

DESIGNING PRESENTATIONS

What Captures Attention and Understanding

There you sit.

You're scheduled to make a presentation. Now you have to decide *what* you're going to say, and *how*.

"How should I begin? What's the most effective/persuasive/informative thing I can do or say? What's the best way to explain this complex (or disconcerting or negative or unexpected or demanding or costly) message? Should everything be explained only verbally? When should I stop for questions? What if they disagree or get hostile?"

You sit there picturing your audience.

"He/she/they could look bored. Perhaps confused. Glancing at their watches . . ."

If you don't imagine at least *some* of the above, please do.

You are embarking on an extremely difficult task.

You want to move your listener(s) from an inert, self-involved state to actively participating in *your* subject. It takes a major effort to capture and energize them so they rise to *your* occasion (which you hope to make *their* occasion).

You also want them to understand what you will explain: something *you* understand and care about but that others don't, or may not even *care* to understand. And you want to persuade them enough to buy your idea, product, or point of view.

Even to be willing to spend money or effort on it—two things no one gives away without a struggle.

Wow!

What you need are some foolproof fundamentals about what best makes people listen and understand, so you can design a presentation