

Selling Your Ideas to People in the Medical Field

By Judith Filek — President,
Impact Communications, Inc.

An essential part of anyone in the medtech field is to sell his or her ideas, whether it is to potential customers, a hospital board, investment bankers, or attendees at a medical design show. Because these listeners hear from a multitude of people like your self all day long, the executive who distinguishes himself and his ideas will be remembered. But, the person needs to do it quickly. **An audience gives the speaker two minutes to score.**

Within two minutes, listeners assess the speaker's credibility and trustworthiness. They determine if what the person is saying is worth their time or effort. If it isn't, they look for ways to end the discussion. Strong communicators in the medtech field need to be both meaningful and memorable by considering not only what they say but also how they say it.

Meaningful Messages:

Are clear. For example, if a sales executive is talking to a group of research physicians about a biochemical process that might potentially revolutionize their current approach, the explanation must make sense. From the start, it must be easy for the physicians to see the idea's effect on attaining faster, more reliable results. When listeners are confused, they withhold their approval. No one wants to make a costly mistake.

Avoid technical jargon. A company spokesperson talking about web enabling technology at a dental conference should recognize that attendees will have varying degrees of technical expertise. The importance of speaking in terms everyone understands cannot be underestimated. Listeners do not want to feel they are translating from a foreign language. Even if the majority of participants are technically astute, the medtech executive should define all technical terms at least once. If a concept or

process is difficult to understand or unravel, it is helpful to use analogies. Not only do they shortcut the time it takes people to grasp the point, but they also aid retention.

Deliver relevant information. When hospital administrators agree to allow a medical technology executive to give a presentation, the expectation is that conversation will be pertinent to the hospital's key initiatives. If it isn't, it wastes their time. They do not care to hear about a company's full suite of products. What hospital administrators want to know is how a particular diagnostic device will alleviate a current or future problem in their oncology department.

Are concise. The biggest mistake medtech executives make is to overwhelm the audience with too much annoying detail. Many listeners, like prospective business partners, venture capitalists or trade show attendees, have to sell these ideas to others. If they cannot remember the key features of the software because the speaker confused them with so much detail, undoubtedly, the internal buyer won't be convinced. **Three key points or ideas are sufficient in a technical presentation and encourage retention.** Researchers have even proven that people remember best in groupings of three. An audience forgets most of what they hear in a technical presentation within forty-eight hours unless the speaker has made it easy for them to remember by being concise. In addition, short simple sentences with strong nouns and verbs work wonders to highlight ideas and focus listeners on key factors that help them make favorable decisions.

Memorable Speakers:

Create excitement. While making the message meaningful is important, any message fails if it is boring. Generally, people have short attention spans because they have many things on their mind. They will not listen to dry, technical information beyond two minutes unless the medtech expert is also captivating. **In those first two minutes, the technical speaker should entice people to pay attention with personal stories or humorous anecdotes.** It will help others relate and see the speaker as authentic. **Questions, quotations and startling statistics are another way of involving people and pulling them into the technical world.**

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The pros, the people like Tom Peters, Jack Welsh and Carly Fiorina, know that **with attention, there is retention**. They are passionate in their delivery and use their body and their voice to demonstrate how much they believe in the idea they are selling. They realize if they aren't excited or enthusiastic, no one else will be either.

Maintain good posture. A speaker begins to communicate with people at an important meeting before even speaking. Posture reveals confidence and commitment. Consequently, **it is important that the executive pay attention to posture whether sitting or standing.** It is a good idea when the executive responds to a client's question or introduces new digital equipment, for example, to sit up straight and lean forward. It conveys that the speaker believes in his ideas and desires to be understood.

Establish eye contact. While it may seem obvious, the audience expects the speaker to look them in the eye. It is impossible to establish trust without sustained eye contact. Technical executives often lose eye contact at a trade show or user's conference when they are demonstrating their product or using a slide show with a large group. Rather than looking at their listeners, they thumb through their materials or read from the screen. Each listener, regardless of the size of the audience, needs 3-6 seconds of sustained eye contact, or a full sentence or thought, to feel the leader is really talking just to them. With a large group, the executive should pick out three or four people to look at in various sections of the room. This will cause a ripple effect. The people on each side of the person the speaker is looking at, as well as those several rows behind, will feel included. The more the speaker's eyes focus on the listeners at a conference, the more they will be engaged and the greater the chance the executive will win them over.

Capture attention with strong gestures and facial animation. To allow people to see their conviction and to keep them engaged, technical speakers need strong gestures and appropriate facial expression. Who says just because professionals are in the medtech field, they have to look stiff and expressionless when talking about a particular microsystem or launching a new orthopedic device? A person's face communicates strength of commitment; the gestures make those ideas emphatic. If medtech executives use their hands freely, people will pay

closer attention to the points they are making. Gestures that originate from the shoulder, versus the elbow or the wrist, come across as meaningful and natural.

Use their voice to persuade. People will notice a speaker's voice when determining trust, just as they noticed body language. If the voice sounds unconfident or flat, if the person is speaking too quickly or too softly or if there are lots of non-words, pesty "um's," "ah's" and "you know's," bankers, for example, will start to focus on the discrepancy between what they hear in the words and what they hear in the CFO's voice rather than on the message being delivered about the company's past and future financial performance. By using one's diaphragm and breathing deeply, not only will the voice project and sound strong, but it will also have energy and interest. Any issue with the voice, unless it is a congenital issue, can be improved by pausing and breathing.

Being meaningful and memorable is the key. Venture capitalists, board members, prospective business partners, trade show attendees and customers:

- Do not listen attentively.
- Are preoccupied with pressing business matters.
- Do many things at one time.
- Have short attention spans.

The business professional that is both meaningful and memorable in the first two minutes, dramatically improves the likelihood of technical information being remembered and being distinguished from one's competitors.

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.