

Gift Card Pros for Your Incentive,  
Recognition, and Loyalty Programs

**IGCC**  
Incentive Gift Card Council



ABOUT US

ADVERTISE / EXHIBIT

MEDIA KIT

SUBSCRIBE

CONTACT US

RSS FEED

SEARCH

# training

THE SOURCE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



HOME

CURRENT ISSUE

PAST ISSUES

EVENTS

PRESENTATIONS

SUBSCRIBE

WEBINARS

TRAINING DAY BLOG

E-NEWSLETTER

FAQ

Training Conference &amp; Expo

Online Learning Conference

Live+Online

Training Mag Network

Training Tips 125

## MAKING THE COMPLEX SIMPLE: A CORE LEARNING DESIGN AND FACILITATION SKILL

*Simplicity leads to focus. And focus produces clarity of purpose.*

Posted: July 27, 2015

**Article Author:** By Dianna Booher, Founder, Booher Consultants and Booher Research Institute

*"Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."—Leonardo da Vinci*

If people don't understand the change you want them to make, they can't make the change. If they don't understand your explanation, you have less chance to change their minds about that issue. If instructions are complex, people will resist the effort to follow them—or fail to accomplish the task.

Simplicity, persuasion, and learning are intricately linked. Health-care agencies and insurance companies, for example, continue to try to quantify the communication problem between physicians and their patients. Laura Landro, managing editor for the *Wall Street Journal* and also author of the paper's Informed Patient column, has gathered intriguing statistics from several sources about "missed messages":

- 18-45 percent of patients can't recall the major risks of their treatment.
- 44 percent of patients don't know the exact nature of their operation.
- 60-68 percent of patients don't read or understand information in a consent form.
- 80 percent of what doctors tell patients can't be recalled as soon as the patient leaves the office.
- 50 percent of what the patient does "recall" is inaccurate.

(Laura Landro, "The Talking Cure for Health Care: Improving the Ways Doctors Communicate with Their Patients Can Lead to Better Care—and Lower Costs." *Journal Reports: Health Care*, April 8, 2013.)

While the research may not identify complexity as the sole cause for these communication failures, common sense clearly suggests that simplifying these technical and emotional conversations would improve understanding and recall.

Why does communication fail to persuade—whether physicians are trying to influence patients to take their medications, do their therapy exercises, or control their cholesterol? Why can't salespeople get clients to increase next year's orders, or political parties persuade more citizens to turn out to vote?

The same roadblocks thwart all these efforts: Too many ideas detract focus. Mixed messages and learning goals bewilder people. Irrelevant details bury key ideas. Disorganized documents discourage reading. Convoluted sentences cause re-reading and waste time.

Have you ever searched a company's Website in frustration trying to find a phone number or an answer to a simple question? Ever spent half an hour searching a Help menu to find an answer to a simple question? Ever spent 15 minutes looking through a course reference manual to review a topic and then give up? Turning the complex into the simple makes sense.

### Simple Does Not Necessarily Mean Short

Known as the father of advertising, David Ogilvy wrote in his book, "Ogilvy on Advertising": "Direct-response advertisers know short copy doesn't sell. In split-run tests, long copy invariably outsells short copy." Copywriters tell us that as a rule of thumb, the higher the price of a product or service, the more words it takes to sell it.

### SPONSOR

Gift Card Pros for Your  
Incentive, Recognition, and  
Loyalty Programs

**IGCC**  
Incentive Gift Card Council



### TRAINING MAGAZINE EVENTS

Download a brochure for the **2015 Online Learning Conference in Denver, CO!** Attend a Certificate Program or The Allen Experience before the Conference and stay after for a Corporate Tour! Save \$250 off a Conference registration. Simply register with **Discount Code: TMEB** by August 7. Learn more at [www.OnlineLearningConference.com](http://www.OnlineLearningConference.com).

Attend **Training's** most popular **Certificate Program online!** Check out the **2015 Live + Online Certificate programs**. Topics include Articulate Storyline Fundamentals; Articulate Storyline for Next Level Design, Training Manager; Training Coordinator; Instructional Design, Project Management, Social Media for Trainers; Developing Small Bites Learning and more. **Register at least 30 days in advance and automatically save \$150!** Hurry, space is limited.

Join **Training** in Orlando for the **39th Annual Training 2016 Conference & Expo** February 15-17, 2016! The conference will be at Disney's Coronado Springs Resort. Join the mailing list and book your hotel at [www.TrainingConference.com](http://www.TrainingConference.com)

Interested in speaking at our Conferences?

**Training 2016**  
conference & expo

**Online Learning**  
Conference 2016

**training**  
live online

Of course, the goal of all persuasive communication is *not* to sell a product or service. You may be selling change or credibility or ideas. You may be selling people on the idea that they need to follow safety precautions, take care of their health, or comply with government regulations.

When persuading people that a project is easy, breaking it down into *more and smaller* steps makes sense. You assume they know little or nothing about the project and provide *more* rather than less detail to make it simple. Making recommendations to your executive team without providing information on the relevant benefits would make the pending decision *more* complex rather than less so.

So making persuasive messages *shorter* rather than *longer* doesn't necessarily make them simple. Clarity comes from language, structure, and relevancy.

#### Focus for Clarity

Simplicity leads to focus. And focus produces clarity of purpose. "The secret of success is constancy of purpose," according to philosopher Benjamin Disraeli. Maybe that explains the downright obsession organizations have about the phrasing of their mission statements to unify employees around their visions. Persuading someone to do something is only half the battle—they need to understand that it's their top priority.

#### Limit Choices

People value personal choice. That leads to the popular notion that the *greater* the choice, the *more* value.

But two major research studies debunk this assumption. People want to know they *have* choices. But in solving their complex problems, they often seek out sales professionals, financial consultants, attorneys, and other advisors to help them *limit* their choices—to make their decisions easier.

The food industry, particularly, has discovered this. A headline in *USA Today* read, "**Marketers Such as Starbucks Discover That Simple Sells.**" After an era of ever-expanding menus, restaurants are slimming menu choices down to house specialties. Bestselling cookbooks are focusing on "gourmet" meals with fewer and fewer ingredients, to be prepared in less and less time.

Over-choice paralyzes people. While they initially feel motivated by the thought of extensive personal choice, having fewer choices makes it easier for people to decide, buy, do, or learn something.

#### Reduce the Rattle

Little leaguers learn to chatter the batter early: "Batter, batter, batter. Watch, watch, watch. Here it comes, here it comes. Hey, hey, hey." But that's nothing compared to the noise level with 60,000 fans in the stadium during the Olympics.

That's the kind of escalated noise you're competing with as you're trying to get people's attention for a learning concept. Yet rather than turn down the volume, people make the mistake of increasing the chatter and drowning out their own message!

For example, presenters display a slide or screen and then talk while their audience is trying to digest what's displayed. In effect, they're competing with the display for the group's attention. Salespeople do the same thing. They close a deal, get client agreement, and then keep talking—often raising concerns about the product or service that causes the buyer to back out of the sale.

Employment specialists and talent placement firms insist that a key reason organizations have difficulty filling advertised openings is that their ads are filled with clutter. They mention educational "requirements" that aren't really required at all and list too many criteria rather than the essential skills and experience they want. Instead of persuading people to investigate the job, qualified people click away.

Senior leaders say people tend to create the most noise when they're seeking funding for capital expenditures, investing, and acquisitions. But recommenders frequently provide the wrong kind of information—just noise.

Change does not come easy—nor without the influence of strong leaders, strong facilitators, and strong course designers who communicate well.

Simple works and simple sells. Making the complex simple—now, that's hard.

*An expert in leadership communication, Dianna Booher works with organizations to increase the effectiveness of their communication. She's the founder of Booher Consultants and Booher Research Institute (<http://www.BooherResearch.com>) and the author of 46 books, published in 26 languages. Her latest book, "What More Can I Say: Why Communication Fails and What to Do About It," is available at local and online bookstores (visit <http://www.WhatMoreCanISayTheBook.com>).*

SPONSOR

Download your complimentary playbook:



Learn more about how the CPI 280® assessment enables organizations to find and develop high-potential employees and leaders.



[www.cpi.com/certification](http://www.cpi.com/certification)

SPONSOR



FREE WHITE PAPERS

**Why should you care about Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Competencies? A Review of Frameworks and Perspectives**

**Conversations with the C-Suite**

**The Ultimate Guide to Learning: Everything You Need to Know**

**Developing Global-Minded Leaders to Drive High Performance**

MOST READ TODAY

1. **5 Trends for the Future of Learning and Development** (195)
2. **Four Types of Leaders** (175)
3. **8 Tips for Developing Positive Relationships** (129)
4. **Training Magazine Events** (118)
5. **Learn More About the Training Top 125** (115)

SEARCH for Training powered by... trainXup

**Category:**

**Sub-Category:**

**Location:**

**Keyword:**  

TRAINING TOP 125

**Training magazine Announces 2015 Top 125 Winners FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact:

Lorri Freifeld

2014 Training Top 125 Winners

DIGITAL ISSUE

Click above for *Training Magazine's* current digital issue

Click here to subscribe!

2015 ISA DIRECTORY



FROM THE EDITOR

Worth the Trip

I am not a morning person, by any stretch of the imagination, as my husband can attest (he is bright-e

Sparks of Inspiration

Bouncing Back

Home, Sweet Home

Getting the Message

Driving Forces

TRAINING LIVE + ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS



Now You Can Have Live Online Access to *Training magazine's* Most Popular Certificate Programs! Click [here](#) for more information.

TWITTER

Tweets

Follow

 **Training Magazine** @TrainingMagUS 1h 

Making the Complex Simple: A Core #Learning Design and Facilitation Skill [ow.ly/Q7DLK](#) @diannabooher [WhatMoreCanISaythebook.com](#)  
Show Summary

 **Training Magazine** @TrainingMagUS 8h 

Official Training Magazine Daily is out! [paper.li/TrainingMagUS/...](#) Stories via @L\_Haritha @siyanalr @som50579

Tweet to @TrainingMagUS

EMERGING TRAINING LEADERS



**2015 Emerging Training Leaders**  
Spectacular.  
Impressive.

Dazzling.



**2014 Emerging Training Leaders**  
Spring is—finally—  
in the air.

**2013 Emerging Training Leaders**  
By Lorri Freifeld

2015 Emerging Training Leaders

FEATURED VIDEO



TRAINING MATTERS 2015

Posted: February 20, 2015

[MORE VIDEOS](#)

---

[Privacy Statement](#) [Terms of Use](#)

[All in Training by Training Magazine](#)