

Keeping Attention: A Bored Mind Says NO!

It is common sense to realize you have to keep your audience's attention in order to persuade them. If you lose them, you lose your chance for them to understand and accept your proposal. We know from our own personal experience that we tend to let our minds naturally drift when we are listening to other people. We cannot focus on one item for too long unless we are forced to do so. Master Persuaders can make a person want to pay attention and stay focused. You may lose your audience's attention from time to time but it is your job to bring them back to full attention status. You can help your prospect lose track of time.

Some estimate that the average adult attention span is about 18 minutes. What's more, studies indicate that attention spans have been decreasing steadily over the past decade. After our attention span is lapsed, we fall into boredom and no longer listen. You have to be creative to maintain the mental involvement that is required to persuade a mind. One way to keep the mind harnessed is to give your audience enough time to process what you are telling them. You can tell by the look in their eyes if you have lost them. I'm sure you have taken seminars or college classes where you have been completely lost. When the professor asks questions, you don't raise your hand because you have no idea what is going on. Give your listeners enough time to absorb what you're saying, but obviously not so long that they become totally bored and detached.

Some more ideas on ways to help people choose to pay attention:

- Use questions
- Use quotes
- Provide relevant examples
- Speak in the first person
- Give them short-cuts or tips
- Present new and innovative ideas
- Make sure your transitions flow (or your prospects will get lost)
- Make startling statements
- Change mediums
- Make them feel important
- Keep your body moving
- Avoid excessive detail

You can see that these techniques are used to grab back the attention of your listeners when their minds have started wandering. Employed properly they will bring your audience's attention back to you.

Thousands of sales are lost each day simply because the salesperson talks too much. Salespeople tend to oversell by making a laundry list of reasons why people should buy their product. This is not what people want to hear. As a result, they will always find one reason or another not to buy. The more benefits you list, the greater the chances that your prospect will find a reason not to buy. Overselling will also kill the emotions of the prospect.

Movement is another common technique for grabbing attention. It causes us to be alert. Stores utilizing movement-oriented end-caps (displays at the end of the aisle) always have more shoppers around than those end-caps without movement. This strategy can be

used to your advantage when doing a presentation. Be sure your movements are purposeful and well-timed and your audience will be more tuned in to your message.

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