
Kevin Lynch is both Partner and Writer at Hadrian's Wall, a Chicago advertising agency he co-founded in 2001. Having written copy for several highly-regarded agencies in the past, Kevin has used a unique blend of humor and smarts to bring his creative shop to national recognition. Continuing on a theme of this series, Kevin also happens to be a very nice guy. (As well as a human quote machine.)

1. *How do you prepare for a presentation?*

Do you remember in one of the Indiana Jones movies where the guy who was about to be killed sat in a fetal position, rocking back and forth and chanting and praying over and over again? That's pretty much my routine.

2. *Describe your overall presentation style.*

Mine is a style of presenting in the same way a belly flop is a style of dive. I'm pretty straight-forward, offer as brief of a set-up as is required to help frame the idea, then show the idea. Not much in the way of drama or theatrics. In terms of order, we try to create a "logic trail" so clients can follow your train of thought. It can sometimes make insane ideas feel less so.

3. *Do you still get nervous during presentations?*

Creatives aren't the only ones that are nervous. Clients are too. After all, the ideas you're showing may impact their career more than than yours. If I knew a good way to deal with it, I'm sure I'd be a better presenter. I can reveal, however, that sweating profusely doesn't seem to help.

4. *How do you deal with a limited or set presentation time?*

As mentioned above, we're pretty straight-forward here. Straight-forward doesn't take too long.

5. *What's the biggest mistake you've made during a presentation?*

I find it impossible to love all ideas equally. Therefore, I always end up kicking myself if the client doesn't buy the "right" one. It's not like the others are cannon fodder. They're not. But if you don't sell the right one, regardless of the quality of the #2 offering, it feels like a compromise and a mistake that you presented it.

Kevin Lynch – Hadrian’s Wall Advertising – Chicago, Illinois

6. *How do you know when a presentation is going south – and what do you do?*

Just look for the point when clients begin doing imitations of mannequins. Of course, if you know things are going south, so does everyone else. So talk about it. “Hey, do you see how this can help you? If not, why not? Come back here...” Or something like that.

7. *What’s the best advice you can give creatives to help them present better?*

Be yourself. If you’re earnest and hard-working, be that way while presenting. If you’re intellectual, or down-to-earth, or funny, be that way. If you’re a prick, well, try to be less of a prick for an hour. But hell, it’s not like pricks don’t do well in this business. Be yourself.

8. *How important are presentation skills for an artist/creative?*

Occasionally, an idea sells itself. For the 99.9999% of the other times, presentation skills are required.

9. *Anything else you’d like to say on this topic?*

Try to keep yourself out of the equation. The most popular words in creative presentations are either “I” or “we.” “When I thought about your product...” “We were thinking that if we could just convince people...” Keep in mind you’re not selling your brilliance, you’re solving a business problem. So speak about the business problem, and how the presented ideas might help that problem. By keeping yourself out of the equation, you make the conversation less personal, and you end up looking like more of an expert in the process. 