

What's Your Objective?

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Just as competitive athletes visualize the outcome of their performance before the game begins, it makes a lot of sense for you to do the same thing. Never go into a meeting with only a vague idea of what you want to accomplish. Know ahead what you want people to think or do differently after your meeting. Being unfocused wastes time and leads to disappointing results. With clarity about your objective, you can align your goals and discussion points with what is important to them.

A good starting point is first identify what your listeners are currently thinking or doing and then next, what you want them to change, either start or stop doing. Is it an attitude, a specific behavior? For example, maybe your audience is currently thinking we tried this before and it didn't work. It is foolish to do it again. After the presentation, you want them to see this is not the same plan. It is different and they need to embrace it.

Your objective should be framed from the perspective of your listeners, not you. An objective structured from your perspective suggests that the message is all about you, not them. "I want to give an update on a project." "I want to share the month end financials." "I want to go over why the problem occurred and how I have fixed it." The reality is people only care about themselves and how your information can help them. Always think from the perspective of what you want or need from your listeners. If your answer is nothing, it's just for me to give an update; it's an invitation for people to tune out. If you share the quarterly results, what should listeners do concerning these results? Should they continue funding the project, approve your recommendations, or delay a marketing campaign? Knowing what you want will help you include or exclude certain information.

Begin your objective with a verb. The Team should:

- Understand how this plan differs from the old plan
- Embrace the plan

- Adjust targets and goals by beginning of the new quarter

True professionals always keep their focus on the prize. It helps you stay on message. You, too, will achieve better results if you ultimately know what you want your listeners to think or do differently. It is your stake in the ground.

***Question:** Think about your last presentation? Did you begin knowing your end game? Why or why not? We're interested in your reaction to this article. Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.*

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