



## **“Manage the Announcement to Set Your New Employee Up for Success.”**

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From “Onboarding: How to Get Your New Employees Up to Speed in Half the Time”, Chapter 8; by George Bradt and Mary Vonnegut

Great communicators connect, inspire and persuade. To *connect*, you must engage your audience in the message. You should *inspire* confidence. And you have to *persuade* your listeners to action. Successful communication demands that you craft a clear, concise, persuasive message and deliver it effectively. Both components matter.

### **Crafting a Clear, Concise, Persuasive Message**

Language matters. As you develop your *Platform for Change and Vision*, ask yourself: What is the ONE thing I want my audience to remember? They won't remember everything you say. Your goal should be this: if Joe walks out of your meeting and runs into Jane, who missed it, could Joe play back your key message in one sentence?

Four keys to an effective message:

- Concrete – don't talk in vague concepts; be specific
- Targeted to your audience – what are their priorities?
- Pithy, memorable – will everyone be able to play it back?
- Short – 10 words or fewer

We can learn a lot about strong messaging from the experts – speech writers and copywriters. Consider these examples pulled from politics and pop culture:

The most effective messages are short and simple.

*I have a dream (Martin Luther King, 1964)*

This famous speech contains, arguably, the most powerful message of any political speech in recent history. Notice that it contains four words, all one syllable.

Stay away from flowery language and jargon. This is not the time to show off your big vocabulary.

*“Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” (Ronald Reagan at the Berlin Wall, 1989)*

Ronald Reagan didn't say, “Let us end the divide between communism and democracy and come together with peace and harmony throughout the world...” No. He shouted “Tear down this wall” – specific, direct, actionable, short and memorable. That wall came down.

Memorable messages give you something unexpected, as in the Addidas advertising slogan:

*“Impossible is Nothing” (Addidas global advertising campaign)*

The slogan could easily have read: “Nothing is impossible”. It means the same thing. But instead, they flipped the cliché on its head. Now your brain hears something unexpected. Your brain has to stop and process the message. That's one way ads break through the clutter and stick.

**Hot tip for Persuasive messaging:** When laying out your Vision of the future – think about the benefits to your listener. Appeal to what we call the “universal motivators”: Money, Time, Feelings.

Money: Make money -- develop new business, increase revenue

Save money -- cut costs, improve profitability

Time: Save time; improve efficiency

Feelings: Build ego, power or cache; improve morale, etc.

This type of benefit language will move people in your direction.

In summary, while you're not writing ad slogans, pay attention to the language. Challenge yourself to craft a powerful key message that will move your listeners to action.

### **Delivering your message**

Note to self: There are no casual presentations. At work, you are always presenting yourself to others and they are always forming impressions of you. So be sure you're projecting yourself as you want others to see you.

Whether you plan to communicate with your employee's stakeholders in large groups, small groups or one-on-one meetings, you will need to project confidence and enthusiasm for your message. And you'll need to know if your message is connecting. Here are some quick tips for delivering information effectively:

**Connect** – Keep your eyes up out of your paper. It's OK to use notes, just don't talk to the notes – they are not your audience! Look your audience in the eyes as you speak. Strong eye contact projects confidence and gives you credibility. Strong eye contact also enables you to gauge audience reaction to your message.

Eye contact is not simply a mechanical skill of looking around the room. The skill is to look people in the eye to see how your message is being received. This understanding allows you to adapt to the moment as needed.

**Show your enthusiasm** – When introducing your new employee to others, you're delivering a good news message. Your body language and tone of voice must communicate good news. So we'd better see you smile! Use natural gestures and avoid speaking in monotone.

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