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LATEST OPINIONS



**Career Tip Of The
Week**

**Guest Contribution by
Dianna Booher**

People resist being persuaded. They fast-forward through commercials. They say, "No, thank you; I'm just looking" when the sales associate asks if they need help to buy—even if two minutes later they ask for help.



The vast majority of people (88 percent) report that they break their New Year's resolutions before the end of January. And those resolutions are changes that people themselves decide to make—to get physically fit, get out of debt, get organized.

Clearly, your clients and coworkers are wary of spin. So when you MUST break through that protective barrier to persuade someone to change their mind or behavior, you have to communicate with intention.

My book *What MORE Can I Say? Why Communication Fails and What to Do About It* outlines nine laws to move people to action. The law of "Specificity Versus Generalization" is **foundational when it comes to persuasion.**

Be Concrete

Your clients, your staff, and your peers consider random communication coming to them an intrusion. Daily messages on social media, network news, and email blasts by their very nature have to be generic. Result: People skim, scan, or tune out altogether.

Both of the following comments have one thing in common: They are used in multiple scenarios—with varied meanings.

"It's our policy. That's the best I can do." In the midst of supplier negotiations, this ultimatum typically brings the situation to a halt—unless the other party really has no other options. And rarely is that the case.

"We will get back to you when we have a resolution to the problem." When



Voice of Experience: Corinne Martindale, Senior Vice President and Head of Product Management, Voya Investment Management



Why Women Can't Stand Alone as Gender Diversity Champions



Men Who Get It: Roger Mitchell, Managing Director, TIAA-CREF, IT Business and Resource Management



OP ED: Men should be Gender Champions, so I started with myself.

OUR UPCOMING EVENTS

NOV
18
Wed
2015
(<http://theglasshammer.com>)

5:30 pm 6th Annual Women in Technology E... @ TBC
(<http://theglasshammer.com/event/6th-annual-women-in->)

leaders toss this promise to a crowd during a crisis, they react, "We want to know now what you're doing to find the resolution."

Such statements anger people, cause them to dig in their heels, and stall action. For a more positive response, use concrete, straightforward language. Acknowledge specific issues or difficulties to be resolved. Explain specifically what you're doing to investigate behind the scenes. State specific action steps you plan to take or that you want others to take.

Drop the Doublespeak

People distrust what they don't understand. Much of what is written today in corporate America and by governmental agencies is not intended to inform people. It is written to protect the organization providing the information.

Take pharmaceutical studies for example. Strip the disclosures and doublespeak, and what they say is, "We are not sure how and why this new medicine works for some individuals. We don't know what the implications and complications may be in the future. Take it at your own risk. We are not responsible for what may happen to you." But if they made that statement so clearly and boldly, nobody would use the medicine without further testing.

Double-speak persists as a protective shield. But gobbledygook also limits your personal influence and power in a distinctive way: distrust.

Avoid Making the Effort Look Harder Than It Is

That's not the same as making things look easy. Promise people that changing will be easy, and they will think you're either a liar, incompetent, or crazy. When you're trying to influence people to make a change, they need to consider a specific request and make the commitment. Otherwise, you'll have a "yes" answer and a "no" on the follow-through.

But that said, some things really are easy. Why make them unnecessarily difficult simply by the way you communicate them?

View Calendar → (<http://theglasshammer.com/networking-events/>)

Whether creating an image for your LinkedIn group, sending email, drafting a client proposal, or soliciting gifts from donors, break the action you want down into clear, doable steps. Provide the necessary details to take the action without the other person having to play detective and make unnecessary calls and send extra emails.

If it's easy, say so. Pay attention to physical layout on the page or screen: Make things look easy:

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networking-
events/
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oneday
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2015/)

technology-event/?
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MAR
9
Wed
2016
(http://theglasshammer.com/networking-events/action-oneday/exact_date~9-3-2016/)

5:30 pm 5th Annual
Navigating, Negotiati...
@ TBC
(http://theglasshammer.com/event/5th-annual-navigating-negotiating-and-building-your-strategic-network-event/?instance_id=13)

JUN
15
Wed
2016
(http://theglasshammer.com/networking-events/action-oneday/exact_date~15-6-2016/)

5:30 pm 8th Annual
Top Women on the
Buy... @ TBC
(http://theglasshammer.com/event/8th-annual-top-women-on-the-buy-side-breakfast-event/?instance_id=14)



- Use a simple font.
- Make subject lines useful, specific, concrete.
- Provide informative headlines for easy scanning within a document.
- Use lists where appropriate.
- Emphasize details by using blank space, bolding, and color for later reference and recall.

Imagine how time-consuming and difficult the task of reading this blog would have seemed had there been no headings, no list, and only a few long paragraphs.

Persuading someone to change their mind or behavior in and of itself is difficult. To be influential, make your message relevant and your action specific.

Dianna Booher is the bestselling author of 46 books, published in 26 languages, with nearly 4 million copies sold. She works with organizational leaders to increase their effectiveness through clear communication and executive presence. Her latest books include "What More Can I Say?: Why Communication Fails and What to Do About It"; "Creating Personal Presence: Look, Talk, Think, and Act Like a Leader"; and "Communicate with Confidence". For more information, please visit www.booherresearch.com and www.whatmorecanisaythebook.com.

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