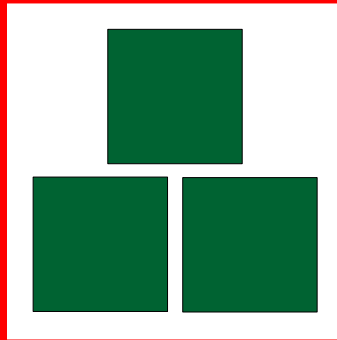


USING COMMUNICATION STYLES THAT ENTERTAIN, INFORM, CONVINCe, AND PERSUADE EFFECTIVELY



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Successful entrepreneurs and executives understand the power of effective communications - the ability to entertain, inform, convince, and persuade. Whether for recruiting, job assignments, selling, or mergers and acquisitions, negotiations cannot have a successful outcome unless these four communications styles are used effectively to reach closure.

Effective communications are essential for building both personal and professional relationships with others. First impressions count so it is important to choose words that others can relate to quickly.

Every industry and function has its jargon. For example, talking to bankers about interest rate sensitivity, to product developers about time-to-market, and to manufacturing enterprises about overhead costs builds rapport. Salespeople prefer words that convey energy and excitement; medical practitioners prefer words that suggest care and well being; accountants and attorneys prefer precise language; and technologists prefer words that convey solutions.

Because people often make decisions on emotion, and then justify them rationally, it is essential to use motivational language. Whereas ultimately that means using persuasive language, the entertaining, informing, and convincing styles are useful for raising emotion.

Successful salespeople claim that it takes multiple interactions with a prospect to make a sale - at least five is not uncommon. Unsuccessful salespeople usually give up before they have reached the threshold required to close. Many interactions are required to build trust, which is based upon communications and the accompanying actions.

Large transactions between enterprises, such as long-term contracts, or mergers and acquisitions may require field trips and site visits over multiple days. These events require discussions and presentations in meetings, and over breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Eventually the parties meet across the table to negotiate the deal. Minimizing the amount of face time with counter parties reduces the risk of something being said that is out of place. So face time should be reserved to those situations where messages can be powerfully transmitted with anticipation and deliberation.

During negotiations, the parties must never be off guard, and all language to entertain, inform, convince, and persuade should be chosen carefully by understanding the needs of the audience and their backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to determine what motivates an audience and what it aspires to - their industry and functional backgrounds provide clues.

It is important to understand whether the audience prefers the "analytical" approach (findings followed by conclusions followed by recommendations), or "bottom-line" approach (recommendations based upon conclusions based upon findings). "Process-oriented" people, such as accountants, attorneys, and engineers, usually want to build the case, whereas "people-oriented" people, such as those in entertainment, health care, and sales, usually want to get straight to the point.

The four communications styles can be used to inspire the audience accordingly:

Entertaining style - appropriate as an "ice breaker" at a formal meeting or presentation:

- Start with an example of a relevant event or situation, made humorous if possible
- Describe images of the event or situation in vivid words, using poetic license if appropriate
- Relate to personal experiences with examples
- Make a transition to the current event or situation
- Make relevant points of comparison
- End with a memorable statement related to the most important point

Informative style - appropriate at larger "town hall" style meetings:

- Start with an example of a relevant event or situation
- Describe images of the event or situation with vivid words
- Discuss what complicated the situation, what the problems were, and how solutions were reached
- Make a transition to the current event or situation
- Talk about the presentation - give an overview
- Discuss complications, problems, and potential or actual solutions
- Be fact based, using examples where possible based upon observations and experience
- Summarize key points
- Talk about the presentation - what it was about
- End with a memorable statement related to the most important point

Convincing style - appropriate for smaller meetings where the audience needs to be convinced of an idea or condition in order to modify behavior:

- Start with an example of a relevant event or situation
- Make a transition to the specific idea or condition
- Answer the "why?" - initial benefit statement regarding the idea or condition
- Answer "what is it?" - a summary of the idea or condition
- Answer "what's in it for the audience?" - benefits of the idea or condition in detail
- Describe the rationale of the idea or condition with facts, statistics, and metrics
- Respond to objections as suggestions
- Summarize the idea or condition
- Call to action - describe the behavior modification as a consequence of convincing the audience
- End with a memorable statement related to the most important point

Persuasive style - appropriate for small meetings where the audience needs to be persuaded to do something based upon an opportunity or threat:

- Start with an example of a relevant opportunity or threat
- Make a transition to the specific opportunity or threat
- Answer the "why?" - initial benefit statement regarding the action required to respond to the opportunity or threat
- Answer the "status" - what is the current situation, and what complicates it
- Answer "what is it?" - describe the problem
- Answer "where does the audience want to go?" - describe the alternative solutions
- Answer "how does the audience get there from here?" - use either the "analytical" approach or the "bottom-line" approach supported by facts, statistics, and metrics
- Respond to objections as suggestions
- Confirm the opportunity or threat with the recommendations and the principal benefit
- Call to action - describe what the audience must do
- End with a memorable statement related to the most important recommendation

Every individual operates within their own world from which they perceive events, situations, ideas, conditions, opportunities, and threats. Their personal style determines what they aspire to and what inspires them. It is important to understand the personal style of each individual member of an audience so as to use a communication style that gets results.

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About Nigel A.L Brooks...

Nigel A.L Brooks is a management consultant to entrepreneurs, business enterprise owners, executives, and managers, and the enterprises they serve. He specializes in developing the entrepreneurial, leadership, and managerial competencies that build sustainable advantage from vision to value. He is an author and a frequent speaker.

He obtained his professional experience as a partner at Andersen Consulting (now Accenture, Ltd.), as a vice president at Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc. (now Booz and Company), as a senior vice president at the American Express Company, as president of Javazona Cafes, Inc., and as president of The Business Leadership Development Corporation. He has been a contributing editor for the Bank Administration Institute magazine, and has served on boards of entrepreneurial networks. He was educated at the University of Exeter, Devon, United Kingdom.

His clients are in the financial services, food services, high-tech, manufacturing and distribution, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas, professional services, retail and wholesale, transportation, and government industries.

He has experience in North and Latin America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

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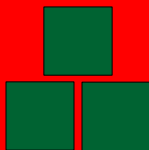
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