

EffectivePowerPhrases®

Undergo A Verbal Renovation: 'Colorize' Your Vocabulary

By Meryl Runion

For years, I've been teaching people how to use PowerPhrases® and have defined these phrases as short, specific and targeted expressions that allow you to say what you mean and mean what you say without being mean when you say it.

My original definition used the word "colorful" instead of "specific." When I discovered that "specific" was a critical part of the definition, I didn't want to make the definition longer. So I dropped the word "colorful," and I miss it.

Colorful words create images in people's minds and create deeper impressions than words that are plain.

Often, specific words are colorful. "Doberman Pincher" is more specific than "dog," and it is more colorful as well. A malicious Doberman Pincher is more specific still, and more striking. "Intuition" is more specific than "thought" and has a vibrancy that the word "thought" does not have. An "intuitive flash" is more specific still, and few people can hear those words without getting a mental picture.

The first step in colorizing your PowerPhrases® is to get more specific in your wording. And don't stop there. Just

as venues renovate their sites, you can renovate your vocabulary.

Collect words you like. When a flight attendant said she would illuminate the cabin, I found the word "illuminate" very illuminating. I added "illuminate" to my collection. Why light a cabin when you can illuminate it?

Similarly, why walk when you can tread? Why repeat when you can echo? By adding color to your words, you go from mundane to magnificent. Add a word a day to your collection.

Speakers know that colorful titles with colorful words draw attendees to their sessions. Speaker Pamela Jett Aal doesn't just speak about difficult people; she speaks about snipers, steamrollers and chronic complainers. I bet you already have a face for each description. Speaker Marilyn Sherman doesn't just talk about overcoming obstacles. The title of her speech is "Whose Comfort Zone Are You In?" Are you picturing yourself in a circle of someone else's comfort? Karyn Ruth White doesn't simply talk about overcoming perfectionism. She calls her hilarious keynote "Kiss My Botox! Poking Fun at Perfectionism." I won't describe the image that title creates in my mind. I

play on a common expression by calling one of my keynotes "And Your Point Is?" How many times have you wanted to say that?

Colorful language also draws participants to your event. Draw from your word collection when it is time to market your conference. Give potential attendees motivation to come to your event by using expressions that insert them into a vivid picture of a productive experience. Words such as "mastery," "flair," "proficiency," "advance," "heighten," "discover," "perceive," "unearth" and, of course, "illuminate" will create images in attendees' minds that words like "competency," "information," "effective" and "learn" might not.

When you speak in Technicolor, your listener hears in Technicolor as well. So give yourself a verbal renovation. You'll never want to speak in black and white again. §



Meryl Runion is the author of "Perfect Phrases for Managers" and "How to Use PowerPhrases to Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say and Get What You Want." She is available for keynotes and training. Her free weekly newsletter, "A PowerPhrase a Week," is available online at www.speakstrong.com.