

Connection is Everything

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How you relate to the audience affects the outcome of the meeting. People more readily accept information and close business with those they like and trust. So how do you build a relationship and still get your points across?

What creates a connection, first and foremost, is strong eye contact.

Eye contact is extremely important because it telescopes how you feel about the audience and your topic. With solid eye contact, you instantly appear transparent and unafraid. You show you are an equal. Your credibility is enhanced. Without it, there are red flags everywhere, and you can easily end up being dismissed. Remember, there is a big difference between glancing at someone and talking directly to them. Sustained eye contact should begin the moment you walk in the door. It is especially important when opening your conversation, delivering key points or answering questions.

Beyond eye contact, connection is built in other more subtle ways, such as by nodding, leaning forward, or affirming. Humor helps to connect also. While meetings are serious business, a quick barb or aside makes you seem real and likeable, somebody a manager or customer wants on his/ her team. The ability to laugh at one's self can even turn a disastrous situation into a winning maneuver.

Connection also comes by being observant. Does the person's cubicle or office indicate, for example, that the individual is family oriented, a chocoholic or loyal New Yorker? If so, the observant communicator would, not only inquire about what he or she sees, but also incorporate these observations into examples or analogies. Wise communicators also interject the person's name throughout the conversation and

use the pronoun "we" to draw commonalities that subtly suggest you are just like them." We're both eager to see...." or "As you and I both know...."

Finally, you connect when you listen attentively. While it takes tremendous concentration to listen all the way to the end of a statement, your efforts will not go unnoticed.

Your message is, of course, important, but your success in today's tough economy depends on building a trusting relationship. Your efforts at making eye contact, using humor, actively listening or nodding do add up and will make you more influential. They demonstrate you care; you respect someone else's point of view; and you are genuine. They encourage interaction and will help you to gain ground.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their presentation and telephone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.