

MEDIA KIT



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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Cindy Opong, 888-808-5009  
info@levanpartners.com

“This book will certainly impact the way you think about communication. The challenge is not only to let it impact the way you think, but also to embrace it, practice it, and use it with your team so it changes the way you execute communication—every time.”

Darren Wells, former Executive VP, CFO & President, Europe (retired)  
The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company

*Speaking with Strategic Impact* by business communication expert, Kate LeVan

### Mastering the Strategy, Tactics of Impactful Presentations By Leveraging Emotional “Intel” that Connects

Effectively communicating data and analytics in a way that supports or influences business strategy is tough. Experts in engineering, IT, HR, Finance, or Project Management—even sales and marketing professionals—across an array of industries muddle through such presentations every day. They stand in awe of TED Talk presenters, who seem born to convey their subject matter to audiences—no matter how large or small—in more dynamic and impactful ways.

Why is it that highly qualified business professionals with valuable technical knowledge or ideas often make presentations that fall flat and leave audiences uninspired? Kate LeVan, corporate communication coach, trainer, and instructor at Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management, points to a focus on process and details that lacks emotional intelligence and audience connection in her new book, *Speaking with Strategic Impact: Four Steps to Extraordinary Presence and Persuasion*.

Often speakers with analytical streaks forego leveraging their own emotional intelligence because it seems less than business-like, and that’s where the trouble begins. Without an emotional connection with their audiences—with the marketers, innovators, sales people, and C-suite executives

who may process information differently than their analytical counterparts—crucial business presentations fall flat, critical opportunities are missed, and these key contributors to the business are overlooked.

LeVan's new book, *Speaking with Strategic Impact*, certainly helps anyone with technical knowledge learn how to present their information effectively, so that they rise like cream to the top of their departments and organizations. But it also offers the pitch teams and so-called “natural” presenters the strategic guardrails and added structure they often need to stay on point and enjoy more consistent results.

“If you're like most of the diverse professionals I train and coach in face-to-face and ‘virtual’ effectiveness, you're a high-functioning type who manages to make it through most presentations and usually gets invited back, despite minor bouts of anxiety and the occasional testing of an audience's patience,” LeVan states. “In this book, I offer that average business presenter a way to ensure they will be seen and heard so that they achieve both their organizational goals and career goals—in that order.”

*Speaking with Strategic Impact* gives presenters the professional discipline needed to exceed an audience's ordinary expectations by giving them an engaging and productive experience as a matter of deliberate practice. This, LeVan says, creates extraordinary presenters. “Exceptionally good things tend to come to extraordinary presenters in our business culture—things like winning, increased sales, more exposure, more senior-level contacts, more responsibility, more . . . well, you get the idea,” she writes.

*Speaking with Strategic Impact* offers a simple and flexible communication methodology that is applicable to 90% of business interactions and designed to keep speakers more consistently on the mark in their high-stakes presentations and meetings. It represents a compilation LeVan's most helpful and differentiating advice, based on approximately 2000 business presentations she has evaluated over 20 years. Her book helps readers keep strategic considerations ahead of the tactical and allows them to absorb the overall approach with a variety of examples and answers to FAQs she's encountered in her training. To experience her training and coaching firsthand, contact [info@LeVanPartners.com](mailto:info@LeVanPartners.com).

###

*Speaking with Strategic Impact: Four Steps to Extraordinary Presence & Persuasion*

By Kate LeVan

Publisher: Delton Press

Publication Date: May 24, 2017

ISBN: 978-0-9989759-0-0 (paperback), Retail Price: \$16.95

ISBN: 978-0-9989759-1-7 (e-book), Retail Price: \$11.99

152 pages

For an interview with Kate LeVan, please contact Cindy Opong at 888-808-5009 or [info@levanpartners.com](mailto:info@levanpartners.com).  
Visit [www.SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com](http://www.SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com) for more information.



## REVIEWS & ENDORSEMENTS

“I’m a big fan of Kate’s training and coaching—both for myself and for our people. Her approach is part of our executive development and her vocabulary is deeply embedded in our culture. If you don’t want to just *talk the talk*, but *walk the walk* too—read this book!”

—LAURA THOMPSON

*Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company*

“After participating in Kate’s training, it’s not unusual for even a very experienced executive to walk up to me and say: ‘I just learned a whole lot more than I expected.’ I have little doubt that readers of this book will have the same reaction.”

—JIM WOODRUM

*Clinical Professor of Executive Education, Northwestern University: Kellogg School of Management*

“Kate taught me the value of preparation. I get a lot of compliments about my comfort on the stage, and that’s 100% related to my level of preparation. I prepare enough to make it look like I ‘wing it,’ but the reality is that I do anything but. I’ve used Kate’s techniques in every large speech I’ve given since the time I took her class, and it all starts with preparation and knowing your audience. Both my firm and I have definitely benefitted from Kate’s class.”

—RENAE T. FLANDERS, CPA

*Chief Financial Officer, Aon Risk Solutions, U.S. Retail*

“Kate LeVan positions you for success! This book lays out her well-honed and proven strategy for creating and delivering a compelling and engaging presentation. We’re proud to have worked with Kate for over ten years.”

—JON BUTCHER

*CEO, Mintel Americas, Mintel Group Ltd.*



“For years, as SVP of HR, I saw firsthand the impact Kate could have on executive presentation skills with my colleagues in the C-suite. Since those days, Kate has been my exclusive recommendation for any executive wishing to elevate their presentation skills. Now I will be recommending they read her book as well.”

—STEVE KING

*Executive Director of the Center for Professional and Executive Development, Wisconsin School of Business*

“I highly recommend Kate’s methods to transform your presentation skills. It was the fuel that got me the last mile on my journey to the executive level.”

—ED McGROGAN

*Senior Vice President and Chief Accounting Officer, Discover Financial Services*

“I cannot overemphasize the impact that the communication process Kate describes in this book had on my career over the last 20 years. As I used her tools with fanatical discipline (I took Kate’s 2-day course many times), I began to become more efficient—able to do meaningful preparation even when only given 10–15 minutes to prepare. I was a finance guy by trade, but became a good communicator by reputation.

“This book will certainly impact the way you think about communication. The challenge is not only to let it impact the way you *think*, but also to embrace it, practice it, and use it with your team so it changes the way you *execute* communication—every time.”

—DARREN WELLS

*former Executive Vice President, CFO and President, Europe, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company [retired]*

“Kate’s coaching helped me personally take that big next step in progressing my career and personal impact—I think the book provides great insight and direction to help you adapt and improve your ability to understand your audience and ensure you are able to connect effectively across the spectrum of executive styles you encounter. A great read for all consultants!”

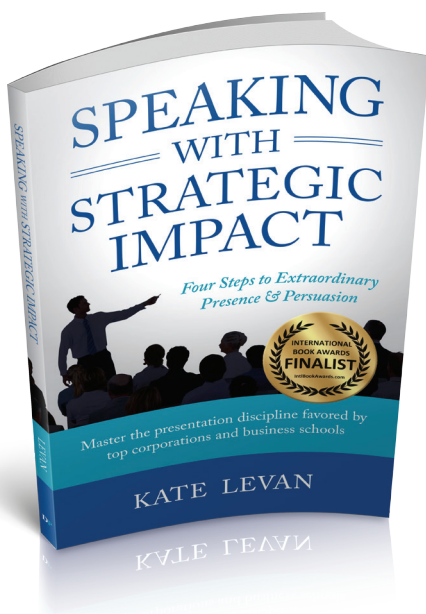
—GARY FINK

*Senior Managing Director, Global Consultancy*





## BOOK DESCRIPTION



*SPEAKING WITH STRATEGIC IMPACT* is for business people who make their living—or their mark—through presentations long and short.

It's a must-read if you're a consultant, analyst, pitch team leader, roadshow executive, technology specialist, project manager, internal or external marketer, sales rep, subject matter expert or innovator.

Do your presentations unexpectedly fall flat? Do others hijack your meetings? Do you spend more time compiling slide decks than actually influencing decision-makers? Has someone vaguely told you that you “should look more confident up there” or that you “lack gravitas”? Have you watched TED Talks but wonder how you can bring that level of effectiveness into real business presentations?

*Speaking with Strategic Impact* gives you the key to leadership presence and persuasion. More than just tips and tricks, it outlines a *discipline* for navigating real business situations with consistently superior outcomes that's favored by top business schools and Fortune 500 companies. You'll get specific strategic and tactical advice to keep you on the mark in your presentations and meetings—and differentiate you from the vast majority of business presenters.

Read *Speaking with Strategic Impact* to master the means by which you make a living and a difference in the world!

*Speaking with Strategic Impact: Four Steps to Extraordinary Presence & Persuasion*

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**KATE LEVAN** trains, coaches and collaborates on business communication effectiveness with major corporations worldwide and as an instructor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. Her training consistently receives top ratings from executive development program participants for its simplicity, applicability and career-changing impact.

Kate's career in advertising and marketing allowed her to observe the edge that effective communication gives business professionals across all industries. Her company, LeVan Partners, LLC is dedicated to helping clients build strong business relationships through greater clarity, authenticity, empathy and impact in their face-to-face and virtual communication.

Kate commutes to O'Hare International Airport and beyond from Evanston, Illinois, where she resides with her husband. For information on how you or your team can experience Kate's training firsthand, go to [LeVanPartners.com](http://LeVanPartners.com) or [SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com](http://SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com).







## SUGGESTED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Describe *Speaking with Strategic Impact* in 20 words or less.**

**Contents:** One simple communication process for handling high stakes interactions that make or break careers.

**Directions:** Add discipline. Learn. Repeat.

**There are a lot of books out there about presenting. What's different about yours?**

There's a lot of buzz out there about TED Talks and Steve Jobs as representing the gold standard for presenting. I don't disagree. But the reality is that the majority of business presenters don't do those kinds of presentations. They mostly do everything after the "ta-da" concept has been revealed.

The book gives people who are mostly subject matter experts—like data scientists, engineers and analysts—as well as those people who live and die by new business presentations—a professional discipline around how to communicate what they know with the rest of us. They're either smart people, who were never told how to focus their smarts on what it takes to be seen and heard. Or, maybe they're naturally charismatic people who tend to "wing it" and need some guardrails in order to deliver more consistent results.

I have found that when you break it down for these folks and put it into a simple process, like this book does, they get it and quickly rise to the top of their profession, simply because they can now "talk" to people or deliver more predictable results. Many go on to become sought-after business partners and senior executives in their respective fields.



### **Which type of presenter are you?**

I am so not a numbers person! My degrees are in literary criticism and history. My avocations are journalism, art history and acting. My first career was in advertising. So, I am a more conceptual person and was more inclined to “wing it” until I learned how that didn’t always serve me well.

But all this perfectly qualifies me to be on the evaluating end of a business presentation. If my training clients can engage me and explain things in a way that allows me to comprehend and perceive the benefits of what they are proposing, they have succeeded. For me, it’s not the content of their presentations and meetings that excites me—although I’ve seen some interesting ones—it’s seeing these people succeed in a way they never thought they could.

### **In the book you say, “You have to BE present to have PRESENCE.” What does that mean?**

There is a tendency in business to use words like “Presence” and “Gravitas” as though they are woo-woo elements on the periodic table that are present in some people and not in others. I do think people may display more or less of them depending on certain factors—like life experience and comfort with an audience. I can’t give people a greater knowledge base or more years of experience than they already have. But I *can* give them a method to focus and calm their energy so that they are less mired in their self-centered details and fears and more aware of what can and should be done in the moment for the audience to be effective. I call that Presence.

### **How did you research your book?**

I train and coach business people in executive development programs sponsored by corporate clients and Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. I’ve done some form of this work for 20 years now; and I estimate I’ve probably seen, given feedback on, or helped develop at least 2,000 business presentations! This is the experience and research that is at the core of the book. So it’s peppered with lots of examples.

Beyond this, I think my previous life as a marketing and advertising executive has contributed to my approach in no small way. Basically, the professional discipline I recommend is as much grounded in good marketing strategy as it is in good communication behaviors and tactics. I don’t just try to get a scientist or engineer to have better eye contact, I try to help them perceive the fact that they have a sales job to do that requires more than submitting a 50-page deck of slides if they ever want to see the corporation fund their project!

### How did you come up with your book's title?

At the last minute. *Speaking with Strategic Impact*—as straight out of the text as it is—was NOT my original title. The cover was approved and the interior text was formatted when we had to stop the presses, as they say. This was due to some testing of the title that happened at a networking event. Colleagues there slapped me upside the head with the realization that I wasn't following my own advice: to make what you're saying about the audience as quickly as possible! I had become enamored of a thematic title with a play on words that only people who knew my emphasis on smart planning might understand (*Before I Begin*). What can I say? I have a degree in literary criticism. But much of the audience I'm trying to reach with this book—the experts who want and need to be seen and heard as “strategic”—would never have even found me on Amazon with that one!

### What's the craziest thing that ever happened to you in a presentation?

Maybe the craziest was when I was supposed to present to 50 Chicago business leaders and all the audio-visual equipment went down 10 minutes before start time. The host, who was my banking client, was mortified and said he wouldn't expect me to do anything, since I had no slides. I asked for a flip chart and some markers instead.

The presentation began with my client apologizing profusely and taking full responsibility for the compromised situation I was in and the compromised presentation they would see.

At the end of my presentation, the group applauded appreciatively, but my client was *overjoyed*. He repeated his apologies and the story about how everything had gone awry despite their best efforts. The business leaders politely listened to my frazzled client's explanation. Finally, one of them disclosed what many had assumed—that all this was an elaborate hoax to demonstrate that they didn't need slides and could do just as effective a presentation without them.

I guess I couldn't have had a more effective session. But, as I shared with the audience, I really did need a drink!

### What are some of the most interesting business presentations you've seen?

I sign non-disclosure agreements, so I'd have to kill you if I told you any details! But, in general, I've had a window into what got us into and out of the great recession, the next new pharma product, the pitches that move companies from one state to another, the lobbying that often determines our policy-making and the cyberthreat that is real. To name just a few.



**What's the most important piece of advice you can give to business presenters/speakers?**

To focus on the audience, instead of yourself, while preparing for an interaction as well as while you're in it. It's not easy to do. It's human nature to make a presentation, or meeting, or interview about ourselves and what we want to get out of it or what we dread might happen. That's why having a professional discipline to default to helps. But remembering this one rule holds the key to engaging an audience, influencing people, deciding what slides to create, as well as how to look and feel more confident while you're doing it.

**As an executive coach and trainer, what is the most challenging element in teaching people to speak with strategic impact?**

Getting them not to worry so much about creating those darn slides! When you start with the slides, you are starting with the tactical—not the strategic.





## CONTACT INFORMATION

For an interview or to connect with Kate LeVan, please contact her at:



**E-mail:** [info@levanpartners.com](mailto:info@levanpartners.com)



**Phone:** **847-866-8964**



**Website:** [www.SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com](http://www.SpeakingWithStrategicImpact.com)

You may also follow Kate on social media at:



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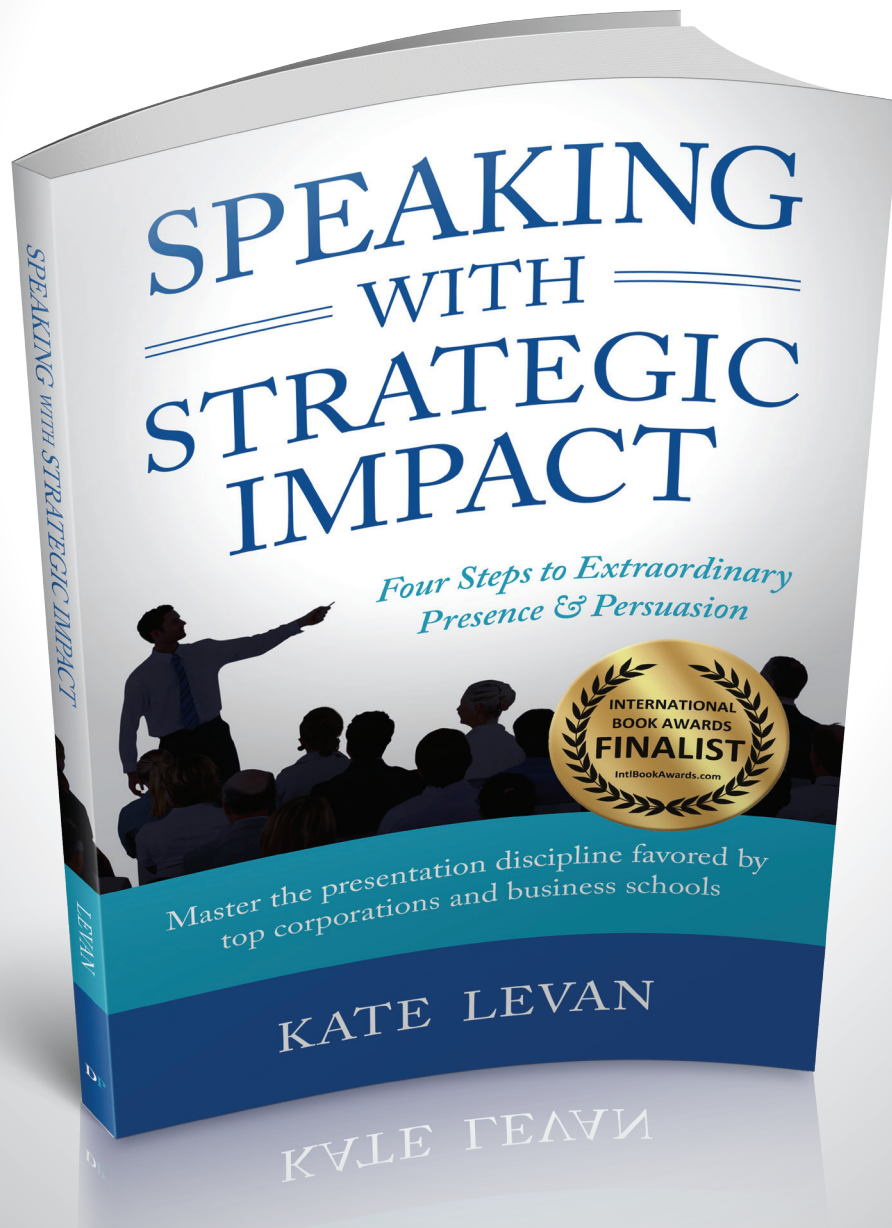
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