

When Your Message Matters: Four Ways to Make It Stick.

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You may be a corporate trainer giving crucial information to a group of employees. You may be teacher lecturing a class full of students. You might be telling a co-worker or friend something you consider really important. Or you may be a parent, hoping that the information you give your children will be remembered and heeded.

Whatever situation you find yourself in, and whenever the information you're sharing is important enough, you want to make sure the folks listening to you remember what they hear.



Yes, you might just cross your fingers and hope that they “got it.” After all, they heard it, right?

Or you might not even worry about it. You did your job by telling them the information. Now it's their job to remember and use it.

Or you might ask, “Do you have any questions?” And you make the assumption that they understood what they heard you say simply because they have no questions to ask.

OR - You can use one of the following simple, easy techniques to make sure that your listeners really heard and understood your message.

These techniques take no more than a minute or two of time, and yet they help your listeners move

the new information into long-term memory, which is important when your message really matters.

Don't be embarrassed by asking the listener to do one of these memory techniques. Simply explain that you want to make sure they don't forget the important information - these simple activities will help them remember information longer.

1. Use a catchy slogan. We are conditioned by television to think in sound-bites, one-liners, and slogans. Make up a short slogan that captures the heart of your message, or that reminds people about the information they heard. Then repeat the slogan a few times as you talk, and have your listeners repeat it also. According to advertising research, when a slogan is repeated a minimum of six times, it begins to move into long-term memory. Think "Just do it!" "Fly the friendly skies." "Got milk?" and so on.

Invite your listeners to create the slogans that will help them remember the information.

As the friend or co-worker with whom you're sharing information, to think of a catchy phrase that would help him remember what he's heard.

If working with your own kids, do the same: encourage them to make up ways to remember what you tell them. During the day/week, invite them to repeat the slogans they create.

2. Write it down. People usually remember more information if they see it and write it, as well as hear it. So print out the important points on a chart or other large sheet of paper (large enough for everyone to read as you talk). Or print important facts on index cards and pass out the cards to your listeners. Better yet, invite listeners to jot down the important points or key words on index cards, a handout, or scratch paper while you talk.

If talking one-on-one with a friend or co-worker, hand that person a pen and blank index card and say, "This is profound so write it down!"

You can do the same with children. Say, "Let's write this down together so we won't forget it."



3. Post a reminder. If you are teaching or training, remember to post important information around the room (on walls, tables, floors, hallways, doors) where learners can see and read it often during the class or training.

If talking with a friend or co-worker, invite that person to post the index card he has written on, or the page of information you've given him, on a bulletin board, wall, desk, mirror, computer, door - anywhere the person will be likely to reread it.

The same applies to your training participants. Tell them to post the important things they've learned in places where they will reread, remember, and use the information later.

Your kids can do the same with their reminders. They can choose the place they wish to tape the reminder so that they will see it daily.



4. Teach it to another. The best way to remember anything is to teach it to someone else. Invite learners to do just that. They form pairs or triads with the folks around them, and then take turns explaining the important points to the others.

Your friend or co-worker can teach another person what you shared with him. Or you can say, "Now pretend that I don't know anything about this topic. What would you tell me? What do I need to know?" And then listen to what your friend says and paraphrase back what you hear.

As for your children, have them teach each other, teach you, or teach a friend about what you just taught them. If no one is around, and your child is young enough, have her teach a pet or stuffed animal the new information. Make it a game by saying, "Dolly needs to know what I taught you. Can you teach her?"

Final Thoughts. Making up a slogan, writing it down, posting a visual reminder, teaching it to someone else: all simple ways to move important information into long-term memory. When your message matters, and you want listeners to remember what they hear, use one of these quick, easy memory techniques to make your message stick.



Author and traveling teacher Sharon Bowman helps educators and business people “teach it quick and make it stick,” - fine-tuning their information-delivery skills and turning their passive listeners into active learners.

Over 50,000 copies of Sharon’s 6 popular teaching, training, and motivation books are now in print. Look for her newest book, published by Pfeiffer, a division of John Wiley & Sons, titled: *The Ten-Minute Trainer! 150 Ways to Teach It Quick and Make It Stick*. It is available on www.amazon.com.

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