

Three Key Components to Any Presentation

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Creating an effective presentation can seem overwhelming. Regardless of whether you're making a formal presentation at a conference or sitting across the table from a client, there are three key things you need to do:

- Captivate
- Motivate
- Educate

Many of us assume that our only responsibility is to educate. Educating is just part of the equation. People get bored easily. We also need to captivate our audience, or they will zone out. After all, they have a lot going on in their personal and business lives. They are juggling many projects at the same time. We have to bring them into our world, sometimes kicking and screaming. With attention, we get retention. So how do we do that?

First, our introduction should pack a punch. The first words out of our mouths should be something interesting. A personal story, a startling statistic, a humorous anecdote or a challenging question surely will make people listen up. If they like what you say at the beginning, your audience will stop multi-tasking and start listening.

Another way of starting strong is to be very energetic. Move towards you audience. Look them in the eye. Do big gestures and smile. This will make them notice you and perceive you as confident, as well as interesting.

It is easy for us to assume that people will know what they should do as a result of listening to us. They don't. We have to motivate them to take action. The way to do that is to clearly state what action you want them to take and the benefits to them or their organization for taking this action. We

should also tell them how we feel. If your listeners see you as the subject matter experts, knowing your position on the project or the product can be very motivating.

It is important to be clear on your position, your recommendations and the payoff in your introductory remarks and in your conclusion. It will help to focus your listeners in your introduction and motivate them to pay attention to what follows. It will also help them at the end of your presentation to assess whether what you said warrants further action.

Obviously, we have to educate our listeners. They have to feel that they understand our product or our service. They have to have all of their questions answered. We confuse our listeners if our explanation seems complex. At all costs, we need to keep what we are saying very simple.

There are many times that our listeners will have to sell our ideas to others in the organization. If we keep our argument to three key points, we will insure that others will easily digest it and remember it.

Captivating, motivating and educating are critical elements in any presentation. They need equal consideration. As you review your content, evaluate how effectively you are considering these issues. Remember that your audience hates being bored. They want you to be passionate as well as logical. They need you to tell them what you want them to do.

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. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.