

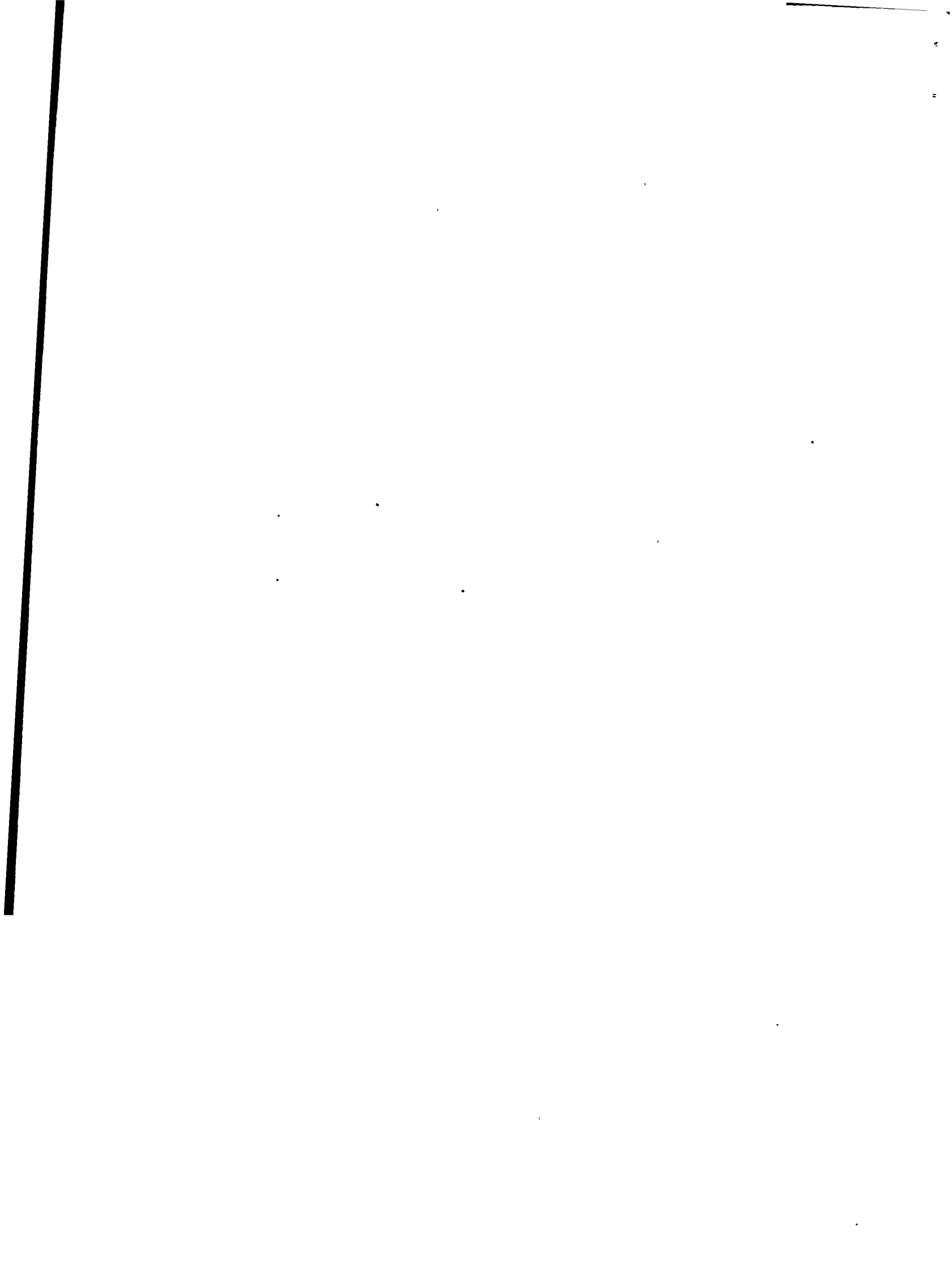
NOTES ON
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

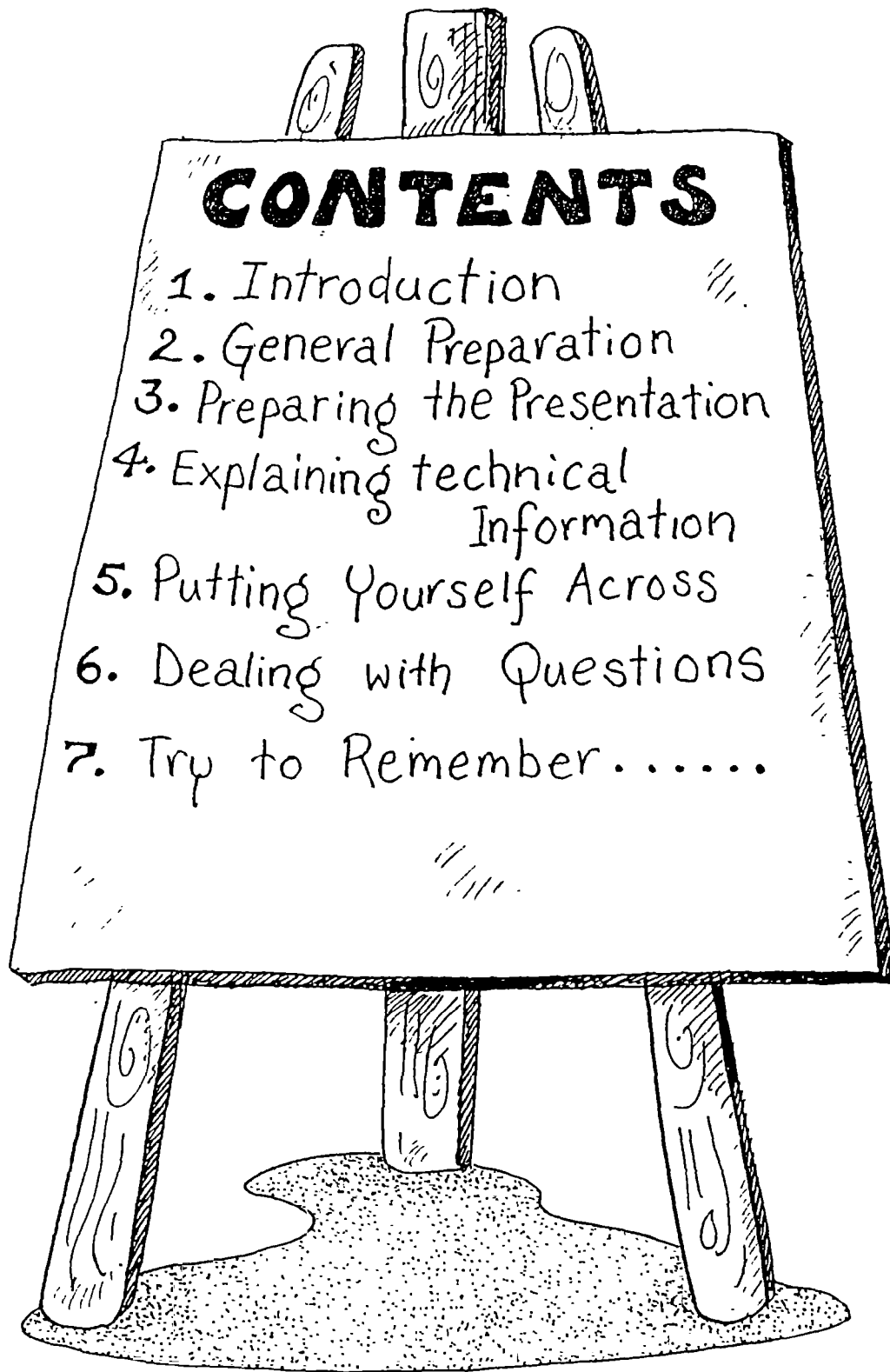
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THE PRESENTER'S CHECKLIST

PREPARING THE MATERIAL

✓

Brainstorm the subject

- List all possible points
- Group into categories
- Arrange in a logical sequence

Structure and select

- Keep the number of main points down to an appropriate level
- Select on the basis of – objective, time, audience, must, should, could
- Tell it like the news –
 - tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em
 - tell 'em
 - tell 'em what you've told 'em

Use illustrations

- Simplify difficult or complex information
- Use real-life examples to illustrate points

Opening and closing

- Write opening and closing sentences in full
- Be challenging and capture the audience in the opening
- Be conclusive when you finish

Notes

- Notes on cards
- Use key words
- Write timings and messages to yourself on cards
- Clip them together

Making sure you are understood

Words

- Use simple words
- Avoid jargon
- Talk in concrete rather than abstract language

How to say it

- Use expression in voice
- Build in pauses
- Ham it up
- Develop a range of tone and pitch in voice
- Speak clearly
- Speak up

Project Yourself

- Look at the audience
- Smile
- Avoid creating physical barriers
- Stand square
- Beware of distracting mannerisms
- Be natural

1. INTRODUCTION

This guide is about speaking effectively. The guidelines can be applied in a variety of speaking situations: making presentations to DLUPU, DDC Council, or Land Board, expressing views at meetings, explaining facts at the kgotla, and so on.

The guide concentrates on three main areas

- preparation
- how to put the message over effectively
- dealing with nerves

It will help anyone who is involved in speaking activities to make the experience a successful and, hopefully, enjoyable one.



2. GENERAL PREPARATION

DECIDING THE OBJECTIVE

WHY

The very first thing to get clear in your mind is the objective of the talk. There will be a general objective as well as a specific objective relating to the subject matter.

General objectives will fall into one of the following categories:

- to persuade
- to teach
- to stimulate thought
- to inform
- to entertain



BEING CLEAR ABOUT YOUR
PURPOSE IS REALLY IMPORTANT!

Whatever your general objective is you always need to try and entertain your audience. This does not mean cracking jokes every other sentence. It does, however, mean that the material must be put over in a way that makes people want to listen.

The specific objective will depend on the subject matter entirely.

It is an excellent idea to write down the objective of the talk in one sentence. This has various benefits:

- it clears the speaker's mind right at the start
- selection of material can be based on fulfilling the objective
- when your notes are complete you can again check that you are meeting your original aim.

RESEARCHING THE AUDIENCE

WHO

Anyone who has sat through a talk and wondered if they are in the right room will know the importance of this question.

The audience or group you are talking to are the most important people in the whole exercise. What should you know about them?

- How many of them are there?
- Why are they there? Are they listening of their own free will? Were they sent to listen?
- What is their present knowledge of the subject of the talk?
- Are they likely to have any bias towards or against the subject or speaker?
- What are their expectations of the talk and speaker?
- What age range and gender are they?

All the above points will determine the material used and the approach to the talk. For example, there is a world of difference between a Physical Planner talking to a group of DOLs about land use planning and the same person talking to a group of Councillors on the same subject. Similarly a computer expert talking to other computer experts about the latest technology will be able to use far more technical language than would be possible when talking to a group of non-experts

You have a duty to those who listen to you to make sure your talk is pitched at the right level for them.



REMEMBER - KNOW
YOUR AUDIENCE!

TIMING

WHEN

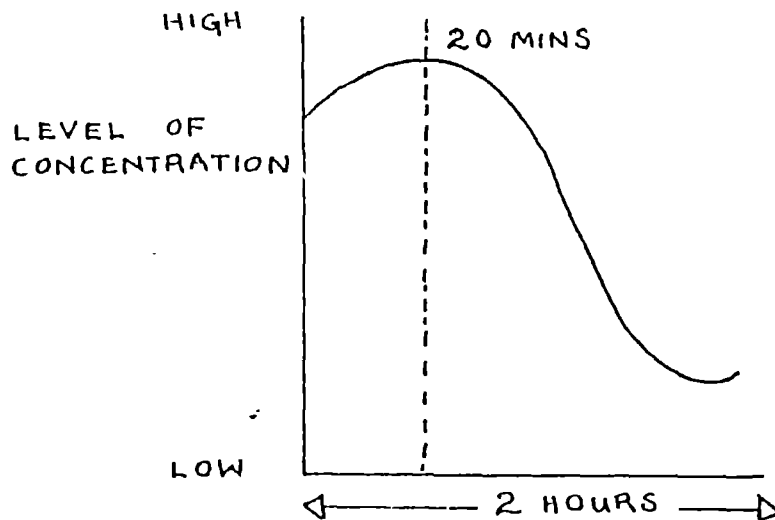
Time of day Time of day can affect the audience. After lunch is known as the graveyard session in training circles. Audiences who have had a few drinks and a good lunch will probably be feeling like an afternoon nap rather than listening to a talk.

The audience, say the DDC or Council, may have already sat through several other speakers. How can you make sure they are interested and listen to what you have to say?

How long have you got - keeping to time Knowing how long you have got and sticking to it is crucial to a good talk. This means practicing to see whether you have the right amount of material. Most people find that if they practice in their head the actual talk will take about 25 per cent longer. Using a flip chart or other visual aids will also add considerably to the time. Bear that in mind. If there is no clock in the room, take your watch off and put it on a table near you so you can glance at it occasionally to check your timing.

Concentration problems Peoples' ability to concentrate hard for long periods is not too good. You need to anticipate lack of concentration in the audience.

Concentration levels over a two-hour period look something like this:



CONCENTRATION CURVE

When listening to a talk, concentration is usually fairly good for the first 20 or so minutes. For some people, however, it can be as short as five minutes. Thereafter, maintaining concentration gets harder and harder until they hear the magic words 'in conclusion'. Concentration improves slightly at that point in anticipation of the end of the talk.

This means that you need to find ways of maintaining the audience's interest in what you have to say.



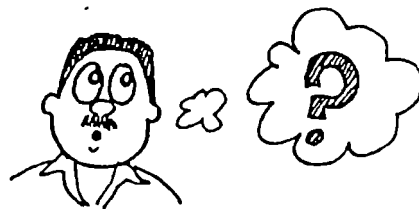
3. PREPARING THE PRESENTATION

ORGANIZATION AND SELECTION OF MATERIAL

Start by writing down all your immediate ideas, and then put them to one side for a while. When you return to the notes, you may have thought of other ideas to add. Group common themes or ideas together. If the logical ordering of points was not obvious at first, after a break, usually, you can see how it all fits together.

Most people at this stage have a mass of possible ideas and information they could use – usually far too much material for the time they have for the talk.

It is important to keep the number of main points to a minimum. In a 30-minute talk you should not try to make more than five main points. Certainly in a five minute talk it is difficult to do justice to more than one or two main points. This may not seem very many, but if you are to leave the audience with a very clear picture of what you have said you cannot expect them to remember masses and masses of points.



Selecting the material you are going to use should be dictated by the following:

- The objective – is some of the information you have irrelevant to the objective of the talk?
- The audience – do they know most of this already?
- How long have I got?
- **MUST, SHOULD, COULD** – sometimes it is possible to select on the basis of what the audience must, should and could know. For example, talking to a group of villagers about the new conservation strategy we must tell them how it will operate and how it affects them. We should tell them why the decision has been made. We could tell them why this particular set of strategies has been chosen against any other.

This stage is often the hardest. It is always tempting to tell people everything you know about a subject especially if it is one you know well.



The structure of a talk should follow the pattern of:

Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em.

Tell 'em.

Tell 'em what you've told 'em.

Like news bulletins on the television, you need to tell people what you are going to cover in your talk, then expand on each of those points, and finish by summarizing what you have said, reiterating the main points again.

When you start writing concentrate on the middle of the presentation first. The introduction and closing will flow from this.

The following structure is useful to adopt when trying to persuade people to your view:

1. State your case
2. Anticipate objections – concede any flaws in the argument. Even if you do not express them out loud, it is important to consider what they might be and select your material appropriately.
3. Prove your case – select your best reasons for your proposition. Do not overload your talk with lots of reasons. Quality is better than quantity.
4. Show your practical evidence – build in practical examples of the facts you are relying upon. Do not slant the evidence.
5. End by repeating the proposition.



OPENING AND CLOSING A TALK

Only when you have completely sorted out the main part of your talk should you think about the opening and closing since the content of the middle will dictate these.

Introduction The introduction can be looked at like this:

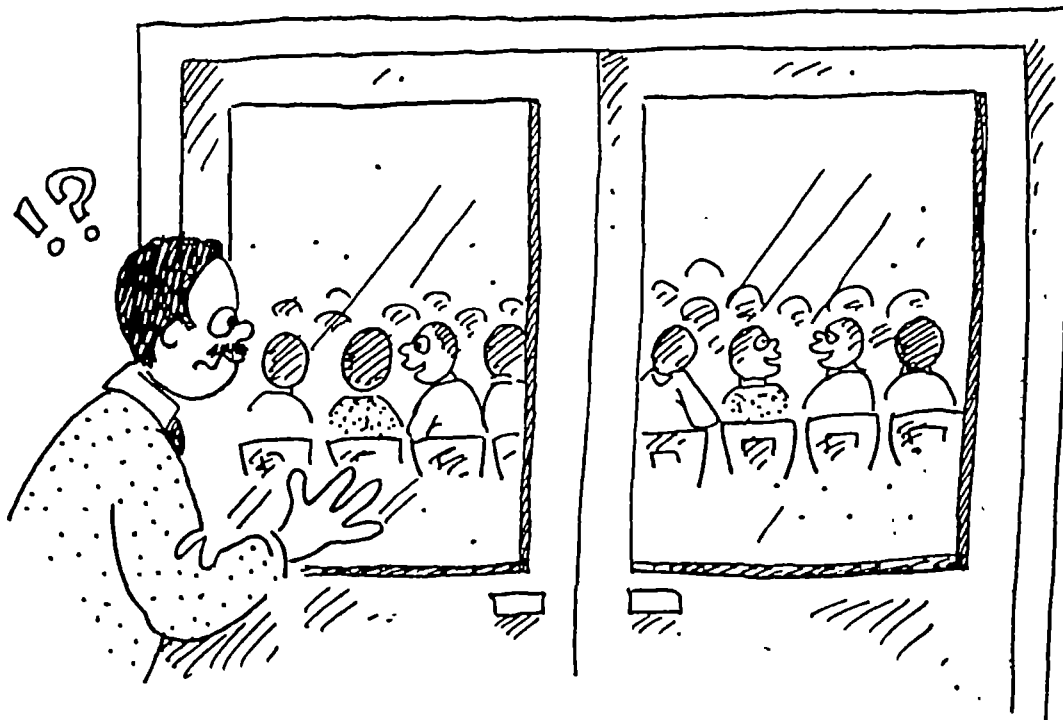
I	Interest
N	Need
T	Title
R	Ratings
O	Objective

Interest Find something to capture the attention of the audience immediately.

Need Show the audience why they need to listen to what you have got to say. What does it mean to them.

Title and Ratings This is the 'Tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em' part. Tell them the subject of your talk and what you are going to cover.

Objective You may or may not decide to state this explicitly. If you do not, the objective should shine through to your audience.



USING NOTES

Notes should be brief and consist of key words. Speakers who use verbatim notes are really reading out aloud rather than speaking from within.

Notes are best put on cards. There are various good reasons for this:

- they do not shake around as much as sheets of paper if you are nervous
- you do not need a lectern to prop all the sheaves of paper on, as cards can be held quite easily
- since they are smaller, they encourage you to use key words rather than writing down complete sentences.

Some of the basic rules that follow, will help to ensure that what you do put on cards will be useful.

1. **Key words.** It is essential to use the right words otherwise you may look at the card and wonder what it was you meant by ENVIRONMENT, for example.
2. **Use your own handwriting.** Make your notes in your own handwriting – written large. Typewritten notes are usually too small to see comfortably. This may mean that you only have two or three key words on a card. It is much better to have several cards than one with everything crammed on.
3. **Write timings on the cards.** As a good check of how fast or slow you are going, it can be useful to write a note to yourself at the point when you expect to be halfway through, for example. If you are only halfway through a 30 minute talk at the 20-minute stage, you will need to speed up or cut out some of the material.
4. **Write messages to yourself with different coloured pens.** For example, if you talk too fast write **SLOW DOWN** in your notes. If you are not too good at looking at the audience write **LOOK UP / ROUND ROOM** and so on. When you are up there talking you are probably concentrating 100 per cent on what you are saying. These sort of notes can remind you occasionally of other points to remember.
5. **Clip the cards together.** If you have more than one card do clip them together. Treasury tags are useful for this purpose. Whatever you do, do number the cards so that even if they become separated you can get them back together in the proper order quickly.



Finally, do practice with cards, especially if you have not used them before.

4. EXPLAINING TECHNICAL INFORMATION

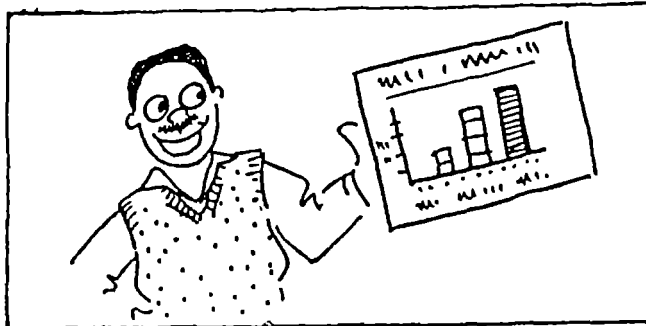
Identify the difficult points in advance and plan how you are going to explain them. Don't start thinking about how you're going to do it in the middle of your presentation.

In simplifying and explaining things try to put yourself in the audience's position and their level of understanding and ways of thinking. Explain things in ways that relate to their experience.

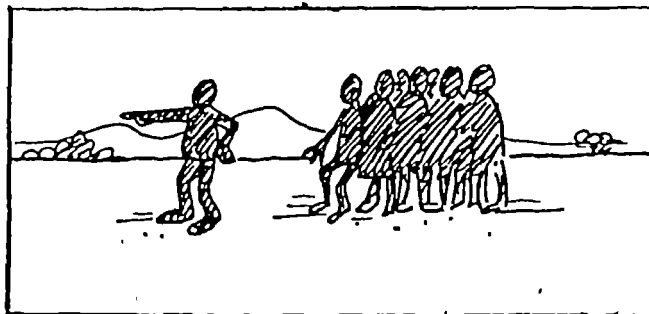
Avoid technical jargon as much as possible.

Simplify statistical data. Keep it to the basic essentials. If members of your audience want more statistical detail, refer them to the full report

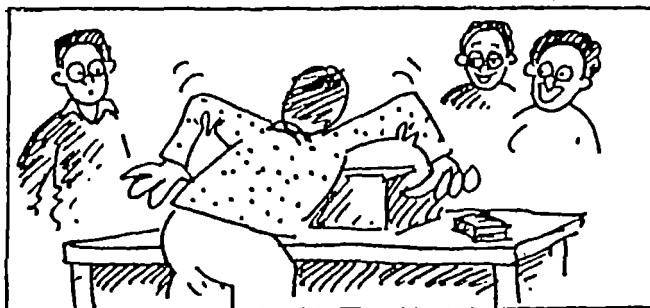
Where visuals will help, use them.



Where a field visit will help, organize it.



Where a demonstration will help, show it.



Remember KISS Keep it sweet and simple



5. PUTTING YOURSELF ACROSS

How the message is understood

Although our basic communication medium is words, it is surprising how little contribution to the message they have on their own. Consider the following information about the percentage contribution to the total message:

7% verbal – to do with words

38% vocal – to do with tone of voice

55% visual – to do with facial expression, gesture, posture and so on.

Let us take each of these areas in turn:

WORDS

The words we use should suit our audience. Only use jargon in its rightful place. Be aware of the problems involved with words.

How you say it affects how people understand:

Remember to:

- **Be Enthusiastic** Show some enthusiasm about your subject by injecting expression into what you are saying. If you are not enthusiastic about your subject, you can hardly expect the audience to be.
- **Pause** Do not be afraid of pausing. You do not have to rush through it all like an express train. Give the audience time to take in and digest what you are saying. Remember – pause after the main points of your talk.
- **Ham it up** You need to use more expression than usual when talking to a large group. Be animated and energetic to keep people's interest. Don't be afraid of acting up a bit.
- **Vary tone of voice and pitch** There is nothing more tedious than listening to a talk delivered in a monotonous tone of voice. A voice that moves up and down is much more interesting.
- **Speak clearly** Try to make sure that words do not run into one another. If there are tongue twisting words in your talk, practice them so that they come out perfectly.
- **Speak up** Most people give up on a speaker they have to strain to hear. Make sure you are loud enough for everyone in the room.

It also helps if you:

**BODY
LANGUAGE**

- **Look at your audience** This may be very hard to do but it is essential. You need to look at them to see how they are reacting. Are they bored? Asleep? Looking interested? Looking at each other? You want to worry when the audience stops looking at you for any length of time. It usually indicates people have lost interest.
- **Smile** Again hard to do if you are nervous. Even if you are not particularly happy, smiling can create the illusion of it.
- **Avoid creating barriers between speakers and audience** You need to get as near to your audience as possible. Standing behind a desk or lectern immediately sets up a barrier. It is always tempting to hide behind something, but is undesirable.
- **Beware of distracting mannerisms** This does not mean standing rigid. Most of us use our hands to some extent to add emphasis to what we are saying and we should not stop doing this. However, waving your arms around all over the place is likely to distract the audience.
- **Be natural** Easier said than done, you may say. However, if you concentrate on getting the message across and stop worrying about yourself, you will have more chance of coming over naturally.



6. DEALING WITH QUESTIONS

There are good reasons for inviting questions from the audience. The main one is that it helps contribute towards the message being understood. If one person asks a question about some aspect they are not clear on, it will help everyone else in the audience.

It is important to tell people there will be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the talk. As they listen questions may occur to them and they can save them up. This is better than springing the idea on the audience at the end.

If you do not have a chairman, the following points should be borne in mind:

- Do not expect questions to come immediately you stop talking. You are asking the audience to take on a different role. They have been listening up until now and may need a few moments to think of the questions they want to ask.
- When someone in the audience asks a question, repeat it, so that everyone in the room knows what is being answered.
- Answer as concisely as you can. Do not go on and on, but do not make it so short that it does not answer the question.
- If you do not know the answer, say so. Never on any account invent an answer. Ask the audience if anyone knows the answer or offer to find out.
- Take questions from all over the room. Do not concentrate on a particular group or person if other people want to ask questions.
- When time is going fast say 'Just two more questions, please'.
- If a question is not clear, rephrase it, eg: 'Do I understand you to be asking.....?'
- If a member of the audience is making a statement rather than asking a question say: 'There is a great deal in what you say. May we have the next question please'.
- If a questioner is hostile, it can be quite useful to ask them to answer the question themselves, eg: 'What about X?' The answer could be: 'Well, maybe you'd like to tell us what you think'. Whatever you do, try to remain calm and composed.



7. TRY TO REMEMBER

- Know your subject.
- Prepare well.
- State your objectives at the outset. Remember, participants are eager to learn very early on the answer to this question: "What's in it for me?"
- Use visual aids – make certain they can be read easily.
- Watch your techniques of delivery: vary your voice levels, use gestures and movement; remember to pause from time to time; vary the speed.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Use humour, examples, stories.
- Don't read out your notes word for word – refer to them and talk naturally facing the audience.
- Introduce surprise.
- Speak clearly.
- Show confidence, sincerity, energy, enthusiasm.
- Catch people's interest right from the start.
- Watch your closing – give them a message they'll remember.
- Try to get feedback on your performance.
- Avoid "uh's" and "ah's".
- Know your audience – their interests, perceptions, expectations, background.
- Test the climate throughout your presentation: are they still listening?

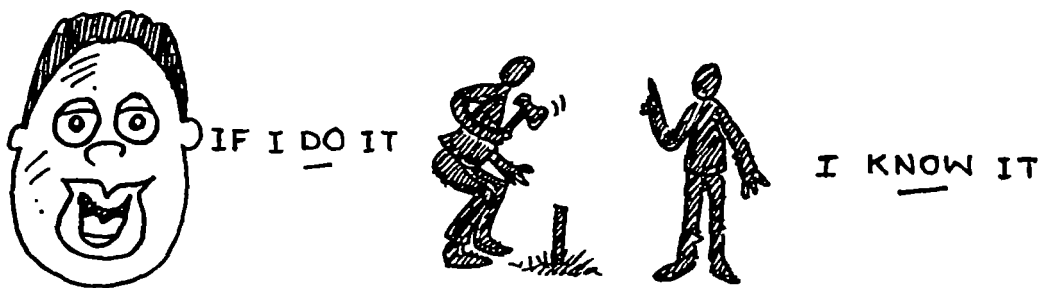
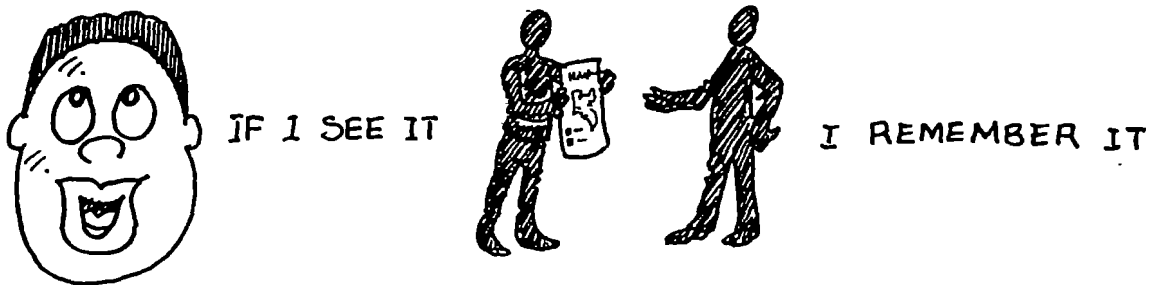
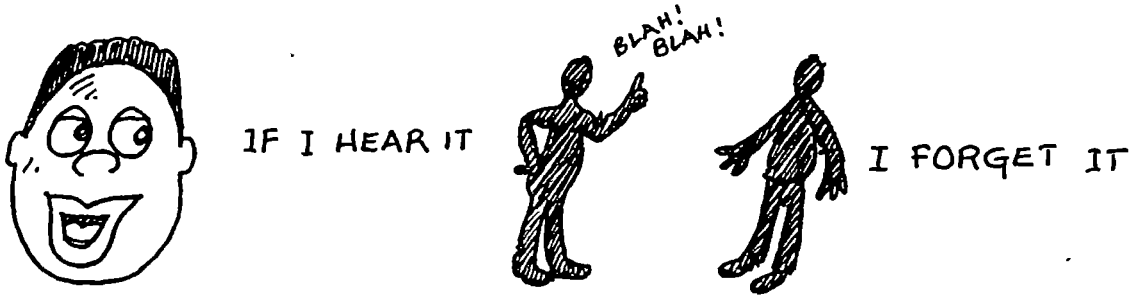


- Use a lot of "you's" for audience rapport.
- Include practical material ("how to") in your presentation.
- Avoid "heavy" statistics, instead, speak about quantitative items.
- Use everyday language and avoid jargon.
- Try to speak in a conversational tone of voice.
- Quit on time.





Notes on
Communication Skills



THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATION

IS TO

CREATE UNDERSTANDING

We communicate to convey

- * INFORMATION
- * FEELINGS
- * IDEAS
- * INSTRUCTIONS
- * REQUESTS

We spend between 50% to 80% of our working day communicating.
Research suggests we spend:

45% of communication time	38% of working day	LISTENING
30% "	24% "	SPEAKING
15% "	12% "	READING
10% "	8% "	WRITING

WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME ON COMMUNICATION

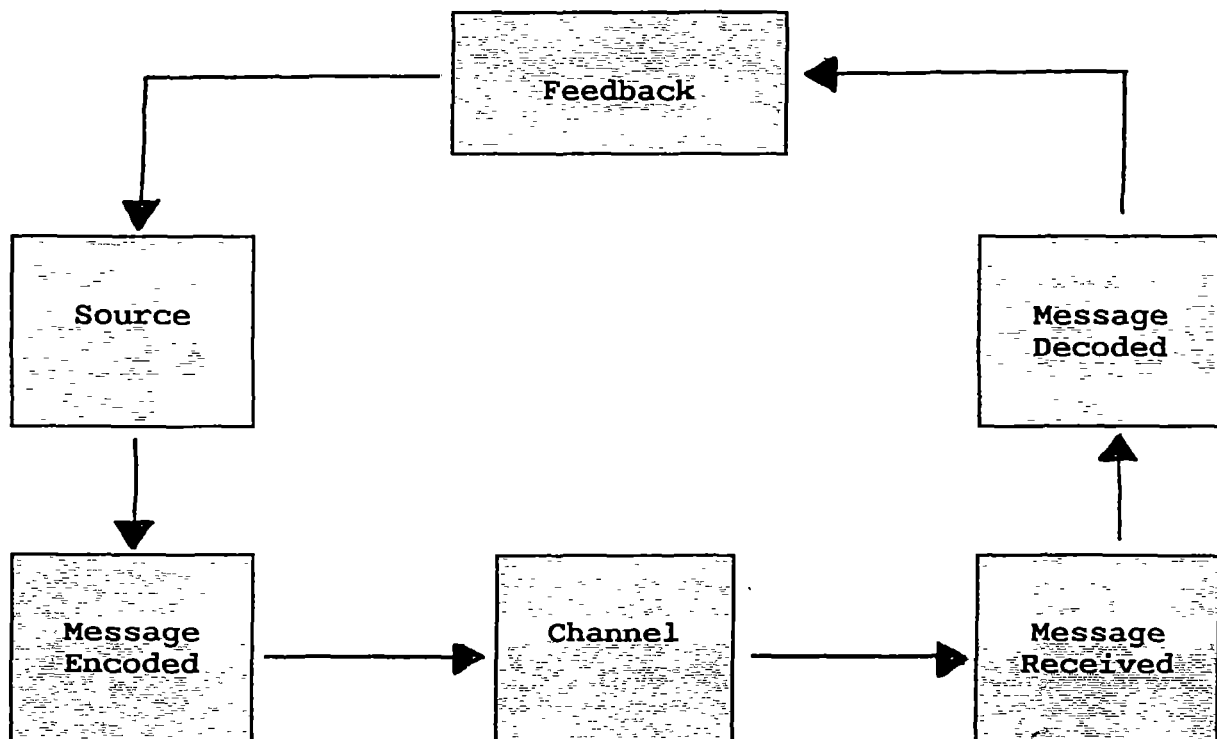
WE NEED TO BE SURE WE DO IT EFFECTIVELY

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION DEPENDS ON

- Attention - by both parties
- Intention - to send and receive
- Message - clear & understandable
- Feedback - a clear response to the message

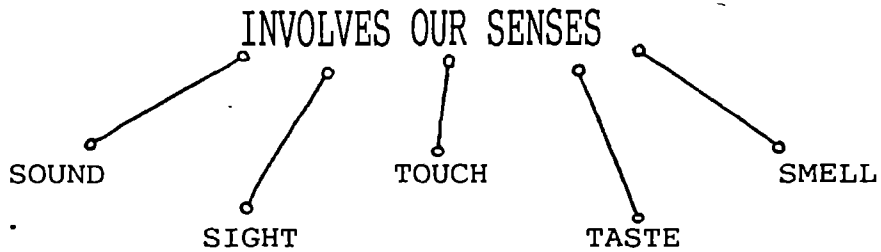
Each communication situation is different but there are common elements in all. In each situation there is a **source** or a transmitter of information and a **receiver**, someone who receives what has been communicated. The source has an idea, information, or instruction which he wishes to transmit to the receiver. The source turns his idea into a message. To transmit this message the source must encode it, that is he must decide which symbols to use to express his ideas. The code can be words, sounds, pictures, gestures or a combination of all of these. The code is then transmitted along a channel to the receiver. The channel is a **medium**, or a carrier of messages. Before he can understand the message the receiver, the target of the communication, must be able to decode the communication.

The communication cycle involves transmission, reception, listening, understanding, remembering, and feedback.





Sending and receiving messages



The most commonly used senses are hearing, seeing and touching (doing)

People learn

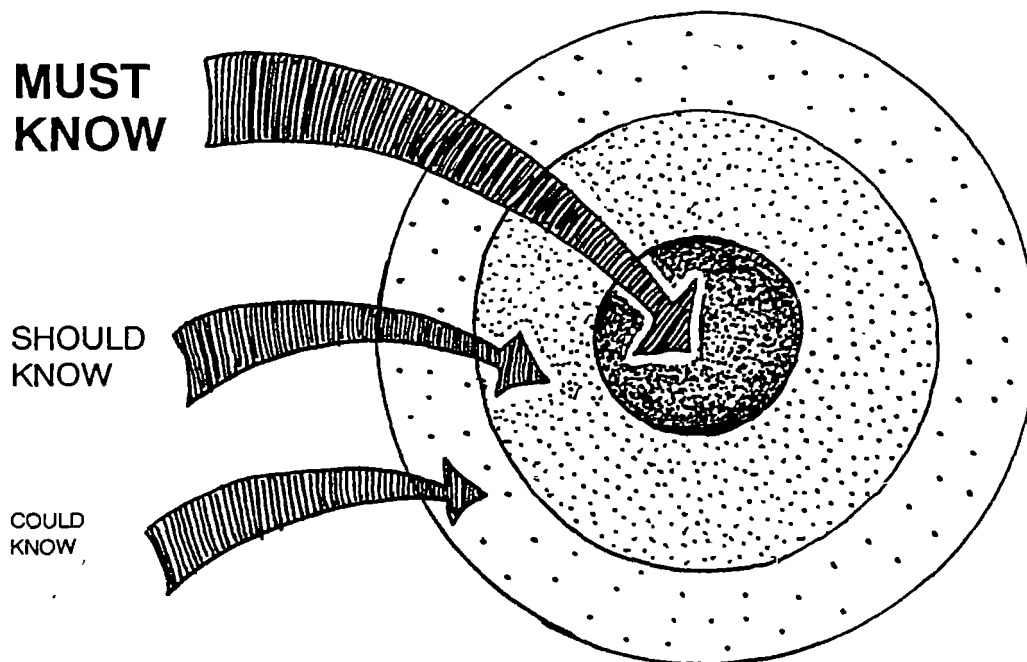
10%	of what they	HEAR
30%	of what they	SEE
60%	of what they	DO

This has
implications for
reception & understanding

The strengths of the different channels of communication has a bearing on our ability to capture and hold attention. If we use more than one channel we have a greater chance of retaining attention.



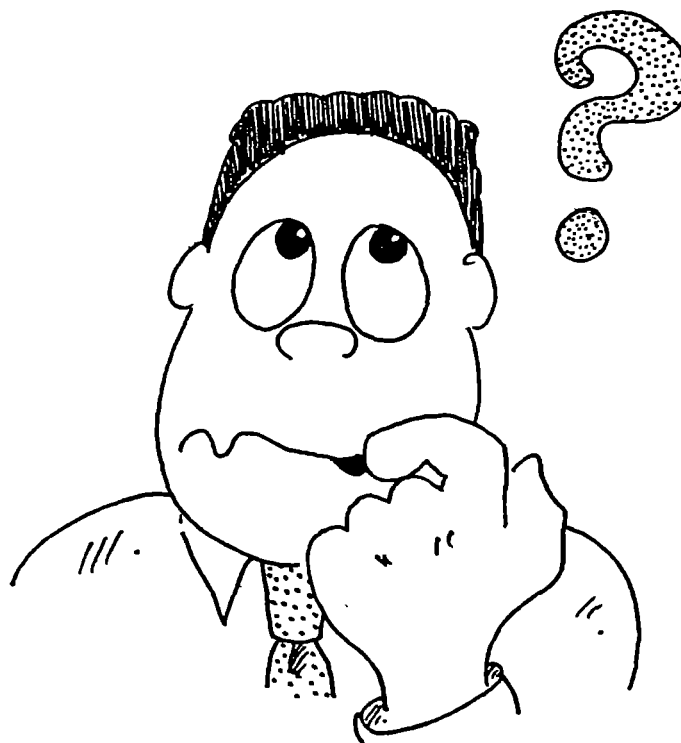
We will be more effective if we target our communication



What do they need to know?

Am I being relevant?

Am I using the right approach?





Understanding & remembering

is improved if

We have their ATTENTION

Are they at ease?

Does it relate to their needs?

Have we stimulated their interest?

They can ASSOCIATE it with

Previous - experience

knowledge

There is a STRUCTURE to our message

Can they see the problem?

Can they understand the reasons for the problem?

Can they understand the connection between the problem
and possible solutions?

Can they understand the arguments for & against each
solution?

Communication Fails Because..

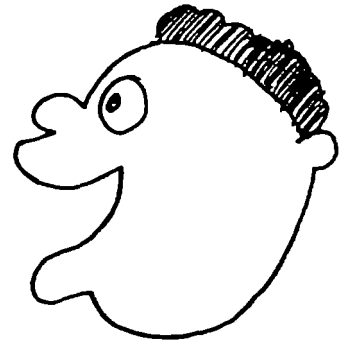
If communication is to achieve its objective the communication channel must be kept wide open, free from interference or distraction. Many different factors can result in the communication channel being blocked. For example:

- The communicator's attitudes, social status, knowledge
- The receiver's attitudes, social status, knowledge
- Competition with other activities
- Contradiction of our words by our actions

All these and many other factors act as barriers to communication. It is the communicator's task to recognise and prevent them from blocking his message.



Be Effective



- * Be clear about WHY you are communicating
- * Be clear about WHAT you want to communicate
- * Be sure your MESSAGE is CLEAR
- * Be sure you KNOW your AUDIENCE
- * Be sure your MESSAGE is RELEVANT
- * Be sure you have selected the APPROPRIATE MEDIUM
- * Be sure you have chosen the APPROPRIATE TIME
- * Be sure that you have been UNDERSTOOD

