uk/toyf](http://www.illumine.co.uk/toyf)
There are 2 ways to take Think on Your Feet® with us:

- **Public Workshops (Central London)**
- **In-house Courses (We come to you to train a group or team)**

**Public Workshops (Central London)**
Our public workshops are a great way for individuals or organisations wanting to train individuals, to attend our courses. These are small groups (to maximise your learning opportunities), where you learn from a licensed trainer as well as from the experience shared by your peers.

Our public workshops are open to all. This is not a seminar style event; it’s a practical workshop where attendee numbers are kept low to ensure you get the most out of the training. Find out our latest dates and availability at [www.illumine.co.uk/toyf](http://www.illumine.co.uk/toyf).

Find out more about all of our public workshops at [www.illumine.co.uk/calendar](http://www.illumine.co.uk/calendar).

**In-house Courses (At your choice of location, anywhere in the world)**
If you have a group or team to train, our in-house option could be the most cost effective for you. In-house is where we bring the course to you, or your chosen venue, anywhere in the world. In-house courses have a number of clear benefits:

- **Tailoring** - Content can be tailored to ensure the time is spent concentrating on your exact needs and requirements; maybe even looking at a specific business issue.
- **Cost** - The cost per delegate can be substantially lower than public courses.
- **The Environment** - Because we come to you we can reduce your carbon footprint.

Think on Your Feet® is part of our write, speak & influence range of courses and workshops. Find out more [www.illumine.co.uk/wsi](http://www.illumine.co.uk/wsi).
ABOUT ILLUMINE

What we do
We are a premier UK training organisation, providing training to enhance practical thinking skills to improve the performance of individuals and organisations.

Our range of courses and workshops are divided into 5 business centric topics:
• Learn, Absorb & Understand
• Write, Speak & Influence
• Creative Thinking & Innovation
• Meetings, Facilitation & Coaching
• Engagement & Personal Balance

Who we do it for
Since 1996 we have built a reputation that we are proud of. Our reputation can be proven by our impressive customer list and their feedback. Here are just a few: Aviva, Barclays, BP, KPMG, Kuwait Petroleum, London Business School, Newcastle City Council, NFU Mutual, Sky, Sony, Specsavers, Tesco, Vodafone.

We run in-house courses for private and public sector organisations. We also run public workshops in selected topics, which are open to anyone. Our public workshops give everyone the opportunity to develop their thinking skills and, for organisations a chance to see the content before running an in-house course.

How we do it
Our reputation has been founded on three simple principles:
• Run programmes which consistently deliver real and lasting benefits that receive great feedback from attendees.

Your choices
Illumine understands that flexibility is key to successful business; that’s why we offer our programmes in a range of formats:

• Public workshops: our most popular programmes are open to anyone and delivered in Central London. Public workshops contain the skills and techniques you will require to learn the subject in an environment outside of work. Our workshops contain practical activities, not just theory and we manage group dynamics for you to capitalise on peer-learning opportunities.

• In-house courses: all our programmes can be delivered in-house. They are flexible in both content and delivery. We are able to customise the content for most of our courses so that they are specific to your industry sector, or situation.

• Rounded Thinker Award: recognition of the significant achievement of individuals or teams when working with Illumine.

• Facilitation: one of our experts will assist your team to rapidly progress on a real challenge.

• Coaching: guidance, feedback and direction to ensure successful performance.

• Away days: team development activities and programmes.

• Speakers: expert thought-provoking speakers to stimulate.