Title:
Business Managers: Communicate Your Career To The Next Level

Word Count:
752

Summary:
All presenters believe their words are important, and they are. But if you don't give an audience a good reason to listen, they will quickly tune you out. In an age where sound bite is king, cutting through the clutter is more important now than ever.

Keywords:
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Article Body:
Not too long ago, I walked into a room where some of the country's top oncologists were preparing to launch a new cancer-fighting drug. The occasion was the group's rehearsal before a big presentation to the Federal Drug Administration. Given that these men and women are some of the best and brightest in their field, I thought the rehearsal would be a breeze. So, I sat down, pen poised to make a few notes so I could help them fine-tune their presentations and be ready for the onslaught of media that was sure to follow.

What a letdown. Five articulate, highly educated, well-dressed presenters, armed with shiny animated slideshows, droned on and on and on and on. It didn't matter what they were saying because the audience wouldn't really hear any of it anyway. Around me, eyes closed, and others pretended to take notes while playing solitaire on their laptops. I wondered how in the world I could help these presenters. I also thought about tripling my consultation fee on the spot.

All presenters believe their words are important, and they are. But if you don't give an audience a good reason to listen, they will quickly tune you out. In an age where sound bite is king, cutting through the clutter is more important now than ever.

<h2><u>Consider the following 7 points before stepping into the limelight:</h2></u>

The Take-Home

No matter how many years and dollars you've spent on research and development,

no matter the technical complexity of your subject matter, when speaking to a group your entire presentation must boil down to one key point. If you had to sum up your talk in 10 seconds, what would you want your audience to know?

Ask Yourself the Right Questions
What you think a listener needs to know is not always what that listener wants to know. Put yourself in your listener's seat and ask the following questions: So what? Who cares? What does this mean to the listener, reader or viewer and me? Until you frame your messages from your audience's perspective, they won't care. If they don't care, you'll never receive their full attention.

Talk in nuggets

Powerful communicators who can hold attention have something in common with each other. They've learned that speaking is for the ear, not for the eye. Instead of preparing a presentation as a research paper jammed with minutiae, condense complicated information into bite-sized nuggets and present only the information needed to move an audience toward the desired outcome.

Present, Don't Read

Is your presentation written like a term paper? Is it written in sentences? Do you allow room for pauses so the listener can participate? People don't converse in long-winded sentences. We speak in short phrases. So write in phrases or bullet points. You will then find yourself talking more and reading less. Also, take time to pause between key thoughts so your listeners can digest what you're saying.

Paint the Picture

Explaining the features of your product may be important, but explanation without example has no meaning. People can't remember all of the facts, but they do remember impressions. By comparing and contrasting, providing analogies and visual images, your presentation will come to life.

Slideshow or Presentation?

No one comes to a presentation to see a slideshow. They come to hear a knowledgeable person share ideas and talk. Visuals should reinforce what you're saying, not serve as your script. Instead of preparing the slides first, prepare your remarks then create appropriate supporting visuals. Let your words drive the visuals instead of the other way around.

Nix the Jargon

Just because your audience is packed with colleagues or you're providing information for an industry trade publication doesn't mean you should talk jargon. Get rid of the buzzwords and throw away phrases. Rather, look for opportunities to put your words in context by humanizing your material and telling stories or anecdotes.

As I worked with the oncologist presenters and brought many of these points to their attention, they worried that simplifying the information would harm their credibility. Quite the opposite. By making an effort to connect with their audience rather than throw too much information at them, they created a focused, central theme with real-life examples that excited and inspired listeners. And in the end, the cancer drug they believed in made it to market and received a lot of good press!