

Developing Presentation Content that Matters to Your Audience

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Too often we “communicators” spend time creating presentations to get our points across to the audience, rather than considering what is most relevant to them. And when this happens, you lose the attention span of your audience.

Here are some simple guidelines to make your message more relevant:

- Identify the audience before you develop the presentation. What are the demographics of the attendees? What are the critical issues in their industry?
- Ask leading questions at the beginning of your speech. Based on that initial research above, get the audience involved immediately by asking questions that can provide you insight on the most relevant issues and can help you better focus your presentation for them. Emphasize in your presentation the issues the audience shared were most important to them.
- In the form of your introduction, share with the audience why you or your organization is best suited to present. For example, in a recent presentation I gave on effective networking, I shared that when I first moved to this community I knew virtually no one so I spent months networking through the city and explained how I did it. This experience provided relevancy to the audience because it was not something I just talked about, it was something I did.
- Don't “sell.” Most individuals attend seminars and presentations to learn about an issue or gain insight into a process. Your job is to provide pertinent content. If your information is useful and objective, you'll gain credibility, and in the end, you might gain some new business, but it should not be your first objective.

In the next column, I'll share information to best utilize slides and visuals to further hold your audience's attention.