



Six ways to be more persuasive

Debbie Mayo-Smith offers six tips for more effective communication in your everyday business dealings.

Every day in every way you have many wins and losses. The battlefield is communication and your weapons are your written and spoken words. Whether you're talking to a prospective client, writing an email, arguing with your teen, deciding on a movie or simply conversing over the dinner table, wouldn't you like to get your way more often?

Here are six tips from my brand new book *101 Quick Tips Effective Communication, How To Be More Memorable and Persuasive* to help you win.

1. Make a connection in meetings

Introduce yourself in seminars and large meetings as an opportunity to connect. Instead of saying, 'I'm Tracey from Marketing', provide your first and last name clearly along with one quick detail, for instance: 'I'm Tracey Poole, coordinator for marketing. I'm the one who sends you our monthly e-newsletter'.

2. Make an intellectual connection

Here's a lesson learnt from Patricia Fripp. You intellectually connect with your audience by having structured and logical organisation of your content. To do this well, form your presentation/speech/sales pitch with the following four points in mind.

1. Who is your audience?
Define their age, attitude, industry and gender.
2. What does that person want to know from you?
How can you help them? What questions might they have?
3. Answer objections up front.
Why you specifically? How are you qualified? Why should they take your advice and make a change?
4. Give your premise up front.
This is the main point you're making – how your audience will benefit from

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what you ask them to do. This can be your opening statement. If you are doing a presentation on how to save money, you could open with: 'By adhering to the following four points, you can save x amount of money'.

3. How to memorise a speech

You can write out a script. From the script, create an outline. From the outline, create keywords. Use graphics of these keywords on your slide if possible, to prompt you. As you practice your speech, record it. Then, as you drive, walk or exercise, play it back on your MP3 player.

4. Send information before a meeting

Sean Kelly (Corporate Partners, Australia) suggests that if you have managed to arrange a meeting, give yourself the best chance. Try to have the client agree to you sending them some information in advance. He recommends that this be in hard copy as a lot of people are tactile, and approximately 92 percent of the population is visual. The client may, however, request the information be sent in email format. Whilst this is easier for you, it is not necessarily best – you leave it to chance whether the client will read it immediately (before they get inundated with dozens of other emails).

5. Maintain and grow your email list.

Here're three ideas to do this:

1. Put your newsletter sign-up request on

every webpage and every piece of marketing material – even your business card.

2. Request two email addresses on your sign-up form – a primary and secondary one. In times of downsizing, you're going to lose a lot of subscribers. As they leave companies, you'll keep them through their secondary email addresses.
3. If those who have unsubscribed are currently removed automatically, take it over and do them manually where possible. That way, you'll keep a closer watch on your list and be able to follow up personally on VIPs that are now mail delivery errors.

6. Words, not images, get your website found

One of the biggest mistakes we make in website briefs is to tell the designer to make our site look attractive, which of course means graphics. Of 100 websites, 99 will have their company name, their navigational links and key phrases as images rather than simply in words.

Search engines can't read pictures, can they? No, only words and formatting. If you want to attract people that don't know you, one of the primary requirements is to have the words your customers are searching for, and in the right places. Where should your words be?

- In the page title (the words in white at the top left corner on your screen);
- In the navigational links;
- In headings that describe the content people are about to read;
- As alternate text to your graphics;
- Even name your graphics with keywords.

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