Getting to the Point

CONSIDER YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you talking to and why should they care about your story? Consider their perspective and what's relevant to them. Some people appreciate a lot of detail but most people just want you to get to the point. Remember most clients care about time and money, with money taking precedence.

CUT OUT THE STORY

Most people don't want or need all the details. Do these details really add anything or are they just important to you? Try re-telling a story, taking away as much as possible each time. Ask the listener if there was anything critical you left out.

DON'T BURY THE GOLD

We commonly tell stories from beginning to end. "First, this happened and then this..." The good stuff is usually at the end. Don't make them wait to hear the people survived the airline crash. Tell them the punch line and then just enough details for it to make sense.

BUCKET YOUR IDEAS

It's much easier to follow someone if you've provided a structure for them to follow. "I have two issues with my current project. First, it's over budget. Second, it's two weeks behind schedule." Framing your topic in a logical way makes it easier to address and solve one problem at a time.

MAKE YOUR POINT

Is there something you want from the listener? Are you left at a critical point in the decision process? If you've found that you've been long-winded, sum it up, "The short of it is that I don't want to hang out with my brother-in-law but don't know how to tell my wife. Any ideas on how to handle it?"

Checklist

1. **Audience**
   What's the most important point to lead with?

2. **Reduce**
   How can you cut it in half or less?

3. **Heart**
   What's your tone and attitude? Are you using inflammatory words?

4. **Solution**
   Are you showing leadership or just depositing a problem?

5. **So what?**
   What do you need from this person?