



What is
there to do
for four
hours?

INSIDE AN EXECUTIVE
PRESENTATIONS
COACHING SESSION
WITH IBRAHIM J. MARIWA

MARIANNE
VINCENT

People 
Potential

What is there to do for four hours?

Inside an Executive Presentations Coaching session with Ibrahim J.

Mariwa

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Prologue

Seated at the edge of the meeting room, I was the first to see the candidates as they came in for their final interview. A young man was walking in my direction. But no, it couldn't be, surely: a shaved head, blood-red jacket, short jeans *also* a hue of red, socks showing, boots and dark glasses. He was making his way towards us with a slow, deliberate, swagger.

"Hel-lo," said the red-clad thug king, stretching out his hand, fingers adorned with large rings. "You must be Mayrien Vincent. My name is...*Ibrahiiiiim*." I didn't see a kris tucked into his belt, so I shook his hand.

His compulsory presentation, delivered in a deep, euphonious voice, was filled with, "Go deep – my father always said to me." *Deep* is a well-chosen word to use when speaking to us, a team of specialists concerned with mastery. He didn't tell any jokes, but he was so funny throughout that the Leadership team had to stifle snorts and giggles.

We'd also never observed one minute of silence at a final interview – he sat there, in front of us, head bowed, unable to answer the question: "So, ideally, what would you like to earn?"

We hired him at the end of 2015.

Part One: Ibrahim

Down at the Call Centre

Before joining us, Ibrahim worked at a call centre in Kuala Lumpur. Every month a quality agent would randomly select four calls for a review session. He'd have to sit next to them, put on a headset and listen to one call. They would pick the call where you had committed several of the most common mistakes, or the worst call. You were scored on a scale starting from Exceeded Expectations (95–100 marks), moving down to Achieved Expectations, then Learning Opportunity, Below Expectations, and Zero Tolerance Behaviour.

Ibrahim spent the first three months at Below Expectations.

He'd dread every review. He didn't know the consequences until the quality agent briefed him: he had three chances to change. If by the fourth month he had not, he would be moved to a lower quality project with a lower salary, or terminated. He'd just gotten married; they were expecting their first child. He was in trouble.

Still, each month when he looked at his scoresheet, there were so many red marks against the list of more than eighty items. At month one, he chucked the sheet into a drawer. At month two, same drawer. By month three, he could toss it into the drawer with his eyes shut.

From Desk to Baton

We hired Ibrahim partly because of his presence and his unusualness. We did not have a vacancy for a trainer at that time, so we put him to work on a post-training coaching assignment. He went through emails from participants of *The Case Maker*TM who'd used the tools on a work case after completing our programme. He would pick out areas for improvement and offer them better ways to frame and justify.

But stuck behind a desk, alone, reading and analysing emails, Ibrahim languished.

Until we needed a new *Think on Your Feet*® trainer. He recovered from a disastrous pre-accreditation Fluency Test and went into his first client class. Many trainers have the experience of getting energy from our participants. But Ibrahim was positively feeding off them – gobbling everything in sight and spewing out a flood of elegant demonstrations, humour, skillful coaching and inspiration. He was at home.

I moved him quickly to his next accreditation: our flagship programme at the time, *Presentations Alive!*™ During his accreditation workshop, he simply skipped teaching the entire Visual Aids module. I found out later he didn't like it; he felt he wasn't good at it and didn't want his participants to get a watered-down experience, so he focused on what he knew. You can imagine my face at the back of the class, though: Director of Training Quality, designer of the programme, master trainer, his manager. I tapped my feedback furiously into my computer.

His participants made their final presentation, and it was time for him to give feedback. "Come, sit here on the Hot Seat next to me, and let's watch your video on the big screen." But something uncanny started to unfold. He'd say the participant's *exact* script *before* it sounded on the recording. He was using their *exact* gestures, their *exact* tone of voice *before* we saw or heard it played back. He went on like this for every learner.

My eyes were popping out from behind my glasses, and my head almost fell off from shaking it in disbelief. Everyone, including me, was thinking: *how could he possibly remember that?* The excitement in the room was palpable.

Participants usually run back to their seats after the final feedback, no matter how encouraging we are, no matter how well they've done. His participants were jumping off the Hot Seat to practise. I could see why: after his feedback, he'd show them how they *could be*. If they had even a remote chance of looking and sounding like that, they were going to snap it up.

Because of that missing module, it was a conditional accreditation, yet I knew we had crossed a threshold. I told our team, "I am passing the *Presentations Alive!* baton to Ibrahim."

They were shocked. To get the baton immediately after accreditation? Before you've given your first client class? Impossible – but they knew I wasn't kidding because I'm someone who does not, cannot tell jokes.

“In many ways he is better than I am. He will stand on my shoulders and create unforgettable experiences for our participants.”

Lift-off

We weren't prepared for what happened next. A regional client asked us to run a high-stakes combination class at short notice: they were flying senior managers in from several countries. They wanted two days of *The Case Maker Advanced* led by Terry, our former CEO, followed by a day of *Presentations Alive!* Our senior trainer for the third day was already booked elsewhere. When I decided that Ibrahim would do it, the senior trainer said to him: “This client rates all trainers using their own criteria which they don't share with us. You'd better not screw up.”

I worked with him day and night for the two weeks before the class, trying to beam all my knowledge, experience and skills to him. It was a journey I thought we'd make over a few years. Before he left for the class, I said: “Remember what you did at your *Presentations Alive!* accreditation? *You* did that. *You* helped your participants transform. You can do it again. Anywhere in the world.”

Ibrahim went down to Singapore one day ahead to sit at the back of Terry's class so he could get a feel for the participants. “I was shivering,” he told me later, “listening to their complex business cases, hearing Terry field all their questions. I didn't know what I was going to do with them the next morning.”

At the end of Terry's class, he had the participants do an activity he doesn't normally do at *The Case Maker Advanced*. Each one had to walk to the centre of the class from the side, pause, greet the class, and deliver the attention grabber they had just worked out after completing their cases. This was to give them a taste of what they needed to focus on after the thinking work on a case had been done.

One by one, they walked to the centre. Some paused, some forgot. Some shuffled while standing and greeting; some swayed. Everyone looked smaller, shorter. Suddenly, the room was filled with “err”s and “uhm”s. All were unsure of themselves. Ibrahim, though, rose from his seat at the back of the room, kicking the chair away as though it was hindering him: *They're mine now, and no one will recognise them by the end of tomorrow.*

In my Director of Training Quality role, I had never placed a newly accredited trainer in a situation like this. I can't remember now what the client's rating was, but

it was very high. Ibrahim learned that senior managers might be content or technical experts, but many needed help to convey their ideas and thoughts in a way befitting their experience and expertise. He decided then that he was going to help them.

Within thirteen months of that fateful *Presentations Alive!* accreditation, Ibrahim ran his first *Executive Presentations Coaching* (EPC) session for senior managers. I had thought it would take five to ten years. He didn't know it then, but one day he would deliver *The Case Maker Advanced* and be working on complex business cases. He would go on to become our Director of Training Quality for Delivery.

Part Two: The EPC Session

Confidence, Comfort, Common Ground

When I asked Ibrahim how he prepares for an EPC session, he said: “Well, I don’t use a checklist anymore aside from my ‘pre-flight’ virtual environment checklist. I don’t prepare using a structured method like I used to. Instead, I spend time learning about the coachee, their organisation, and I mull over the question – what do I need to do to give them an unforgettable experience?”

Ibrahim and his coachee Joseph (not his actual name), a senior leader, have already had a preliminary conversation to get a feel for each other and for what the EPC session is about. Ibrahim has administered a pre-EPC self-survey to Joseph and a few of Joseph’s colleagues who have also enrolled themselves for coaching. It’s a scale of 1 to 5 from poor to excellent, covering content and delivery skills for face-to-face and virtual presentations.

Joseph has rated himself mostly 4s and 5s.

Now, at the start of the session, Ibrahim sets the stage to gain three things he wants: Joseph’s confidence in him as coach, Joseph’s comfort, and common ground between them. When he sees and hears evidence of this, he knows it will be much easier to achieve the presentation goals.

After these first few minutes, Joseph asks Ibrahim the big question that’s been on his mind: “What is there to *do* for...*four*...hours?”

Cracks, Movies and Bridges

The first EPC session begins with a baseline presentation by the coachee. As Joseph presents, Ibrahim takes note of what might be the highest-leverage items and prioritises them. At the top of his list are transitions. Joseph doesn’t have any, yet rated himself 4 in this area. Ibrahim writes a zero in his notes.

“Here is what you’re doing that you will never do again.”

Slide 1. “So this one is about blah, blah, blah.” Click. “Uhm, this one is about blah, blah, blah.” Click. “Err, now this one is about blah, blah, blah.” Click. “So this one...”

Ibrahim can see that Joseph is puzzled, wondering what’s wrong with that.

“Now here’s another way. It’s slightly better, but it’s not for you either.”

Slide 1. “Blah, blah, blah...about content ‘A’.” At the end of slide 1, “Now that you know ‘A’, what’s next is ‘B’.” Click. Slide 2’s title is ‘B’. “So, ‘B’; blah, blah, blah... about ‘B’.” At the end of slide 2: “Now that you know ‘B’, let’s move on to ‘C’.” Click. Slide 3’s title is ‘C’. “Now, ‘C’; blah, blah, blah...about ‘C’.”

Joseph exclaims: “That’s nice!”

“No, no! The first way – is not to be done by anyone, ever again. Be sure to tell your direct reports. The second way is for amateurs; beginners; novices! That’s not you. You’re presenting multi-million-dollar solutions to clients. Watch and listen carefully. *This* is going to be you.”

Slide 1. “Blah, blah, blah...about ‘A’.” At the end of slide 1, “Now that you know ‘A’, you’ve got a question on your mind: blah, blah?” Joseph nods. “It’s an important question.” Joseph feels affirmed. “Why? Because...blah, blah.” Joseph nods again – yes, that’s exactly what he thinks! Ibrahim clicks to the next slide while Joseph is nodding and thinking. Joseph sees the answer to the question without Ibrahim saying a word, and in his mind goes: *Ahhh!*

“And that’s why I rated you zero for transitions. And I know, as the listener, you’ve just felt something you’ve not felt before and you’re wondering what just happened.” Joseph wonders how Ibrahim knows that.

“In the first version, there’s a crack at the end of every slide – the audience falls in, then must climb up again for the next slide. They fall, climb up, fall, climb up. How many times before they decide to avoid more pain and run away?”

Ibrahim can see that Joseph's mind is ticking away, trying to figure out how to cement all the cracks.

"In the second instance, it's as if each slide is an entire movie: it starts, builds, ends, all in two minutes. Another movie starts immediately. And another. And another. Thirty movies later, the audience is exhausted. We can't blame them for switching off halfway through."

When Ibrahim and I were discussing transitions, it occurred to me that he sees a *space* between slides. Imagine your deck in slide sorter in PowerPoint. There *is* a space between each. To Ibrahim, this is an accident waiting to happen. Thus, he builds a *bridge* so that the listener has a better UX instead of pain or exhaustion. At every bridge, he wants his listeners to do something *different*: stroll across, skip, hop, run, slide down, or glide. And so, listeners go on a journey with him. Who wouldn't want to run across a bridge to explore what's on the other side?

He shows Joseph how to construct a simple, solid bridge: "Since you know what the next slide is, if you figure out what might be on your listener's mind at the end of your current slide, you could simply say it, and just like that you've created a bridge."

Joseph gives it a go and manages to get some transitions immediately. He is beaming: he can hear that he is different. He can *feel* that he is different. Ibrahim tells him he feels different too, listening.

As I understood more of what Ibrahim does, I realised he is determined to *elevate the experience* of the listener. His transitions get the listener involved, and when they're deeply involved, it's as if they shed their skin and become something different: they're no longer listeners, they're fellow adventurers.

I was once sitting next to our client at the back of a training room; we were both observing Ibrahim's class. Towards the end of the class, as he was delivering a transition, she must have whooshed down a slide he'd built, because she leapt out of her chair and cheered as he clicked to the next.

Ibrahim tells Joseph: "There's also a method to present the blah, blah, blah, and there are transitions to make there, too. But that's for another time."

“I’ve never been so glad to get a zero,” Joseph says, “I don’t care if it takes me a year. I’m going to work until I can do what you do.”

Something to Do

Ibrahim says, “You might be wondering why I started with transitions rather than the opening of your presentation. Look at it this way: you have 30 slides where you can engage your audience. But you also have 29 more chances to *involve* your listener, to keep them very, very close to you *throughout*, to affect the UX in a major way.”

With that done, they begin working on the opening. “Show me,” Ibrahim says.

Joseph starts with the customary greeting. Then, “Today, I will be taking you through...”

“Stop. That’s for amateurs...”

“...beginners; novices?” Joseph finishes. They both laugh. But Joseph asks, “Seriously, what’s wrong with that?”

Ibrahim shares the value of what we call “first words”: how first words can either compel your listener to stay and come on a journey with you, or tell them it’s a good time to answer WhatsApp messages.

Joseph gets it quickly. “I’ll start with a pantun! I know just the right one.”

When he recites the pantun after the greeting, Joseph can hear the difference. Once again, he *feels* different. Ibrahim has goose pimples.

“That’s amazing,” Ibrahim says, “a great way to start that impacts your specific audience. Now go on from there – you need to craft an Attention Grabber that makes them really, truly want to remain, and not miss a single thing you have to say.”

Ibrahim helps Joseph hone in on what he wants his listeners to think, feel and see at the very beginning of the presentation. That’s easy for Joseph. He wants to tell them about the opportunity that is before them to save 30 percent of a very large sum of money.

Joseph tries this out and is even more pleased with his new opening. But Ibrahim isn't satisfied.

"Give the audience *something to do* in their heads – make it *immersive*. Then you've got them *with you, in their thoughts*, right from the first minute.

Joseph is curious.

"Instead of saying it this way:

"*Your greeting; pantun; I'm here to talk to you about a way you can save up to 30 percent of your annual cost...*

"Try something like this:

"*Your greeting; pantun; think about your cost this past year. (I'm giving the audience something to do.) Now slash it by 30 percent. (I'm giving the audience a second thing to do.) That's why I am here today.*"

"Wow," Joseph can't help himself, "what a concept!" He immediately practises the sequence again, finding his own words that will suit his listeners, that will give them something to do in their heads.

Ibrahim can see that not only has Joseph gotten the structure, content, and concept of first words, but he is naturally putting in pauses at the right places, and without trying, he is using his voice to mark out key words and phrases.

After Joseph is done, Ibrahim says: "You look like you've won the lottery."

Impact via Absence

Joseph's fillers are mostly "uhm"s and "so"s. There aren't many: about twenty in four minutes. Ibrahim asks Joseph to watch the baseline recording and record the fillers.

After about two minutes, Ibrahim notices that Joseph really doesn't seem to be enjoying himself. Ibrahim knows that all the objections he usually gets – *I need fillers*,

they help me to get to the next point, they're natural – will begin to dissolve now. This is the moment of awareness he is after.

As Joseph is listening to himself, he has an insight: Ibrahim's impact doesn't come from the quality of his language: it comes from the *absence* of fillers. And something shifts for him.

He continues to practise parts of his presentation. Ibrahim says, "Do you notice you're now *avoiding* fillers, like you're trying to run away from them?"

"I am, I am! I can feel them coming up my throat, so I am pursing my lips and swallowing them! I don't want them to spit themselves out at any cost."

As Ibrahim and I were talking, I asked him whether he'd always been a fillerless presenter. Apparently not. "The key to removing fillers is *observing* yourself. It's not practice, practice, practice," he said, after telling me his story.

As I mulled over this, I thought: *Yeah...how can you practise something that shouldn't be there?*

Interlude

“The call-monitoring scoresheet didn’t make sense,” Ibrahim told me, remembering his call centre days. “There were too many words; I wasn’t able to analyse it, go to the drawing board, figure out a strategy. So, I asked the quality agent if I could have a copy of all my recordings instead. He sent me the last four.”

Ibrahim listened to the first minute of the first recording and thought: *I don’t want to listen to this*. Then the second: *It’s bad. My voice sounds awful, I can’t even understand what I’m saying*. Third, fourth: *I can’t bear to listen to this*. And a moment later, an insight: that’s what I need to change – the first minute of every call.

Call most hotlines and you’ll hear an equivalent of this:

“GoodmorningwelcometoorganisationXmynameisYhowmayIassistyou?”

Ibrahim didn’t realise that this strategy for speed was backfiring. He had a group of customers who would always ask: *Can you say your name again?* Followed by: *Can you spell your name for me?* Over and over, he would have to spell it: not just i-b-r-a-h-i-m, but In-di-a! Bra-vo! Ro-me-o! Al-pha! Customers wanted to be sure they got it right when they complained.

He was determined to avoid this exercise in spelling. He’d just have to say his name properly. Reclining on his chair, with his feet on his desk, he said, eighty times a day:

“GoodmorningwelcometoorganisationXmynameisIB-RA-HIIIIIM!
howmayIassistyou?”

At the end of each day, constantly yelling out his name, he was fatigued. A zombie walked to the bus stop after work. *Why am I so tired?* He didn’t have the answer, but he knew he had to do that first minute differently.

Still reclining, still with feet up, he slowed down while making the first words melodious (imagine your GPS): *Good morning!...Welcome to...Organisation X!...My name is—IB-ra-hiiiiim!...How may I assist you?* His customers replied: *Wah...so enthusiastic you are!* This was his first experience of UX, and how much it could

change if he changed.

He realised he was starting to feel excitement as customer responses continued to change. One day, he sat bolt upright. No longer able to recline, he planted his feet firmly on the floor. And for the first time, he was eager to answer calls.

“I started coming in early, waiting for 7:59am. I’d have my hand stretched out, and at 8am, I’d pounce on that button to begin receiving calls,” he recounted. When it came time for lunch, he didn’t want to go. He started listening to those four calls beyond the first minute. He’d always assumed he spoke fluently with each customer but that’s not what he heard: he was an unending series of stops and starts punctuated by a slew of “uhm”s, “so”s, and “err”s. *Gosh, that’s awful. How do I change that?*

Some days later, he stands. Like a giant in call-centre-land, he is using his hands to describe and emphasise; his voice rings out; words begin to flow like a fountain; his customers start to shower praise. He wasn’t aware you’d get 20 ringgit when a customer wrote in with praise. In one month, he made the equivalent of his salary in compliments money.

“I was able to pay for the hospital where my mother-in-law wanted her first grandchild to be born,” he said, tears in his eyes.

At the next review, the quality agent picked the best recording. Ibrahim was struck: he sounded good! He also realised there wasn’t a single filler word. His scoresheet, usually face up so that the red marks could jeer at him, lay face down. The agent handed the sheet to him. “I don’t know if this is a first in this call centre, but in all my years of call monitoring, I’ve never seen it or given it.”

Turning it over, Ibrahim saw: 100.

He continued to take calls standing with newbies huddled around him, learning from this unique specimen.

He was soon promoted to train the call centre staff.

I Can't See Your Feet, But I Know

Joseph swivels on his swivel chair, making a wave-like movement with his shoulders while presenting, like a hip-hop dancer.

'It's the chair,' he says, defending himself, when Ibrahim models what he is doing.

"You need to do two things. First, plant your feet on the floor. The way they are now," – Ibrahim can't see Joseph's feet, but he knows – "it's easy to swivel."

Joseph sees that his feet are indeed not square on the floor. "How did you know that?" He plants his feet on the floor. He can't swivel.

"The second thing: emulate me. Do everything you can see me do; adjust things on your side and see if your presence starts looking like my presence. From there, you can develop your own special brand of presence."

Joseph spends the next fifteen minutes adjusting the *way* his feet are planted on the floor, asking Ibrahim to specify how far apart his feet are, how far back on the chair he is. He scrutinises his video, then Ibrahim's. He discovers that he is very close to his camera and Ibrahim is further away. But as he pushes his laptop back, he can't reach the keyboard.

"Just ask your personal assistant to get you two external keyboards: for the office, and for your home. Here, look." Ibrahim adjusts the camera so Joseph can see his set-up for virtual presentations.

Ibrahim then swivels, but it is to give Joseph a side view – so Joseph can see that his back isn't resting on the chair. He demonstrates, and Joseph can hear the difference in Ibrahim's voice when he reclines, compared to when his back isn't touching the back of the chair. Joseph notices a small cushion on Ibrahim's chair. "Comfort," Ibrahim says. "Comfort helps you to be everything you want to be." Joseph goes around his house looking for a small cushion for his lower back.

No, Sorry, That Isn't Eye Contact

Ibrahim doesn't work with Joseph on eye contact because with all that swivelling, Joseph barely looks at the camera. He makes eye contact with the camera fleetingly as he whooshes from side to side. Instead, Ibrahim demonstrates what Joseph is

doing and models a different way.

Joseph had never discerned the difference for the listener when the presenter looked into the camera as though being filmed (*he is talking to only me*) as compared to looking at all the videos thinking that that was eye contact, while twirling away (*I'm feeling nauseous, I'm not sure why. Maybe I'll excuse myself from the meeting*). Ibrahim adds some finer distinctions so Joseph can make eye contact more naturally.

Joseph does use gestures. But he makes all the common mistakes for virtual presentations. It takes only a few minutes of demonstration for Joseph to learn: how wide gestures should be in a virtual meeting; how fast they should not be because of blurriness for the audience; how far away from the camera his hands should be. Joseph is taken aback at his Giant Hands.

The EPC session is about to end, and Ibrahim starts wrapping up.

Gifts in a Mistake

"Is it time already?" asks Joseph.

Ibrahim says, "We didn't do much work on content skills today because you are fluent with this slide deck and your structure is satisfactory – for now. But your text could go to unexpected levels if you applied Framing, for example. Also, your Justification is too simple – just one slide with seven benefits. That's not enough for such a high-stakes presentation. We will work on these when..."

"I have one thing to ask," Joseph interrupts him. Ibrahim is concerned that perhaps he missed something crucial. "You asked me to rate myself in the pre-coaching survey. I gave myself mostly 4s and 5s. You told me you rated me zero for transitions. Could you rate me now, on all the skills?"

Ibrahim proceeds to rate him: mostly 2s for content skills, and 3s for delivery skills – Satisfactory. "But we're not stopping at Satisfactory."

"Yup, yup. Satisfactory is for amateurs; beginners; novices! And that's..."

"...not you," Ibrahim finishes Joseph's sentence. Joseph nods resolutely.

Just before Ibrahim ends the meeting, he asks Joseph: “What made *you* sign up for a virtual EPC?” Joseph’s colleagues had all opted for face-to-face sessions to be held some months later.

“Oh, I thought it was compulsory.”

Epilogue

And so it became clear: Ibrahim has an extreme dissatisfaction for amateurish ways. He wants Joseph, and every senior leader he works with – from their first words, all the way through their presentation, until the call to action – to show their audience that there is nowhere else they should be. He is on a quest to cast out amateurishness, send it to the dark kingdom, and to elevate the experience of the audience instead. Yet, this isn't enough. He wants more.

It's as though he wants the presenter to *levitate*. To find themselves on a different plane. To leave normal ways behind, to even forget some good ways of presenting. To bring their audience there, too, and help them become what is uncommon now: fully involved, thinking, curious. He knows that the view from that vantage point is unlike anything they have seen before. The *feeling* will be different, for everyone. And if senior leaders learn just enough to lift off, with listeners in tow, who knows what might happen? What might they be moved to do from that marvellous new place?

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To explore [Executive Presentations Coaching](#) (EPC) and how we can work with your senior leaders to raise their impact, or, if you want Ibrahim to deliver a keynote address or a TED-style presentation at your organisation's Learning Day event or a similar occasion, please get in touch with Mints at min.lee.chin@peoplepotential.com. We would be delighted to discuss the specifics and explore how we can best meet your needs.

About the Author



Marianne Vincent is the Director of Training Quality at People Potential. She is responsible for the rigorous trainer accreditation at People Potential and the unique methodology behind our skill-building programmes.

Marianne's vast experience came in handy in February 2020 when a regional bank in Singapore called. They wanted to cancel a seven-day face-to-face workshop for their trainers scheduled for the end of February. Singapore was one of the first countries (outside of China) to be affected by COVID-19, with their first imported case reported in January 2020. But instead of cancelling, our sales team negotiated, and the client agreed to test day one of a seven-day workshop in a virtual environment.

Marianne worked with a team for an intense two weeks to create People Potential's Virtual Instructor-led Training (VILT) methodology, converted the content and materials, trained the trainers, implemented a technical support team, and put new admin systems in place. It was a rocky morning on Day 1 of the virtual workshop, but the team assembled in the meeting room-turned-war room and worked furiously to solve problems on the fly.

The client, who themselves had started conducting virtual training, saw, heard and felt the difference and agreed to carry on for the remaining days. They would later say: "I'm using People Potential as the benchmark for training providers."

With other clients slowly returning, the team pressed on, determined to get the same or better results for all our programmes, including those thought to be ill-suited for the virtual environment, like presentation skills and *Executive Presentations Coaching*.

In her non-People Potential hours, Marianne works on a poetry collection called [A](#)

[Man with Shining Eyes](#) about her ten-year journey with her late father after he suffered a devastating stroke. When she is not writing, you'll find her out in her neighbourhood trying to run again or at home fortifying the few meals she knows how to cook.

Marianne was a trained concert pianist before changing careers. After almost 30 years of not practising, she resumed in 2020, capturing the process in [Absolutely, Perfectly](#) - an essay to honour the passing of her music teacher from her years at the Conservatorium at Melbourne University. She is currently working on Chopin's *Prelude Op. 28 No. 22*, trying to solve problems in her technique to play *Molto Agitato* at concert speed. (This is how Marianne has fun.)

She is re-reading George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London* using a pencil to analyse his craft and has just started *Coming Up for Air*.

Most Saturdays at lunchtime, if she's not writing, you will find her at her family home in Petaling Jaya seated at their Green Table, yakking with her Mum, siblings, nieces and nephews. Since she doesn't cook so well, her job is to make tea for everyone at 2 pm.

About People Potential



We're a learning and development consultancy and training provider based in Kuala Lumpur – with partners as far away as Europe. In the last 40 years, we've worked with multinational corporations (including several dozen on the Fortune 500 list) in 24 countries spread across five continents.

Over the years, we're humbled to have won numerous accolades from the HR Vendors of the Year Awards, including awards for Best Leadership Development Consultancy and Best Digital Learning Provider; we are the only training provider to win the Best Management Training Provider award (gold/silver) for six consecutive years (2017-2022, Singapore/Malaysia).



Our accolades for 2022 at the HR Vendors of the Year Awards

At People Potential, we can help you in three practice areas:

- [Business Presentations](#)
- [Leadership Development](#)
- [Instructional Design](#)

Our interventions are all available as face-to-face or virtual interventions. For more details, go to our website, www.peoplepotential.com.

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