

The Joke

A photograph of three mallard ducks swimming in blue water. The ducks are in the foreground and middle ground, with their characteristic green heads, yellow bills, and brown chests. The water is slightly rippled, and the ducks are facing right.

Purpose and value in professional presentations

Warning: bad presentations can kill!



Moral: Presentations of any sort should be carefully planned and practiced to inform, interest, and maybe entertain.

Warning: bad presentations can kill your career!

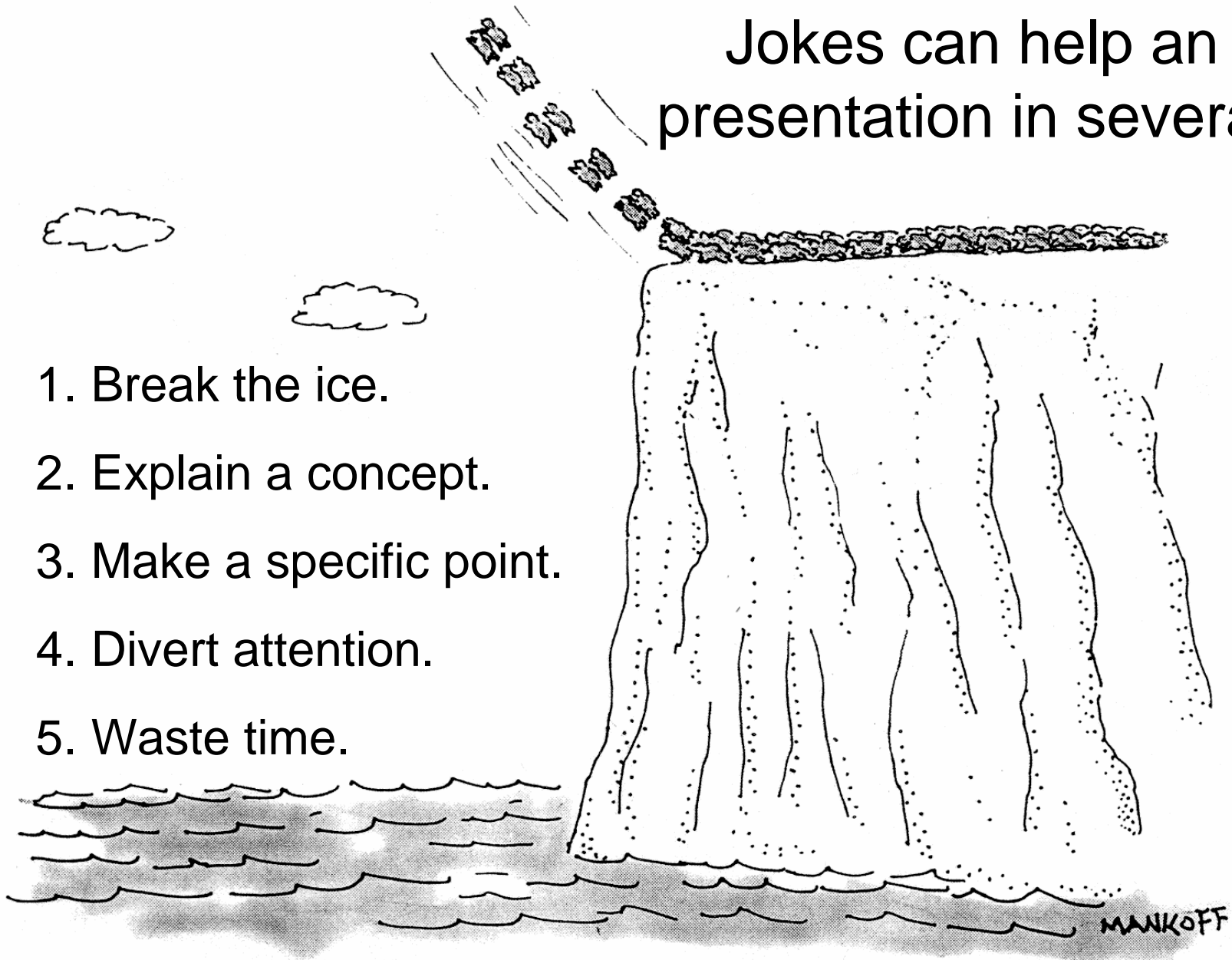


© 2003 United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

Moral: Presentations of any sort should be carefully planned and practiced to inform, interest, and maybe entertain.

Jokes can help an ailing presentation in several ways:

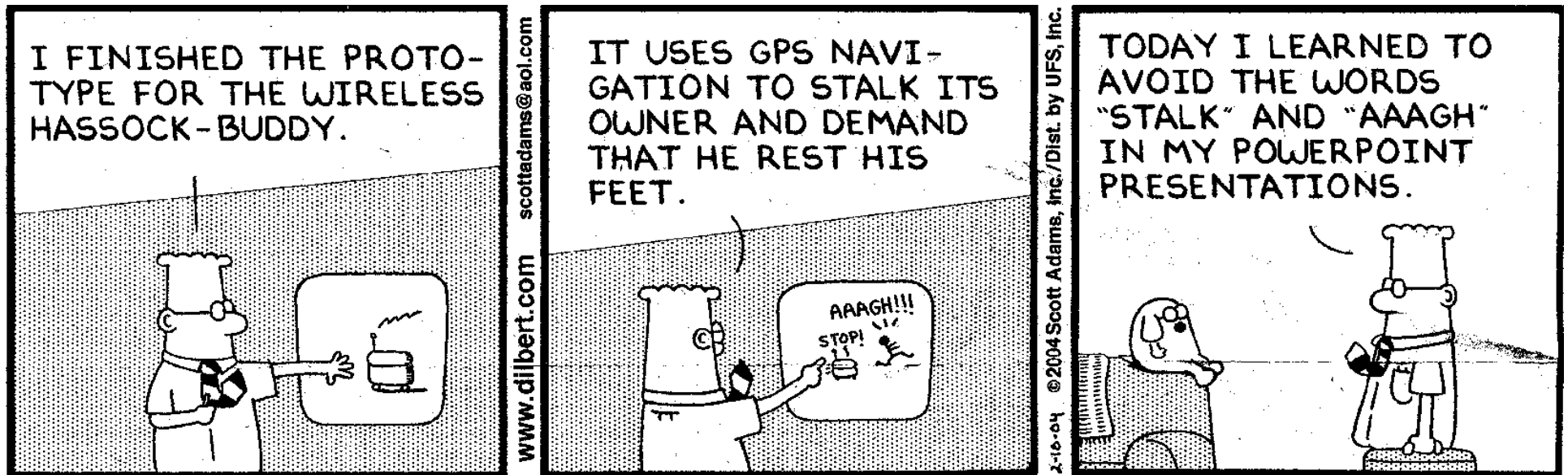
1. Break the ice.
2. Explain a concept.
3. Make a specific point.
4. Divert attention.
5. Waste time.



WHAT LEMMINGS BELIEVE

Jokes should be kept in context:

Right: “This illustration shows that large, simple drawings can make a point more clear.”*



Wrong: “I just remembered a good joke! Ha, ha, wasn't that funny?”

* The point may be a bad one, but at least it is clear

Complex jokes should be avoided

Complex jokes take considerable time to tell, or to explain if the audience doesn't get it. This takes time away from the rest of the presentation.



On the other hand, a presentation that is not worth doing at all is probably not worth doing well. Again, note the value of large, simple illustrations.