

From Snore to Score: Tips for Effective Teleconferences

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Teleconferences are a great way for corporations to bring people together to resolve issues without being physically present. In fact, a survey conducted by 3-M reported that most business people are spending almost 2 full days of their work week or between 10–20 hours per week attending meetings, many of which are teleconferences. The study also revealed that attendees felt that 25–50% of those meetings were a waste of their time. Some even confessed to doing e-mail or other job or household related tasks while supposedly listening. A lot of criticism related to how the facilitator communicated the message. If a facilitator drones on about a topic, the meeting will be a “snore.” To “score” with an audience, a teleconference speaker must do a lot more.

The wise teleconference speaker remembers that listeners don’t “hang” on your every word. They are often pre-occupied with things in their personal and business worlds. They have demanding clients or project deadlines. They get bored easily. If what you are saying doesn’t command attention, they will start to multi task.

To command attention, the speaker must constantly relate the topic to the individuals who are listening so that they see the relevance with statements like, “what this means to you is...” “How this will help us is...” Additionally, the speaker gives specific examples or shares personal stories to reinforce a point and to keep attention. Business points are made memorable with personal stories.

The speaker also interjects humor into a story or point when appropriate. It keeps listeners atten-

tive and makes the narrator look human- real. Most teleconference speakers overlook how important humor is to retention.

The speaker who scores asks for interaction between points. “What do you folks in Norfolk think?” “What are your questions related to the install? Let’s start with you, Hank. I want to hear from all of you, one by one, since it is critical that the install go perfectly.”

A speaker’s voice has a lot to do with keeping people attentive or putting them to sleep. A voice with vocal variety is commanding. A speaker with a strong voice pauses a lot. By pausing, the speaker can take a breath and also highlight what comes next. In the pause, listeners digest a slide or previous point.

When a speaker reads from written remarks, there is a danger the voice will be a monotone. To avoid any risk of a poorly produced voice, a speaker must pause at the end of each sentence or thought. He should avoid long sentences and reading from a script.

Teleconferences are a big part of any business professional’s life. It is critical to maximize the meeting by insuring that the way information is communicated is interesting and has impact.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.