**How to Emphasize Key Points – Reading Material**

**Overview:**

When you are presenting a report to your management, a proposal to the committee or changes to your staff they are not hanging on your every word. When you get to the key points - you want them to listen, believe and remember. Use the techniques shared in this reading material to give your words impact.

**Objectives:**

This reading material is designed to help you:

* Identify Key points
* Implement techniques to emphasize key points.

**Thought for this topic:**

If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time - a tremendous whack.

Winston Churchill

Sir Winston Leonard Spencer-Churchill was a British politician who was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and again from 1951 to 1955. Widely regarded as one of the greatest wartime leaders of the 20th century, Churchill was also an officer in the British Army, a historian, a writer, and an artist. Since its inception in 1901, Churchill is the only British Prime Minister to have won the Nobel Prize in Literature, and was the first person to be made an honorary citizen of the United States.

Introduction:

People have to hear or see something about eight times before it sinks in permanently. So don’t shy away from repeating points in order to have them be remembered. What you can do is vary how you tell them, give new supporting data, give a new example to support the information, or relate the point to the audience. Emphasize your main points by anchoring them visually (with a story or example) or numerically (with first, second, third, etc.). This will help people recall what you shared. Another way to emphasize main points is to continually tie what you are currently saying to a previous main point. Suppose you are giving a presentation on change and you have made the key point that change is constant and people must adapt to it. You can re-emphasize that point later on by saying, “As we are talking about the climatic changes, rain played havoc in Chennai, that really ties back to our conversation about how things continually change and it is up to us to adapt to that change. Could you ever imagine telling Mother Nature that you will not accept any more seasonal changes?

**Why is it important to sequence content and identify key points when you present your ideas?**

Identifying key points helps in:

* Smoother transitions
* Facilitates clear understanding
* Better organization

The main points are the backbone of your talk. They play an important role in helping you prioritize, focus and sequence your information. When planning your presentation you should put aside your research notes and produce a list or summary of the main points that you would like to make, expressing each in a few words or a short sentence. Ask yourself: “what am I really telling them? What should they be learning here?” Your answers to these questions will help you communicate clear and effective messages to your audience. The sequence of your main points should be directly influenced by the purpose of your presentation. For example, build an argument by moving from background information to precise points of detail, or explain a process by describing its purpose and then taking the audience through its stages sequentially. Always remember that the aim is to communicate issues in manageable sections or building blocks, helping the audience to piece their understanding together as you work through your material.

After you have identified your main points, you should embellish them with supporting information. For example, add clarity to your argument through the use of diagrams, illustrate a link between theory and practice, or substantiate your claims with appropriate data. Use the supporting information to add color and interest to your talk, but avoid detracting from the clarity of your main points by overburdening them with too much detail.

**The importance of transitions while articulating Key points**

Transitions are the signposts that help the audience navigate their way through your presentation. They can help divide information up into sub-sections, link different aspects of your talk and show progression through your topic.

Importantly, transitions draw the audience’s attention to the process of the presentation as well as its content.

**Examples include:**

“I will begin by discussing …”

“Now that we have explored the ... I would like to move on to …”

“In contrast to my earlier statements concerning …”

“Moving away from a focus on”;

Transitions can also be made without speaking. Non-verbal transitions include pausing, changing a slide or other visual aid, moving to a different area of the room before resuming speaking, or making eye contact with a different group in the audience.

Verbal Emphasis Techniques:

* Pause before important points
* Silence speaks too
* Repeat key words
* Stress certain words
* Illustrate with examples
* Vary your rate of delivery and volume

Non-Verbal Emphasis Techniques:

* Movement distracts
* Movement emphasizes
* Talk to the audience
* Use eye contact
* Talk with your hands
* Use right gestures

**The 10 commandments for articulating key points:**

When you are presenting a report to your professor, a proposal to the committee they are not hanging on your every word. When you get to the key points - you want them to listen, believe and remember. Use these techniques to give your words impact.

Verbal Emphasis

1. **Announce**, "This is important." Then give the important stuff. Teachers do this by saying, "This will be in the exam." You could state, "This tip will make a significant difference to your Verbal Aptitude scores."

2. **Pause, just before, and after, you say a key point**. Notice the effect of the pause at the awards night when they say, "May I have the envelope please?"

3. **Lower your voice to increase the believability**. Practice this, "And in conclusion," (lower your voice) "I am the best one for the job." Then try it in a higher pitched voice and notice the difference.

4. **Make them laugh just before, then get serious and deliver the important message**. When we laugh we open our minds and are more willing to accept new information.

5. **Tell a story of how this lesson was learned or applied**. The earliest lessons were stories told by our cave-dwelling ancestors. They were remembered. If only the lecturers of today remembered the wisdom of our ancestors.

6. **Repeat it three times during your presentation**. If you want it remembered - repeat it and repeat it again.

7. **Move before - then stand still while delivering the important stuff**. This is especially effective for those who pace or move a lot when they speak.

8. **Look your audience in the eye - don't read the important stuff**. If you have to read it - then it looks like you don't really know it or believe it.

9. **Smile.** We believe those who smile at us. We also prefer to listen to speakers who smile at us. We listen with our eyes and our ears.

10. **Reinforce the message with images**. We retain images better than words. Attach your message to word pictures, visuals and body language.

**Summary:**

Identify and emphasize important points using your words and body but both require planning.