

Top tips for putting your message across

Before getting active, prepare

Think about what kind of event or action it is? Who are you likely to be talking to - general public, students, the elderly? What fact might appeal more to them? Which campaign materials would be most suitable for your action or event?

Find an opening line which works for you

You'll say this hundreds of times, eg "Hi there, I don't want your money, but could I ask you just one question?"

Act as if you are confident even if you don't feel it

If you appear confident about what you're saying people are more likely to take you seriously, and you'll probably start to feel it too. Think about how your body language makes you approachable - have an open and relaxed appearance. Smile.

Use local examples

For example: "Wasn't it frustrating when Thames water imposed a hosepipe here but were still making millions in profit"

Bring the issue home

Make the our issues relevant to your target audience, eg "did you wear a white band last year?" or "do you think it's good the government spends our aid money on helping to produce pop videos in Tanzania in support of water privatisation?"

Listen to what people say to you

All good communication is to some extent two-way. You've got key information you want to communicate, but you're not a robot. Listen to what is said to you, and adapt your messages accordingly.

Ask open questions

"what do you think the answers are to international debt crisis" or "what did you think of Make Poverty History?"

Be aware of people's personal space

... and don't crowd it. Make eye contact... but don't overdo it.

Sound engaging and non-threatening

Try not to use jargon or acronyms and avoid lecturing or sounding like you're telling the listener how to live their life. Sell the benefit to them rather than instruct.

Don't feel you have to be an expert on the issue

If you do not know the answer to a question, either take their details and say you'll get back to them with the answer or refer the person to WDM's website or telephone number.

Have a closure strategy for awkward Customers

Remember your objectives for the action (eg to get people to sign a petition or come along to a meeting). If you spend 30 minutes debating with one person, you won't be able to speak to many people and get them to take action. Thank people for their interest, offer them a leaflet or ways to get more information, but don't get cornered.

Share your experiences and keep morale high

Talk to others in your group and encourage them if things are difficult. Share your experiences and any top tips.

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What Psychologists tell us

What we believe:

The words you use account for just **7%** of what people believe (what you say: the **verbal** information)

38% of what people believe is down to your tone of voice (the way you sound: the **vocal** information)

But the majority of what people believe - **55%** - is down to body language!
(the way you look while you're talking: the **visual** information)

So getting the message across is more than just knowing your stuff and saying the right words. In fact it's how you say the words and how you look when you're saying them that count for the most.

Non-verbal communication (visual and vocal) is actually more important than what you're saying! To maximise the effectiveness of your communication you need to reinforce your verbal message with matching and persuasive vocal and visual messages.

What we remember:

Whoever you're communicating with will forget:

25% of what you say within **24 hours**

50% of what you say within **48 hours**

80% of what you say within **4 days**

To maximise your effect, think about picking just a few (no more than 3) simple key messages