

Take A Risk and Be Remembered

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When you make any type of presentation, you compete for peoples' attention. Rarely, are your listeners hanging on your every word. Instead, they are pre-occupied with things in their personal and business lives and managing multiple projects at the one time. Therefore, their attention span is very short and scattered. To sell your ideas, you have to create memory hooks for your listeners. You have to make them want to listen.

So take a risk and incorporate **R**eferences, **A**nalogies, **V**isuals, **E**xamples, **S**taories and **Q**uestions. They will engage your listeners and make your points stand out. The acronym **R.A.V.E.S. and Q.'s** will help you to remember these all-important principles.

References and Quotations: Clients are always interested in what the experts have to say. When you use a reference or quotation, people notice, particularly if the reference or quotation is timely. Also, references give you credibility because your listeners conclude you have done your homework and are up-to-date on what is happening in their industry or their company.

Analogies: When the information is technical or difficult, people have trouble following the explanation. The last thing any presenter wants is for people to conclude the solution, or product is too complex or difficult to use. Analogies aid comprehension by comparing the known to the unknown. If the analogy makes perfect sense, it will insure that your idea is remembered. For example, if you are explaining how to operate a new machine to learning how to operate a microwave, people will get your point immediately.

Visuals: Just as analogies help people to remember, so do visual aids, as long as there aren't too many and as long as they are ef-

fective. Whenever you create a visual, the idea should be clear, readable and, if possible, dramatically represented. Obviously, people do not think in terms of bullet points or flow charts. A picture is worth a thousand words. The more pictorial the visual, the more impactful it is.

In addition to something that is viewed on screen, a visual aid can be anything you hold up or demonstrate. For example, a speaker holding up a stapler to remind people of what a diabetic goes through each day or a speaker wearing a Hawaiian shirt and lei to introduce the next sales promotion can be an effective visual aid and possibly more compelling than anything you could put up on a screen. People always remember the visual or the unusual.

Examples: Anytime you make a point, substantiate it with an example. For instance, if you are talking about what a particular feature could mean to the bottom line or how versatile a product is, cite examples to prove it. The more relevant your examples, the more likely people will be convinced.

Stories: Everybody likes stories. Particularly, people like personal stories because they not only teach a concept or an idea, but they let listeners in on who you are. A story that is humorous is even better because it shows that you can find something amusing in an awkward situation. Stories build bridges to your listeners as long as people see the business point.

Questions: Finally, questions are a great tool for involvement. If you ask people questions, they typically pay attention. The other good thing about questions is that they allow you to learn more about the audience's needs and your listeners to verbalize their concerns.

When to Use These Principles

People draw many conclusions in the first two minutes. So, it is a good idea to open with a story or question or any other R.A.V.E. principle. It is also a

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good idea to end with something memorable since it will be the last thing people remember. Between times, use these principles whenever the information starts to become boring or technical or whenever you see a look on your listener's face that says they are losing interest.

If you do nothing to keep your listeners involved or to make your points stand out, people will forget about 50% of your ideas in twenty-four hours and 70% within forty-eight hours. You go to much trouble to prepare content. Your listeners hear from many people like you all day long who are trying to sell their ideas. To make sure your points are not forgotten, remember the **R.A.V.E. & Q principles**.

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.