

Emotion—the Fast Lane to Motivating Listeners to Take Action

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Can you remember a time when you attended a meeting, only to be lulled into an occasional listening mode because of one dull fact after another? Just like you, your listeners will tune out quickly if you don't capture and hold their attention. After all, most business professionals, especially today, have a lot on their minds. They are used to multi-tasking. Speakers who want their ideas remembered must electrify their listeners by moving them emotionally throughout their presentation. It is the fast lane to motivation and action. So how do we accomplish this?

First, the speaker must create enough detailed images for listeners to assemble a mental picture of what is being described. For example, if you want to change a policy or procedure, help people to see the dire consequences for not making the change or conversely, the positive responses customers will have to a new process.

Draw word pictures, but remember that the word pictures you have created must be powerful enough for listeners to see the same thing you envision in their mind's eye. Weak language will not work! In fact, George Johnson, author of *Palaces of Memory: How We Build Worlds inside Our Brain*, suggests that the more detailed the images, the more robust the memory it will leave. Strong, powerful, nouns, verbs and adjectives are just the trick.

People get very involved with stories, particularly personal stories. Sharing your emergency room experience of the ER doctor's inability to access your recent x-rays, would really highlight the need for new technology. Your wild travel story or your child's lucky soccer goal will be remembered long after the fact as long as it is tied to a business point.

Although not personal, customer stories or examples are also winning. They explain a lot more than just the numbers. They put a face on the customer and motivate people to correct issues affecting people's lives and businesses. When a company in Wisconsin learned that the article of clothing they were producing was being shipped to our troops in Iraq, production numbers doubled. When a high tech company's executive shared multiple specific complaints from their channel partners about not seeing their sales person for an entire year, sales people took notice and changed their ways.

Not to be overlooked are Power Point slides and demonstrations. Nobody dreams about bullet point lists, but pictures speak louder than words. Easy access to the web means that all of us have the ability to insert powerful images into our presentations. In terms of demonstrations, imagine the power of holding up a stapler to make a point about the pain associated with testing for diabetes or a large ball of rubber bands to indicate how a client's network is in dire need of an update.

Most people would say they make decisions based on facts, but the reality is emotion is a hidden motivator. Vivid images stir the soul to action. As you plan and review your content for your next meeting, ask yourself "Have I moved people emotionally?" Have I created the world I want them to imagine?

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone 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.