



Keep your audience on the Edge of their Seats!

Check the VAKS

If you pick up this tip and use it, your audience members will have no choice but to be wrapped up in your stories, feeling like they were there when the stories took place.

As you know, storytelling involves a series of scenes. When you create a scene, it's important to engage your audience member's senses.

We can do this by doing what I call check the VAKS. It stands for Visual Auditory Kinesthetic and Smell. When you invite your audience members into your scene, you want to make sure these VAKS are present. Now listen closely to this just 20 second audio clip of me and see if you can point out the VAKS.

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If you had been sitting beside my wife and me just a few moments later on our old beat up, black leather sofa, with the chocolate chip cookies baking in the background, you would have heard her say something that can absolutely change your life. I know it changed mine.

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Welcome back. Let me ask you some questions about that scene that I just created. What could you see in the scene? The black leather sofa, right? What could you hear in the scene? Hopefully you said my wife, and this is key. That's why I specifically used the word, "You would have heard my wife," because heard is an auditory word. It's for the auditory learners.



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What could you feel in that scene? My audiences usually say, "I could feel the leather." Sometimes they say, "I could feel the love," which lets me say, "Hey, love and leather always go together, right?" And what could you smell in my scene? The cookies. In fact, you might even been able to taste them. That, of course, is another sense.

So I check the VAKS in the story. Make sure you do the same with your scenes, but guess what? Do it quickly. That really only took me maybe nine or 10 seconds to do. You don't want to go overboard and take 30 seconds or a minute to check the VAKS in your scene. That's more of a novel rather than a speech.

One of the reasons checking the VAKS is so important is because your audience members learn in different ways. As you probably know, some are visual learners, some are auditory, and some are more kinesthetic, meaning they need to feel the experience.

The sense of smell, by the way, brings back memories more effectively than any other sense. So it's important to use that as well.

Here are two important caveats about checking the VAKS:

- 1. Make sure you set your scene quickly so you don't take away from your story.**

If you drone on and on about the VAKS and you were walking through the forest and the leaves were crumbling under your feet, the fresh air snuck in and slapped you in the face, look, you're going to lose your audience, because you won't get to the conflict, the hook, of your story fast enough.



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You don't want to do it in a way that it belongs in a novel. You want to make it in a speech, and that means you have to do it quickly. It shouldn't take very many seconds to get there.

2. Try to make the VAKS not seem so poetic.

Poetic is fine for a novel, but a speech needs to sound more realistic and personable. In other words, use words you would use in every day conversation as if you're talking to a friend.

I've seen some speakers say things like, "And as we traversed over the gravel, and the grass crackled under my toes, as the sweet-smelling flowers tickled the inside of my nose hairs and I...."

That's okay for a novel, but it's not okay for a speech. Speak like you normally would when you set the scene.

That's it for this week. I'll speak to you again next week. Until then, keep speaking up and make sure you check the VAKS.



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Craig's Top 10 Recommended Resources

1. <http://www.edgeoftheirseats.com/>
2. <http://www.createyourkeynote.com/>
3. <http://www.dynamicdeliverydevices.com/>
4. <http://www.learntoownthestage.com/>
5. <http://www.wcspeaking.com/>
6. <http://www.askcraigvalentine.com/>
7. <http://www.audioforspeakers.com>
8. <http://www.resourcesforspeakers.com>
9. <http://www.thebookonspeaking.com>
10. <http://www.automateyourspeaking.com>

Craig Valentine's Background & Results

Craig Valentine, MBA, an award-winning speaker, management trainer, and speech coach, has traveled the world helping speakers breathe life into their presentations. He has spoken in the United States, Taiwan, Canada, Jamaica, Qatar (Doha), England, Bahamas, Hong Kong, and China. In 1999 he won the World Championship of Public Speaking for Toastmasters International after competing with more than 25,000 contestants from 14 countries.

- *The conference was this past weekend and with your "virtual coaching" I was able to give my own "Killer Keynote". I stood on that stage and gave the speech I had always dreamed of giving-- they laughed where I wanted them to laugh -- they teared up where I wanted to touch them the most -- they came into the scene of my stories -- they heard my message and believed. It was a wonderful moment for me and I will always consider it a gift. Now I would be lying if I said I didn't enjoy the standing ovation at the end...*Susan Lamb-Robinson, Speaker; Toronto, Canada
- *"I now deliver better presentations in 20 minutes than I did in 60 minutes; moreover, my closing ratio has increased 350% thanks to the lessons learned in The Edge of Their Seats Storytelling Home-Study Course. Craig's 9 Step Formula has changed my*



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life. "Kevin D. Gross, MBA, President, Alumni Connection.com
www.AlumniConnection.com

- *I learned more from you in one hour than I have in years of giving speeches. You are a master of your game. Thank you for inspiring me to find my own voice and greatness as a speaker!! Thank you! Pele Raymond Ugboajah; Author, Speaker, Business Coach; DreamBanc, L.L.C.*
- *Craig Valentine is one of America's finest speakers, 1999 World Champion of Public Speaking and author of what I consider to be the bible of public speaking, "Nuts and Bolts of Public Speaking". He's also got several audio and DVD's on the subject. Craig was the driving force and the biggest reason I made it to the World Championships last year in Calgary. The two days I spent with him, in his living room, in Baltimore, completely changed the way approach public speaking...Martin Presse, 2008 Finalist for World Champion of Public Speaking*
- *Hey man I know you are busy but I wanted to bring you up to speed on us. We just returned from San Francisco where we spoke at the national convention of NAMI. It was great. No notes, we both spoke for about an hour. Based on all the comments they liked it. There were a number of people there who had heard us before and they were amazed at the changes we made. Thanks! Bill Neely; www.billandtena.com; Courage in Crisis*
- *Thank you 1000 times over. I just came home from Niagara, what a fantastic time I had. All of your techniques worked. I offered 7 free, 1 hour consultations if booked today offered only in January. I not only booked those I had a line up afterward. Sarah Hilton; Speaker on Mental Health, Toronto*
- *Thanks for your changes...I gave the speech last Monday and everyone raved about it. Thank you so much for your help. I went in very confident, knowing it was a very good speech thanks to your advice and changes. In fact, they hope to get me back again and several said they want to find out where else I am speaking so they can come hear me again. Christine Duvivier; Managing Director, Impact Partners*