

Breakthrough or Breakdown?

By Judith Filek—President
Impact Communications, Inc.

Nobody wants to leave a meeting having a breakdown, wishing you would have done something differently. All of us want to be breakthrough communicators. Getting your message across doesn't happen by accident. It depends on considering 5 key things:

1. **Preparation.** First and foremost, you have to do your homework. A breakthrough communicator learns as much as possible about the person he or she will address. What is going on in that individual's world? What issues are problematic? What opportunities could there be? What are the risks? What questions or objections might the person have? What help can they provide?
2. **Focus.** As you begin, of course, develop rapport and provide context for your meeting; but get to the point quickly. Don't bury ideas. Use strong language. Avoid jargon or "buzz" words. Use short pithy statements. Carve a clear path to what you want to accomplish and stick to it. Proof is one thing, but don't overdo it. Too much detail confuses. Make it easy for your listener to follow your points. Sort through all of what you know about the topic and determine what is essential to your argument. Choose examples carefully. Breakthrough communicators remember "Less is more."
3. **Value.** To be heard, you have to show value. As you present your ideas, be sure to tether your ideas to solving your listener's issues. Show how the person will gain share, or save money. Don't rely on chance. Connect the dots.
4. **Follow through.** Breakthrough communicators do what they say. They deliver on what they promise. Information or data necessary to make a decision is at the ready. If something goes wrong, they hold themselves accountable. In all situations, they are always truthful. There are no shades of gray.

5. **Authenticity.** Sometimes, when we are nervous, we appear rigid or on automatic pilot. Be real and authentic. Genuine speakers smile; they joke, if appropriate. They don't worry about being too animated. They easily weave in information about themselves to show that they are willing to be vulnerable and are transparent.

Breakthrough communicators impact change. They gain attention. Understand where your listeners are and then guide them to where you want them to be. Show them value, have good follow through and be yourself. You will be successful.

Question: What issues are you still unsure of related to being a Breakthrough Communicator? We're interested in your reaction to this article— Click here – to comment on this article, share your concerns or ask questions. Judy will respond to all questions.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their presentation and telephone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. When you have to have impact, phone (847) 438-4480 or visit our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.