



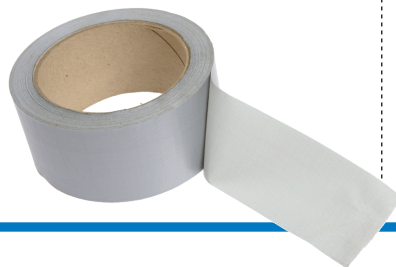
It takes a lot to cut through the clutter and connect with your audience. Whether you are promoting a product or service, communicating a brand, or outlining a business strategy, you need to make your message stick. When considering a marketing or corporate communications initiative, follow this simple checklist. The more items you incorporate from this list, the more effective your communication will be.

1. Be clever.

Human brains adapt quickly to consistent patterns then filter them out. Traffic noise, elevator music, and PowerPoint presentations are examples of events so commonplace they are rarely absorbed or recalled. To get the attention of your audience, your approach must be unexpected or mold breaking. To maintain their interest, you need to engage their intellect and satisfy their curiosity.

2. Keep it simple.

Your audience won't absorb more than one or two concepts so resist the notion to include extraneous details that clutter your message. Your goal is impact, not completeness – you want to ignite conversations that support your objectives.



3. Make it concrete.

A statement like “maximizing shareholder value” is abstract and difficult to visualize. “Make a customer smile every day” however, is tangible, universal and understood by everyone. Being concrete allows your audience to focus on what you want them to. Everyone will feel comfortable that they're on the same team and pursuing the same attainable goal.

4. Add the human touch.

Weaving human elements into your message will help your audience find context and common ground. If you hope to connect at a deeper level, your characters must be real and believable. Models, actors, and professional announcers, satisfy practical challenges but rarely build trust in the minds of your audience. If you want to truly engage people around a topic, recruit a real customer, or frontline employee to deliver the message.

5. Stir in emotion.

People follow their hearts. For your audience to take action, they have to care. Have comfort in

knowing that you don't have to trigger anger, laughter, fear, or sadness, just to get them to care. The emotional chord might be as simple as "What would I do in a case like this?"

6. Tell a good story.

People will emerge from a 45-minute PowerPoint presentation unable to recall the main points, but they'll remember a 2-minute story they heard a week ago. Stories are part entertainment, part instruction, and help to simplify complex concepts. Couch your idea in a story and you'll have a tool that provides your audience with the *knowledge of how to act* and the *motivation to act* - in one convenient package.

**BUDGET
STRETCHER**

Want an extra long shelf life or multiple distribution opportunities for your message? Consider weaving your message into a real customer or employee story!

Even a well-designed story that promotes products or services can help your company communicate its brand to employees, sales teams, managers, and new recruits. The universal themes your story communicates will remain relevant for months and years to come.



You'd be surprised how many communicators overlook the importance of good distribution when designing their message. Assuming you have at least one primary distribution method, take a look at other ways to increase the effectiveness of your communication.

1. Make it visual. Incorporate a strong visual design. People absorb 85% of their information visually. If it looks boring at first glance, your audience may ignore it.

2. Make it easy. Make your message short and concise, or break it up into bite-sized chunks. Let your audience decide how they want to process the information.

3. Spread it around. Have a plan. Take advantage of audience touch points that already exist including online channels, email lists, sales meetings, and live events.

4. Boost the frequency. Your audience is like grass - a frequent watering produces deep roots. For example, a small, memorable ad every week is far more effective than a full page every quarter.