

Know that *before* you get to your message—and after you establish their self-interest in listening—you must "lift your visor." You must let your audience *of one or many* see (or *feel*) who you are, or at least some pertinent aspect of who you are, and what you intend. And if you don't do it consciously, they'll do it for you. They're looking for labels and categories, for recognizable signals seen through your personal approach to them and your task, that help them know "Who's Telling?"

How They Tell It

The third reason people listen is *technique*. Style and technique have become the principal determinants of whether or not we sell or tell anything successfully today. Rather than bemoan that fact and say, "The validity or purity of the message itself should be the central core," let's deal with what *is* and understand it better: What techniques work to get a message across these days?

How Communication Has Changed

I say "these days" because the way we communicate—how we give and get information—has been permanently changed in this half of the twentieth century. Our new ingredient?

Television.

Mass imparting of information *visually*, with words a secondary adjunct.

Now visually transmitting information is not new. From the prehistoric cave painters to the sculptors of old who told the masses about religion before they could read, we have always found the visual image the most arresting and the most instantly eloquent. In all other times, visual images were evocative, designed to trigger the imagination and emotions of the viewer. But viewing them required work. Commitment. Response. Rapt attention and personal participation to make the pictures or statues be eloquent and to receive their message.

Words, too, used to require effort. To listen and understand, to wait until the end, demanded something from the listener: The willingness to follow someone else's unique style and pace, and then to sort out the ideas and what the words really meant, on one's own.

That's how it *was*. But not now.

Not since television.

The two major differences between how we used to use visual