



Andy Bounds

A great way to impress others... and also to annoy my (former) #1 Fan!

“Give me some Rules of Thumb with communication – rules that I can follow without thinking.”

So said one of my clients recently. I asked what areas he was most interested in.

Him: “Well, when I’m making a formal presentation, should I use PowerPoint or not?”

Me: “I don’t know. It depends what the audience wants. Your best bet is to *ask* if they want you to use it or not.”

Him: “Ok, but if I do use PowerPoint, should I send information in advance, or take everything with me on the day?”

Me: “It depends. Ask them what they want.”

Him: “Should I start my presentation with background information, to set the scene?”

Me: “It depends. Ask them if they want it.”

Him: “Who should present the information? The best presenters on my team? The people actually doing the work? Does it matter?”

Me: “It depends. Ask...”

My client interrupted me: “This is *exasperating*. I’m looking for some Rules of Thumb.”

I replied: “Can’t you hear the Rule of Thumb? Ask.”

The best way to ensure you give people the communication they want... is to ask them what they want! Contact them before the communication, and ask such questions as...

- What do you want me to cover?

- What do you want me *not* to cover?
- Have you any concerns, that you want me to address?
- Who else will see this communication? Is there anything I should include for their benefit?
- Would you prefer a formal PowerPoint, or a more informal discussion?

If you don’t ask, you don’t know. And that means you are guessing. This makes it less likely you’ll get the outcome you and they want.

Action points

For your next communication, ask your audience what they want from you. Use their answers to shape what and how you communicate. For tips on other hot communication topics, [click here](#).

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain’s Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world’s largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him ‘... more about effective communicating than a lady who’d taught two American Presidents’.

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