

Getting Your Message Across – Jane McCann

"You can't communicate a word ... the whole person comes along too"
Anon

93% of
communication
is said to be
non-content

We all use all our senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch) all the time. However, we all have a preferred or "primary" sense, and though we may think we communicate using all our senses, the minute we're under stress we tend to revert to our "primary sense" whether that is visual, auditory or kinesthetic. Flexibility is the key to getting your message across.

Imagine a community group meeting where you're trying to get buy-in for a policy launch. A highly visual person may say "Show me what it's going to look like" and will respond favourably to visual stimuli. An auditory person will want to continue talking about the launch and may not be convinced until they've talked it right through with you or others. They may use words like: "Tell me more; I like what you're saying about the prospects." On the other hand someone who is more tactile or kinesthetic may say "This doesn't feel right, I need to get a handle on this I'm not quite comfortable with things yet."

Getting the Outcome

Keep your
outcome in
mind

You'll get a quicker outcome if you literally "feed" the senses of your audience. Give the visual person plenty of visual material to absorb, pictures, colour, writing. Give the auditory person enough time to talk things through. With the more tactile/kinesthetic person, give them something to do. Let them use their body (let them walk around) or give them something to touch or play with. For print-orientated people (often those who've been educated through books or the written word) – provide things in writing.

People with an "Auditory" Sense

People with a high auditory sense tend to talk to their neighbours and internally talk to themselves also you may notice that their head moves towards the noise in a room. They will use "auditory/hearing" words like "say, tell, bell, sounds, I said, they said, hear" etc.

People with a “Visual” Sense

People tend to notice things eg the inconsistencies between the typefaces on your proposal. Everything about them looks good, from their haircut to their briefcase. They may use coloured ink to write with and will often draw pictures to explain themselves. They will use "visual" words like "see, picture, visualise, perspective, view" etc.

Feed the
senses

People with a “Kinesthetic” Sense

The kinesthetic people in your audience will be the first to wiggle in their seats during a meeting. They may not be the best dressed people in the room but they'll be comfortably dressed. Their breathing will be diaphragmatic and deep, they'll look comfortable with their body and use "doing/tactile" type words like "hold, grip, handle, feel, touch, move, dig, do" etc. and often want the specific detail of your plan.

Knowing When You're Hot and When You're Not

We all build rapport naturally with clients and colleagues. Taking time and energy to create the “like me” state is a sign of respect for others. It shows your willingness to “walk a mile in their shoes” and try to understand their perspective on the world. As long as you do this with integrity you're honouring the other person's map of the world. We can create the state of rapport by:

- ▶ Matching body position and movement
- ▶ Matching verbal language patterns
- ▶ Matching the voice and breathing patterns

The more
nearly
you're like
me the
more I like
you...

Matching Body Position to Create Rapport

When we have rapport we have a “like me” illusion. We're all attracted to people who are like us in some way either through accident of birth, geography, education or belief. We can create the "like me" situation by using body posture, voice, breathing and rhythms of movement.

The quickest way to build rapport is through body posture. Watch a successful leader at work; they will match the body position of their client. (Great communicators do this naturally and are often not conscious that they do it). Next time you're at a meeting, watch those who display similar body positions ... it may give you some clues about who's going to vote with whom. If you're able to match the body position of your client you've begun the first and most important stage of rapport. Try matching the body posture of the person in

charge of your next meeting. You might be amazed at the results (try matching the rhythms of movement also).

Using Verbal Language to Create Rapport

The words on a restaurant menu are not real food, merely symbols of that food. In the same way the words we use are symbols of how we internally represent our own reality. We all hear, see and experience the world differently and process each experience in our neurology in quite a different manner.

Match Before You Lead

Every day in business we use words to 're-present' how we want things to happen without really knowing how the other person is receiving and internally processing our message. For example what do you understand by the words -

- ▶ planning
- ▶ project
- ▶ prosperity
- ▶ happiness
- ▶ quality
- ▶ excellence
- ▶ science
- ▶ constraint
- ▶ innovation
- ▶ community
- ▶ policy
- ▶ consultation

Each word means something slightly different to everyone seeing or hearing it. For some people they would see a picture of the word and remember something from the past. Others may talk to themselves about the word and remember a past conversation. Still others could create a situation in their mind where they had "quality/excellence" etc. Try it out for yourself.

Learning to
walk in
another's
shoes is a
sign of

Because we all process information differently, but always through our senses (sight, sound, touch, smell and taste), people always give away some clues about their method of filtering information either visually, verbally or through their body.

Matching the Voice to Create Rapport

Matching the voice - the tone, tempo, volume and rhythm of your speech can be used to build or break rapport. When you're working in a country where the speed and inflections of speech are different to yours make an effort to speed up or slow down. Don't try to mimic the idiosyncrasies of the language, rather get a general feel for the patterns and rhythms, then adjust your speech accordingly. Remember; match the speed of the other person. Then you can lead them to follow your speed.

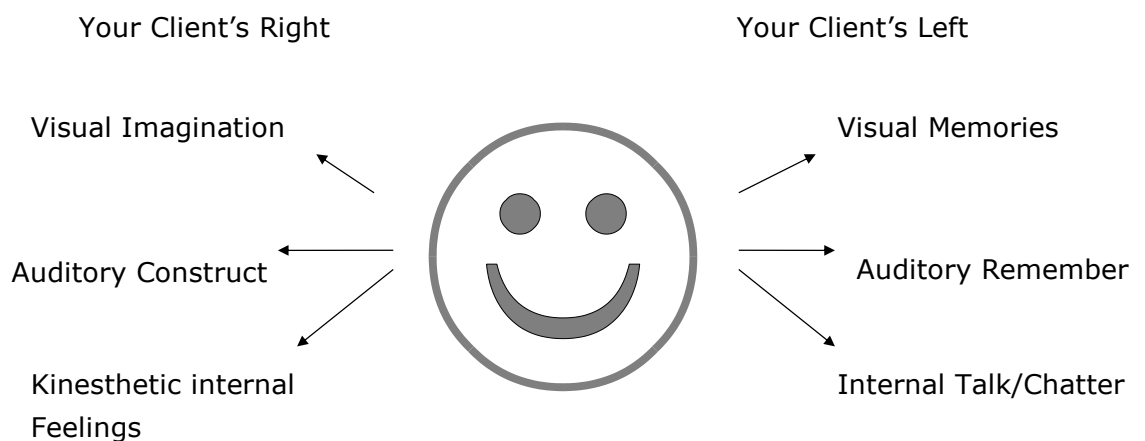
Matching the Breathing to Create Rapport

Matching the breathing - we all breathe subconsciously, so matching the breathing is an ideal way to build empathy and rapport with someone. If you've been close to a woman in labour you'll know what matching the breathing feels like.

Mind Reading - Can It Be Done?

Eye movements are the keys to the computer we call our

We can't so much mind read as pick up the sensory clues that others spread before us about their thinking patterns. We indicate what's happening inside our head through our eye movements. The movements of our eyes indicate how we're accessing our brain.



The most flexible part of the system is

Seeing When we're seeing pictures (either remembering things from the past or creating pictures of the future) our eyes go upwards.

Hearing When we're listening or constructing words to say, our eyes move from side to side.

Feeling When we're feeling (good or bad) our eyes move down to the right.

Internal talk We all do it at sometime... our eyes move to down to the left.

Think about a performance conversation - if the person's eyes are down left, then right - they may burst into tears - if the internal talk has been negative or critical and the feelings are overwhelming.

Keeping your eyes up ensures that you keep out of your emotions - ideal if you're making a presentation. Helping committees/groups

that you may be presenting to - to get their eyes up also helps you by ensuring that they stay out of internal dialogue and feelings (which could be critical of your proposal). To get the eyes up – use an A3 chart/power-point or flip chart. Eyes up also ensures that they remember what's on the posters.

Decision Making Strategies

We're all creatures of habit - we tend to use the same decision making strategies for most things we do - from choosing a new suit, to selecting a service provider.

A successful decision making strategy has the following components:

- ▶ Visual - the ability to see the final decision.
- ▶ Auditory - the way we talk to ourselves and others about the +/- of the decision. (We use *internal* and *external* talk to decide).
- ▶ Feeling - this component is a "gut" or "intuitive" component - how does it feel to make the decision.
- ▶ External Check - this is the vital ingredient - what external facts support the decision.

People who consistently make bad decisions (eg criminals) often have one of these components missing - eg they don't use an external check or don't use all the senses to make the decision. The easiest way to find out your client's decision making strategies (both good and bad), is to ask them how they decided to buy something they already have. It's a quick way to discover their strategies.

Example

You: "How did you choose your latest car?"

Client: "Well, I saw (visual remember) this young chap, and he said 'it goes well' (auditory external) ... then I thought, (internal visual) and I saw (visual construct) what a good investment it was going to be ... and said to myself (internal dialogue) 'yep this is the one it feels good' (kinesthetic exit) ... well let me tell you it goes really well ..."

Get the idea? Were all the elements of a successful decision making strategy present? Another way of doing this is to analyse a letter from your client about what went right or wrong with one of your services or products.

Matching Language

Visual/Seeing Words	Auditory/Hearing Words	Kinesthetic/Feeling ¹ and Touch Words	Non-Specific Words ²			
aim	pattern	say	scrape	sting	attach	think
look	spotless	tell	accent	warm	crawl	know
appear	portray	talk	note	point	tickle	understand
clarify	image	discuss	babble	fumble	sore	ponder
blue	reflect	yell	argue	cool	warm	contemplate
billow	dim	praise	tone	merge	sharp	confirm
bright	scan	rasp	whine	unbalanced	stick	determine
foggy	survey	purr	chime	flat	touch	detect
brilliant	show	sing	boom	shocking	solid	remember
oversight	focus	call	quiet	tender	hard	consider
cloud	sketch	chant	snore	bend	attack	interesting
clear	blind	noise	music	throw	steady	
dark	stain	listen	tinkle	rough	flat	NB use these to appeal to a wide audience;
picture	diagram	ring	clatter	hot	soft	
dull	view	voice	loud	grip	electric	
shine	clear	screech	shrill	tension	firm	Do not use these to give detailed instructions or directions – they are too vague and non-specific.
glow	visible	sound	clang	push	stiff	
pretty	hide	silent	verbalise	reach	carry	
hazy	vision	shout	squawk	connect	fasten	
reveal	glare	speak	compute	link	handle	
neat	watch	whisper	debate	jarring	twist	
sight	light	grumble	utter	cram	probe	
observe	vivid	scream	shriek	tackle	touch	
ugly		squeal	resounding	pack	fall	
		tune	hiss	manipulate	cut	
				unite	backing	
				shuffle	lift	
				catch	hurt	
				balance	smooth	
				take	sturdy	
				resist	mould	
				sharp	support	
				twinge	stable	
				extend	scratch	
				compress	grasp	
				trudge	flexible	
				ragged	tight	
				massage	battered	

This is a brief overview of a very complex subject – the study of human behaviour; which includes motivation theory; linguistics and a range of behaviour sciences you can explore these further by search on 'neuro-linguistics' or ask Jane McCann.

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¹ Margerison McCann's work on team roles indicates that over 50% of the population are in the 'thruster-organiser' 'concluder-producer' roles- this means that they'll use concrete, practical, doing-type language – often kinaesthetic.

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² Policy people may use non specific words – ideal for broadcast communications – not for deliverables discussions.