

Summer 2010

COMMUNICATE

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Summer Issue

Recently, our Executive Communication Coaches noticed our participants nodding at reporter's leading questions during practice interviews. In this month's newsletter you'll learn why this is a must break habit. Also, don't miss our top five phrases to avoid during PowerPoint presentations, as well as a unique buzzword and information on our non-profit summer discount.



Five Phrases to Avoid During a PowerPoint Presentation

1. "Let's go to the next slide..."

If you have to tell your audience you're moving to the next slide, your slides probably don't fit together naturally. Create a transitional phrase that links each slide together so the audience can follow along easily.

2. "You may not be able to see the numbers on this graph but..."

Why would you place a graph into your PowerPoint presentation that the audience has zero chance of reading on the screen? Instead, highlight the main point from the graph, table or chart and take the time to explain those critical numbers.

3. "I have 50 slides, so I hope this isn't too long..."

Calling out how many slides you have (no matter what the number is) distracts from your actual presentation. Audience members are focusing on how many slides are left rather than the point you are trying to make. Also, avoid references to the length of your presentation... within seconds, your audience will start to zone out for what they believe to be yet another long... boring... PowerPoint presentation.



4. "I'm not going to read all of this but..."

Avoid slides with too much text that even you don't want to read it all. As a rule of thumb, you shouldn't be reading word for word from your slides anyway. Again, focus on the main points and use those key takeaways to support your overall objective.

5. "The End."

'The End' is not a takeaway. 'The End' is a phrase used in children's fairy tales. When you use this phrase in the work environment, it leaves everyone hanging and anticipating a more conclusive summary.

Are You a Bobblehead During Media Interviews?

Why Nodding During Leading Questions is a Bad Habit



Have you been caught nodding during a media interview - even when the questions are accusatory or negative? Chances are, you didn't even notice you were nodding. During practice media interviews in our meeting sessions, we find many of our clients develop a case of 'the bobbleheads' - nodding throughout the questioning to demonstrate listening and comprehension to the reporter. This is usually a great technique for active listening. The problem with active listening, specifically to a reporter's gotcha question, is that if you nod your head indiscriminately, the nodding makes you seem in agreement with the negative accusation within the question. On television, it can be used against you.

As the traditional field of journalism is challenged by the high demands of a 24/7 news cycle and the increased need for flashy stories with conflict, reporters are pressed to dig deep for any hint of foul play.

If you're caught in a 'bobblehead' nod as you are actively listening to an aggressive question, you can bet it will end up in the interview. While nodding to show you are listening works during discussions with colleagues, family and friends, employing this tactic during a media interview can potentially give you and your organization a negative image.

So, to snap yourself out of active listening mode during journalistic interviews follow these two helpful hints:

- 1. Don't let the reporter's attempt to butter you up before the cameras roll fool you. If you are being interviewed about a challenging topic, be prepared for gotcha questions that are more than likely headed your way.**
- 2. Focus on the question. You don't have to nod your head to prove you are listening. By understanding the question and providing a well constructed message, your audience will know you were on high alert.**

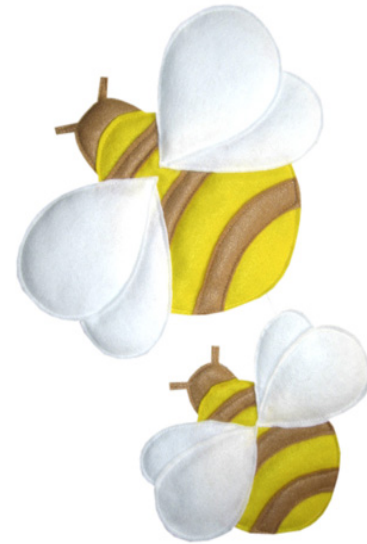
As spokespeople for your organization, you work long and hard to perfect your messages. With numerous news sources available, it's important to give the best media interview possible. To do so, you need not only polished content but flawless body language as well. During our media training sessions, we focus on both strong content and strong body language. So remember, you don't always have to nod to express you are listening.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzword

Thomas Hagan was released this past month, 45 years after being convicted of fatally shooting Malcolm X, the civil rights activist. During a phone interview with the associated press Hagan said, "I really haven't had any time to gather my thoughts on anything." The reporter ran with it, and printed the quote.

Forty-five years is a long time to prep for a message when most spokespeople only have 10 minutes to prepare. So what made this buzzword epic was the absurdity surrounding the time line.

This buzzword example illustrates how message preparation and your ability to stick to that message is the difference between success and failure. Hagan was quoted several times in other news publications with more positive statements expressing remorse for his crimes. However, based on the Associated press article, not all reporters received that message.



Summer Saver 15% Off Discount for Government, Non-Profit and Association Clients

Our Summer Saver is back, for our Government, Association and Non-Profit clients! From now until September 15, 2010, enjoy a 15% reduction on any training session. Sharpen your professional skills and address specific communication concerns with programs including presentation coaching, media interview coaching, leadership communication, and Communication: It's Your Business. Make sure you get your session scheduled such as our calendar fills up quickly. You may schedule your session for any time, but remember all sessions must be booked and paid for before September 15, 2010.

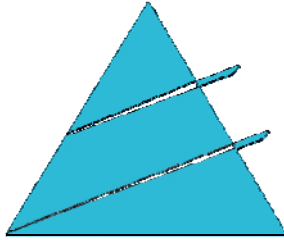
Not sure which program would best suit your team's needs? Call us at 202.463.0505 for more information.



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