

MAKE A CONNECTION

by Karen Friedman

Your product may be the best product to hit the shelves in years, but if what pops up on your TV screen doesn't grab the viewer in just a few seconds, they'll probably tune out or turn off.

Thanks to technology, like children, we expect instant gratification. We want the home page to load faster, the images to appear clearer and the transactions completed sooner. After all, if we can broadcast events from around the world as they happen, why shouldn't we expect everything in an instant?

That is the challenge during media interviews or public presentations where fidgety impatient audiences aren't interested in verbal foreplay. That's why we believe it's essential for you to be able to describe your product or service in a sentence or two. Before you simply spit out some words, make sure those words answer these questions. What sets you apart? Why should your listener care? What will you do for them? To make this easier, think of the word S P E A K and remember this acronym to help you connect with your viewers, readers and listeners.

Succinct.

Short sentences or phrases are more effective than long ones. You want to inform your listeners by talking with them, not at them. Your sentences should contain single thoughts in plain, simple language.

Passion.

If you're not enthusiastic about your subject, how can you expect to excite or inspire an audience. The audience wants to like you. If you appear bored, they will be bored. If you're visibly uncomfortable, they will feel uncomfortable. However, if you look people in the eye, gesture accordingly, and involve your audience, you will keep their interest.

Experience.

Don't just tell people what happened. Let them experience your words. Create examples, stories and descriptive adjectives that bring your words to life. If you try to memorize what you want to say, you'll sound insincere and you won't give meaning to your words.

Analogies.

Use analogies to drive home a point. For example: The new store that's being built in this community is the size of two football fields. Analogies also help us visualize which increases the likelihood that we will remember.

Keepers.

These are what I call take homes. If you want a listener to take away one or two points after hearing you speak, what would those points be? Have you delivered those points passionately and succinctly through analogies and recreating experiences. Did you leave the audience with something to remember?

Your job is to make it as easy as possible for your audience to cut through the clutter and connect with what you're saying. They can't do that if you don't SPEAK their language.

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