



Understanding Your Audience

The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.

George Bernard Shaw

The biggest rule of communication

Presentations and communication are a large part of the corporate world. When done effectively, presentations can act as a huge advantage towards helping someone gain support for their ideas, visions or solutions. When we successfully gain support, we can see our ideas, visions and solutions come to life.

What is one of the biggest barriers to giving an effective presentation?

Often one of the biggest barrier's is us. When we give presentations we often focus so much of our time and energy on what we want to present, what we want to say and what is in it for us, that we forget the most important rule of communication.

“Communication is not about you its about your audience”

When we begin to shift our focus towards our audience, we can develop presentations that are relevant to our listener. When presentations or any communication is relevant to a listener it will cause this listener to be engaged and attentive because you are speaking to their needs and wants.

How do we craft communication for our audience?

Before we can develop our presentation, before we can write a single word, we need to first adhere to the biggest rule of communication mentioned above.

If we are adhering to this rule, then we need to first begin to understand our audience, which means building a personality profile.





Questions to ask about the audience

To build a personality profile you must ask yourself key questions to fully understand the audience.

- How technical are they?
- What is their role in the organization?
- What problems do they face?
- What motivates them?
- What inspires them?
- What are their interests?
- How is your topic relevant to them?
- What are their goals?

Answering these questions will help you develop a strong understanding of your audience. If you were unable to answer some of the above, then this may be a good time to do a bit of research.

Research

If you are still not satisfied and would like to learn more about that individual or group, then the best thing to do would be to research them.

Here is a list of a few places to go

- Coworkers and colleagues
- Their company website
- Social media (LinkedIn, twitter, etc...)
- Ask them yourself

Build Relevance

The final step once you have successfully built their personality profile is to ask and answer one simple question.

How is my goal relevant to theirs?

- You want your presentation to be a win-win situation. This means that both you and the audience get what you are after. If you were offering a new product to your audience, then them implementing it would be a win for you. The win for them would be that one of their problems is solved and work becomes easier. Your objective, once you have understood how your goal is relevant to theirs is to create a presentation that communicates how you will help them reach their goal. When you do this successfully you will in turn reach your goal.

