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Hi everyone

It's been a busy year - December has already arrived!

I've had the pleasure to work with a variety of people and travelled to new locations this year.

Thank you for your support and feedback throughout the year especially on the newsletters, [blog posts](#) and [Facebook page](#).

Special thanks go to my 'regulars' - Jim Birtwistle, [Lucinda Lions](#) and [Francis Foo](#) - who regularly contact me with their feedback and words of encouragement. I appreciate it.

I've decided to extend the **special offer** that I've given to Infinite Growth's Facebook Community to also include my newsletter readers.

This offer hasn't been advertised on the website so if you decide to take it up, [send me a message](#) and let me know where you heard about the program. You'll automatically receive the 5 weeks of email support. Enter the 2012 working year with improved business writing skills!

I've included Infinite Growth's office hours below for the Christmas holiday period. The next newsletter will arrive in your inbox in February, 2012. If you have any topics that you'd like covered in 2012 feel free to [let me know](#).

In this month's article I've interviewed the 2011 winner of the NSW and ACT Toastmasters Humorous Speech Content, Dale Rees-Bevan. Dale shares with me her experiences of being in a contest and how preparing for a contest can be applied to preparing for business presentations. Congratulations Dale on your win!

As Christmas is around the corner, I'd like to wish you a safe and happy Christmas. May 2012 be a prosperous one for your business.

Until next time
Maria



PS: A warm welcome to my new subscribers!

PSS: Infinite Growth's [blog](#) and [Facebook page](#) will be regularly updated with articles and videos throughout December and January - so drop by and leave a comment!

Let's Connect



Questions or Feedback?

Have a question or would like to provide feedback?

Post it on Infinite Growth's [Facebook page](#) or reply to this email.

Special Offer

For a limited time – **until 20 December** – in addition to the great bonuses already included, receive an extra week of email support (totalling 5 weeks of support) when you purchase **Infinite Growth's [Self-Study Business Writing Program](#)**.

Improve your business writing skills in time for the new working year!

About Infinite Growth

[Infinite Growth](#) delivers [workshops](#) and [coaching](#) sessions for individuals and teams in:

- [Presentation skills](#)
- [Business writing](#)
- Communicating effectively with [clients](#) and [colleagues](#)

[Contact Maria](#) to book a complimentary session to discuss your business communication needs.

Interview with a Champion



I recently interviewed Dale Rees-Bevan who won the 2011 NSW and ACT Toastmasters Humorous Speech Contest with her speech, *Country Charm*.

As a businesswoman, do you find humour easy to include in your speeches and presentations?

Most of the time, yes. I think the key is not to be funny but rather to be natural.

Once you stumble on something that you know works you tend to use it as often as you can. Then at least you know you're going to get a laugh.

How did you decide on the topic for your speech for this contest?

I think it would be more accurate to say that the topic found me.

I flew on a small plane to Cobar and I was chatting the whole time and decided there and then that this has to be a speech.

When you're preparing to speak in front of a group – whether it's in a competition or in a business environment – do you have a process by which you compose the various elements of your speech or presentation?

Starting at the end is always the obvious strategy – what you want your audience to know, think, feel or do by the end of the presentation. Then you work backwards to achieve that.

When I do presentations for clients, the most useful preparation is talking to the clients to find out what the issues are, what message they want to come across and putting it altogether is just about finding a structure that is logical and easy to follow. Their answers often form the backbone of the presentation.

To compete in the finals for a speech contest can be a very stressful experience. How do you stay composed and focused?

I've always been extremely nervous at competitions, which is why I do it because I find it more challenging than any other kind of speaking.

This year I felt so much more relaxed and a lot of it was due to the fact that I'm simply so busy professionally there almost wasn't time to feel nervous. But there was also an element of a conscious decision not to get stressed but to try and concentrate on the enjoyment of the experience.

I think that was partly why I was more successful than usual.

What are your top three tips when preparing for a presentation?

The most important thing is to concentrate on the main message or theme and only use supporting materials that are relevant to that.

Think about where the humour could go in. A bit of planned humour always goes a long way. It's a great way to keep your audience awake as well.

Find out as much as you can about your client so that all of your material can be presented relevant to your client's world.

If your presentation is internal then simply make reference to the internal environment and characters. Everyone connects with this and enjoys the in-house references and jokes.

Thank you Dale, for your time!

If you'd like to listen to the full telephone interview you can find it [here](#).

Office hours over Christmas



The office will close on **20 December 2011** and will re-open on **10 January 2012**.

Infinite Growth's monthly newsletters will resume in February 2012.

If you know someone who could benefit from this newsletter feel free to forward it to them.

Not a subscriber yet? Like what you've read? [Subscribe now](#)

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