

HOW TO FORM MORE MEANINGFUL

CLIENT CONNECTIONS!

AMY FOND | CAMERON COMMUNICATIONS



thINK is an independent community of Canon Solutions America inkjet customers, solution partners, and print industry experts, and Canon Solutions America is a proud executive sponsor. Led by some of the most successful inkjet service providers in the country, it provides a forum for members to network, gain knowledge, discuss common challenges, and share best practices.

HOW TO FORM MORE MEANINGFUL CLIENT CONNECTIONS!

INTRODUCTION

How can you truly connect with clients...when you're not even in the same room anymore? You might think the answer lies in a purposeful pitch. But sometimes even a great topic can only take you so far.

So use these easy tricks to help you connect, and come across as confident and compelling.

HERE ARE 6 WAYS TO MAKE EACH VIRTUAL MEETING MORE MEANINGFUL.

1) MAKE YOUR DELIVERY DELIVER FOR YOU!

Sometimes how you say something can be more important than what you say! Let's prove this by thinking of some classic movie quotes;

You can't handle the truth!

Go ahead, make my day.

Bond, James Bond.

All famous lines we love from films. But what if those lines were all whispered? What if they were all spoken quickly... or in monotone? **The words wouldn't have the same impact.**

Without variation in voice, volume, cadence or rhythm, the same thing can happen to your messages. They become a jumbled mass of words.

You may have a compelling point, but **if your delivery falls flat, your words won't matter.**

Today, with virtual home offices and cyber meetings, your delivery counts more than ever. A UCLA study finds that when talking on the phone - 84% of your message comes from your voice and how you deliver your words.

Only 16% of the message comes from the actual words themselves.

Proving a confident delivery can be crucial!

TO HELP YOUR VOLUME - STAND UP

Standing helps you breathe better, giving you full use of your lungs and diaphragm to help amp your volume and make your voice sound richer. Standing also releases energy and helps eliminate jitters so you'll sound more confident. If you're speaking over the phone, no one can see that you're standing, but **they'll hear the difference in your delivery**. If you can't stand... sit up. Slouching constricts your voice more and weakens your volume.

TO HELP YOUR RHYTHM - PAUSE

It's human nature to talk faster when you're nervous, but well placed pauses can help slow you down and add variation to your rhythm. Pauses are also great ways to transition topics and can help cut down on unwanted "ums." They also give the audience time to truly hear what you're saying and digest your messages. **Place a pause right before delivering a key message** to make sure you don't speed through an important point.

TO HELP VARY YOUR VOICE - MARK IT UP

Want the audience to remember a **key word**? Write down your messages and then mark them up. It's a trick Producers use in television news so Anchors know to vary their voice with specific inflection. Producers bold words to punch, add dots... for pauses, and use CAPITALS to highlight important phrases. After practicing out loud with your marked up messages you'll be better able to deliver them with **greater feeling and emotion** because you'll know what to emphasize and when.

TO HELP YOUR CADENCE - ALLOW ALLITERATION

The repetition of the same sound gives your delivery a sense of flow. Aligning similar sounds in sentences makes your cadence smoother. Even if the words have the same ending like changing, evolving, and growing. When words flow together **you'll sound more natural and conversational**. Alliteration also aids in memory retention. It's easier to remember words that sound alike (Coca-Cola, Best Buy, PayPal, Dunkin' Donuts.) So, carefully considering your consonants can not only help your cadence, but also make your message more memorable.

TO HELP SOUND YOUR BEST - TELL A STORY

How can you sound more enthusiastic, more authentic and therefore more credible? Tell a short, relevant story. Stories not only bolster messages by providing proof points for the audience, but they help create a more natural and convincing cadence. That's because when you tell a story, you're more engaged with the topic. Your pace tends to liven and you'll sound more **passionate, comfortable and confident**.

To effectively convey your messages remember that
HOW YOU SAY SOMETHING AFFECTS HOW IT'S HEARD.

If you want your messages to resonate, your
delivery makes all the difference!

2) REFLECT WHAT YOU SEE

Delivery can sometimes define everything you say. Other times though, you can get someone to trust you, like you and be on your side... sometimes without even saying a single word!

That can be done through a tried and true technique called **"Mirroring."**

Mirroring is when you mimic someone's behavior,
their tone or their mannerisms.

It's an often innate trick with body language that can
help you **build a better bond.**

Imagine you're sitting across a table from someone having coffee. Now picture this...you lean in, they lean in, you drink your coffee, they drink their coffee, you smile, they smile. What starts to happen? You're literally in sync together and subconsciously that leads to trust and a better rapport. We like that person more because we literally see a version of ourselves. **In fact, studies show that mirroring behavior actually activates the area in the brain that process rewards and makes you feel good.**

You're probably thinking, "that doesn't work!" **But it does... consistently.**

- Retail sales people who mirrored verbal and non verbal behavior of customers sold more products.
- Waitresses who practiced mirroring with diners at their tables earned higher tips.
- Women who mirrored their partners were evaluated more favorably during speed dating.
- Negotiators who mirrored their counterparts were more likely to get their way.

When mirroring is done right it can lead to a more powerful connection.

When mirroring is done wrong... it's a disaster!!

SO HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW SO YOU DON'T MAKE A MAJOR MISTAKE:

BE AUTHENTIC

You can't just jump in and start copying someone's every move. It will come across as creepy! First start with other body language cues to start to build rapport.

- Sit or stand squarely facing whomever you're talking to.
- Make eye contact.
- Smile if it's appropriate to convey warmth.
- Start small by nodding if you agree or copying leaning in.

It's like walking into a pool. Sometimes it's good to dive in and other times you need to take the stairs one at a time to ease in. **Take the stairs with mirroring. Ease in and then start to work to build a better connection.**

KEEP UP!

If you're speaking with someone who's a fast talker and you languish on every word, you won't be in sync. Try to match someone's pace, their volume, their tone. Imagine someone is whispering and you're shouting...how would you both feel? **Matching cadence and pace often happens naturally**, which is why you may find yourself subconsciously copying someone's accent.

FIND THE PUNCTUATOR

Everyone speaks with a certain punctuator, a gesture we often use to emphasize our points. Be on the look out for what someone else's punctuator is, and start to slowly incorporate that into your mannerisms.

FOR EXAMPLE

I have a client that often expands his hands to demonstrate the word "big." Therefore, when I ask him about size or breadth of scope, I also expand my hands. I show him I'm listening to him and on the same page. **That gesture is now a common language between us.**

ONLY MIRROR NATURAL MOVEMENTS!

When does mirroring go wrong? When you mimic a movement that's unnatural. If they scratch their nose....and then you scratch your nose...the spell is broken. That's jarring, it makes mirroring too apparent and unnatural.

Pay attention to the natural rhythm in which someone speaks, or the natural way they use their body language while talking. That's what you want to mirror, not someone's tics, scratches, knuckle cracking, or clothing adjustments.

Sometimes communication means using your voice and your words, and **sometimes we can communicate simply using our body language and tone.**

Mirroring forces us to put attention on whom we're speaking with, show them we're listening and paying attention to them, and

BUILD A PROVEN AND POWERFUL RAPPORT!

3) PREPARE THE RIGHT WAY

If you want to become a more confident communicator...don't sabotage yourself with this one mistake: **Preparing your thoughts incorrectly.**

Very few people can just speak off the cuff and sound polished. Most of us have to jot down our thoughts prior to a presentation or meeting. **But the mistake comes when we write everything down word for word.**

Often I work with clients who will hand me paragraphs of what they want to say...down to the correct punctuation marks and capital letters.

They think by crafting everything start to finish, they'll be more prepared. **Wrong.** Instead all they'll be is more robotic and less relatable.

HERE'S WHY:

When we write down what we want to say...in full sentences or even paragraphs...we become married to those words, in that order.

Our brain becomes bogged with having to memorize an entire script and we come across as if we're reading out-loud instead of **speaking conversationally.**

Think of the cadence of a third grader reading a story out loud. Now think about that same kid retelling a tale from the playground that day. Two completely different types of communicating. That's because **when we read**, no matter what age we are, **our inflection isn't always natural**.

Plus, and here's a big plus, **when we write things down we tend to write more formally than how we speak**. We write "you are" but we say "you're". We write "are not" but we say "aren't." When we memorize what we want to say, directly from a fully written document we come across as more formal and stilted. The words don't sound as natural when spoken as they do when read. Can you imagine if someone said "Sincerely" when ending a phone conversation?

So, since you don't want to write everything down first, how can you **organize your thoughts** so you can better communicate with confidence?

USE BULLET POINTS.

Bullet points work because they:

- Provide an outline of what we want to say.
- Force our brains to fill in the rest.
- Give clear stepping stones to guide us.
- Make us sound more natural, more conversational, and more relatable.
- Allow us flexibility so we're not tied to a fully-written script.
- Let us make eye contact without losing our place.

When our brains fill in the gaps instead of regurgitating memorized words, we sound more authentic and less formal. We become a little more genuine and less stiff. Formal and stiff aren't words anyone would use to describe a confident communicator. But **relatable, authentic, and conversational** fit the bill.

So before your next meeting, call or presentation, jot down your ideas in bullet point form. Write down your key messages, your proof points, perhaps a word you definitely want to use, and then...practice. As much as you can.

**YOU'LL BE WELL ON YOUR WAY TO BECOMING
A MORE CONFIDENT COMMUNICATOR!**

4) DITCH WEASEL WORDS!

I was just wondering, if maybe you'd like to learn a simple way that, in my opinion, could possibly help you come across a tad more confident when you communicate.

Does that sound confident? Trustworthy?

How about this instead:

I know a way that you can come across as more confident when you communicate.

Even better:

There's a simple trick you need to know to communicate with confidence.

See the difference? The first paragraph is full of **weasel words**. Words that sound hesitant, less forthright, less confident.

Weasel words soften our sentences and make us appear less assertive and unsure of what we're saying.

In sales, you're already fighting an up-hill battle to gain trust. So don't **undermine your own credibility** with words that aren't even necessary.

Words like:

"JUST"

"PERHAPS"

"IN MY OPINION"

"POSSIBLY"

"HOPEFULLY"

"I'D LIKE TO"

The list goes on.

In order to sound more confident,
you need to wipe out weasel words.

HERE'S HOW:

1

DELETE....DELETE....DELETE

Practice first on e-mails. Write what you want to say and then see if there are any words you can delete with the sentence still holding true. I'm constantly deleting the words "just" and "that." Two words that you can take out of a sentence and the meaning stays the same. Look at these two sentences: "I'm **just** circling back to see if you got my e-mail" and "The main point is **that** the words you choose affect credibility." In both cases, the words "just" or "that" are completely unnecessary. **By deleting unnecessary words you can start to streamline your sentences, stay concise and sound more assertive.**

2

TAKE YOURSELF OUT

Instead of saying "I think", or "In my opinion" ... make a more specific statement. When you put in your own "feelings", you take out firm assertion. Using "I think" or "In my opinion" makes your statement sound wishy washy. As if you're not quite sure. Instead: "In my opinion this is the best course of action." Try, "This is the best course of action and here's why." **You'll sound more assertive and confident.**

3

DON'T LIKE USE THE WORD LIKE, LIKE ALL THE TIME

Nothing can make you sound less confident than using the word "like" as a crutch. It's **verbal graffiti**, words that just add clutter and distraction. Since repetition leads to recognition...do you really want the word "like" to be what your audience walks away remembering? Using "like" too much is a habit that can be broken by first becoming aware of the repetition. You can also cut down on "likes" by knowing your headline before you speak. When you know where you want the conversation to go, there's less of a chance you'll be searching for your words.

*So maybe you'll hopefully take this
advice and perhaps it might help you
sound a little more confident.*

Or...

**FOLLOW THESE RULES TO HELP
SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE!**

5) JOLT YOUR AUDIENCE!

A television news director once gave me a valuable piece of advice.
He said:

"Viewers are like cats. You have to dangle something in front of them to help keep them focused."

What he meant was,
you always need to work to keep your audience's attention.

Unfortunately you can't dangle shiny keys in front of clients to get them to focus. **Instead, you can do this one crucial trick: Jolt so they don't bolt.**

As attention starts to wane, you
"JOLT" THE AUDIENCE,
in regular intervals, as you speak.

A jolt can mean:

- Telling a story
- Putting the attention on the audience by asking a question
- Changing your voice
- Reminding the audience why what you're saying will matter to them
- Switching speakers

Imagine audience attention is like **a balloon you want to keep up in the air.**

If you leave the balloon alone it will silently fall to the ground.



But if you focus on keeping the balloon in the air, as it starts to fall you can bump it back up again.

Don't wait till you see your audience has figuratively fallen to the ground before you try to bump them back up. **It's a lot harder to win back attention than it is to keep it in the first place.**

Instead, regularly and proactively **"jolt"** your audience to keep them with you so they're more apt to truly hear your message.

You should be building "jolts" into your outline as you map out what you want to say. Be prepared and make sure you know ahead of time where and when to include a story, or a question to ask the audience.

Let's say you're giving a 20 minute presentation. Plan ahead so every 2-3 minutes you know to "jolt" your audience. Even if you're speaking for 5 minutes, don't assume you'll have anyone's full attention for that long.

No matter how long you're talking, plan at least one or two "jolts" so you're not just talking at someone, but rather forcing them to focus on what you're saying.

If I'm giving a power point presentation, I make sure to tell a **short story** or give an **analogy** every slide. I never go more than 3 slides without showing a **video**, and I'm constantly asking my audience **rhetorical questions** like "Have you ever...." **So that I keep them involved.**

You need to be working to keep your audience with you throughout and regularly "dangle" something in front of them to keep them focused.

Don't take attention spans for granted, and make sure to

**"JOLT" YOUR AUDIENCE SO THEY
STAY WITH YOU AS YOU SPEAK!**

6) DON'T PASS THE TEST!

**Would you rather face
an easy question or a tough question?**

Let me guess which one you'd choose. However, as a Media Trainer and Presentation Coach, I'd choose the tough question. **Every time.**

That's because **an easy question can often get you into trouble fast.**

HERE'S WHY:

Imagine you're about to be hit with some questions from a client. You're a little nervous and you're not sure what you're going to be asked.



Then the first question is a breeze.
It's a topic you know about and a question
you can easily answer.

What happens? Your brain says:

"Hey I've got this! I know this! Now.... let me show you how much I know!"

And therein lies the problem.

When you're faced with questions on a topic you truly know... it's human nature to try to prove your knowledge.

Plus if it's a topic you enjoy talking about, you're more likely to expound and lose track of your answer in the moment. Think about it, if you're asked to talk about a subject you really know a lot about, like your family, where do you start and where do you stop? If I asked you, "Tell me about your family"...how long would your answer be?

Easy questions can lead to long-winded answers crammed with too much information!

When you go on and on, you're not only diluting your main message, but you're also adding in more for your audience to focus on. **There's no better way to lose audience attention than to ramble.**

So here's how you can curb yourself when an easy question comes your way. Remember this:

COMMUNICATING IS NOT A TEST!

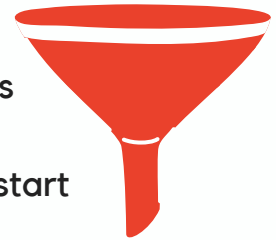
Effective communication is never a test of how much you know.

Successfully communicating means **delivering messages with a purpose**, not expounding on a topic until you're off track and out of time. Persuasive communication involves delivering your messages succinctly and backing them up. So don't try to "pass the test" by proving what an expert you are.

Long-winded answers lead to tuning out. Instead, **stick to your messages and focus on ways to deliver them credibly and concisely.**

It can help if you **think of your answers like a sieve**, one that's wide at the top and narrows to a small hole at the bottom.

Your answers may start out broad at the top, but the goal is to start **narrowing focus toward your messages** as soon as possible.



THE NEXT TIME YOU GET A CURVEBALL QUESTION, BE THANKFUL!

Hard questions can come in handy.

When you're faced with a tough topic, **use the bridging method** to help you deliver an answer where your message can truly shine.

First answer or acknowledge the question, transition and build a verbal bridge to your topic. You'll wind up with a more succinct and successful answer!

So the next time you're trying to truly connect with a client,
**work to not only keep their attention,
but make them feel like you're both in sync.**

- 1) **FOCUS** ON YOUR DELIVERY
- 2) **MIRROR** WHAT YOU SEE AND HEAR
- 3) **PREPARE** WITH BULLET POINTS
- 4) **DITCH** WEASEL WORDS
- 5) **JOLT** YOUR AUDIENCE TO REGAIN ATTENTION
- 6) **STOP** PROVING HOW MUCH YOU KNOW

**MAKE YOUR CLIENT FEEL MORE VALUED
AND
MAKE YOURSELF SOUND MORE CREDIBLE**