



## Action Planning

As you sit down to plan your next communication, remember; the receiver determines your success. What you think is clever, funny or entertaining only has value to the extent that it motivates your listeners to help you get the outcome you want. As a business communicator there is always some **Change** or “□” you want when you communicate. Clarify that single, observable, measurable “□” first and your content tumbles out. On the other hand, start with your favorite joke and tell them only what you want to tell them and you’ve forgotten about the two most important elements of an effective content - the “□” you’re after, and your listeners’ needs.

**Here’s how to make sure you get the result you are after with your content.**

**I. The “□”:** Know the specific change you want from each particular communication. Communicators who can picture their listeners doing something as a result of a talk will always have more focused, energetic content than speakers who just talk about what they know. The former is working to create a change in the listener, the latter is dumping information.

When you finish this talk what will your listeners do?

- Implement the strategy.
- Sign the order.
- Agree to another meeting.
- Be motivated to coach their direct reports.

Use this statement to clarify your “□”:

When you finish this communication, your receivers will... (single, action, verb if possible).



## **II Wishes:**

### **Personal:**

Know your own needs well enough keep them from interfering with getting the result you want. If you are not willing to identify your own needs and put them on the back burner, they may be unconsciously driving what you say and how you say it. For instance:

- Do you like to talk?  
You may go on too long.
- Do you think you are funny?  
Your jokes may distract your listeners from what's really important.
- Do you need approval?  
Your words and body may be throwing away your power to convince.

### **Business:**

- Are you trying to close too fast?
- Is this business relationship ready for this type of communication?
- Be aware of the difference between long term, intermediate and short term "□"'s.

In communication as in all situations, the better you know yourself, your needs and your wishes, the better able you are to address the needs of others and make things happen.

## **III Receiver's Current Reality:** Who are the receivers of this

communication? What do they need? What drives their choices? Do they want money, achievement, an easier day? If you don't know you will never be able to create content that will activate them. Take the time to get as complete a picture as possible of the people who will determine your success. Do research. Make phone calls. Send out surveys if you have to.



#### **IV Hook 'Em Where They Live.**

Advertisers are masters at using information about potential buyers to create memorable slogans or **Hooks**.

- You want guaranteed next day delivery.  
Fed X says: *"When it absolutely positively has to be there overnight"*.
- You want less hassles at car dealerships.  
Saturn has *no haggle prices* and *non-commissioned sales people*.
- You wanted more meat in your burgers.  
Wendy's said: *"Where's the Beef!"*

Now take what you know about your **Listener's Current Reality**, put it together with the "□" you want and create your own Hook. If it's really going to **Hook** them it needs to clearly tell your listeners **What's In It For Them** (WIFM) to do what you want them to do.

- "This strategy is the key to increasing market share."  
(You want the strategy implemented, this owner wants more market share.)
- "Accepting this order now means more profits tomorrow."  
(You want him to sign the order, this prospect wants profits soon.)
- "Let me come back on Thursday and I'll show you how we can improve your ratings."  
(You want another meeting, client wants improved ratings.)
- "A real coaching relationship is the key to lower turnover."  
(You want managers to coach, managers want lower turnover.)

A strong **Hook** gives your listeners a reason to listen to the rest of your talk. The test of a strong **Hook** is that if you convince your



listeners it's true, they will do what you want them to do. If they hear your **Hook** and say "so what?" you didn't focus on an important receivers need.

**V. Sell your Hook.** A good strong **Hook** always leaves important questions unanswered. Your listeners only need answers to those questions in order to believe your **Hook**. If they believe your **Hook**, they do the "□". Look back to your **Hook** for the questions it asks and the content of your communication.

- "This *strategy* is the key to *increasing market share*."
- Explain the strategy.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- Explain why it is the key to market share.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- "Accepting *this offer now* means *profits tomorrow*."
- Explain the offer.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- Explain why he needs to accept now.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.
- Explain how it will bring profits tomorrow.
  - 1.
  - 2.
  - 3.

**VI. The Prep:** An opening only exists to get your listeners "Prepped" to hear your hook. What do your listeners need to hear to be ready to listen to

3030 Bridgeway, Suite 109, Sausalito CA 94965 Phone: 415-332-6646, Fax 415-332-6589

[dan@dansappassociates.com](mailto:dan@dansappassociates.com),

[www.dansappassociates.com](http://www.dansappassociates.com)



your Hook. Do you need to establish common ground? Lay your cards on the table? Bring people up to speed? Do they need waking up? Again let the **Receivers Current Reality (RCR)** and the “□” you want drive your opening, not your need to tell funny stories.

**VII. The Close** either directly asks for the “□”;

- “Do you agree to implement this strategy?”

Or restates your **Hook**;

- In closing, this strategy is the key to improving market share.

Don’t bore them at the end. Remind them of what’s in it for them to do what you want them to do. Give them a call to action.

**Note:**

Most people, intuitively, start the planning process with their catchy opening. If you do, the tendency is to support your opening instead of your Hook. Follow the order established here and you will be planning for success; strategically.

**In closing: Use this process and you’ll get better results in any communication!**

**Test:** See if you can identify the parts of the process in this outline!