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JAN 26, 2018 @ 06:48 PM 11 👁

When Women Talk Techie To Tech Men -- Keep These Techniques In Mind

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Your knowledge of the technical subject has earned you a title and credibility. Remember this and stand up strong, make eye contact and own your podium.

When senior executives send someone to our firm for communication coaching, one of the most frequent goals on the executive's wish list is brevity: "They ramble—particularly when asked a question. Can you help them correct this problem?"

Multiply this complaint ten-fold where technical professionals are involved. The best technical communicators drive straight to the point and stop. No rambling. No rabbit chasing.

For many women, the temptation to take a circuitous route is strong. Your female brain can juggle many thought patterns at once. For example, when asked a technical question, you may see seven ways to respond. You may try to incorporate all possible details in an attempt to give a correct, comprehensive response.

Not so with most male brains. They work in linear fashion. The thought starts at point A and goes directly to point B. When the male techie communicates on a technical subject, you may often consider his explanations or answers "blunt," "incomplete" or "simplistic" while he may consider yours "verbose."

If you want to get through to a particular techie male, keep this principle in mind: Overview first; then elaborate. State your point in a sentence or two, then circle back

to provide details.


Structure matters to help the two species reach common ground here.

Set Yourself Up to Hold the Floor Without Interruption

Again, [several research studies](#) on the differences between male and female communication show that males interrupt females more often than the reverse. And females permit others to interrupt their comments more often than males do.

To go toe-to-toe with your technical male counterparts, from the beginning set yourself up to hold the floor. For example, in a meeting, you might say: “I’d don’t think that’s the best software choice for two reasons. First, the compatibility issue....” Then if you’re interrupted before you get to the second reason, you say, “Just a moment. I’d like to finish with my second reason...” Then do so.

Don't Let Visuals Drown Your Delivery

Many technical professionals go overboard in creating visuals—too many, too cluttered, too meaningless. You can stand out by being different—and better. Your knowledge of the technical subject has earned you a title and credibility. Remember this and stand up strong, make eye contact and own your podium. 

Bottom-line: Being technically sound represents only the first step in communicating with other techies. Your male counterpart is human first, technical second. So connect accordingly: To be memorable and promotable, be persuasive and engaging.

Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 47 books. Her newest is [Communicate Like a Leader](#). She helps organizations communicate clearly. Follow her at [BooherResearch.com](#) and [@DiannaBooher](#).

I'm Nancy F. Clark, author of [The Positive Journal](#), and curator of [Forbes WomensMedia](#). My team helps businesswomen succeed and live happier and more fulfilling lives.