



How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds or Less

By Milo O. Frank

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Learn how to get your listener's attention, keep her interest, and make your point—all in thirty seconds!

Milo Frank, America's foremost business communications consultant, shows you how to focus your objectives, utilize the "hook" technique, use the secrets of TV and advertising writers, tell terrific anecdotes that make your point, shine in meetings and question-and-answer sessions, and more!

These proven techniques give you the edge that successful people share—the art of communicating quickly, precisely, and powerfully!

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Editorial Review

Review

Jim Lindbergh Corporate Group Vice President, Dart Industries Milo Frank is a communications genius. His book can catapult you to a whole new level of success.

Charlton Heston Communicating may be the most important skill the human animal possesses. Milo Frank's book tells how to do it well and succinctly...which *means* well.

About the Author

Milo Ogden Frank is a nationally acclaimed authority on communications skills and strategies. His proven techniques have brought him success in an extraordinary career as an actors' agent, Director of Talent and Casting for CBS Television, a writer-producer of feature films at MGM, and vice president in charge of production for Cinerama. Mr. Frank died in 2004.

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Chapter 1

Why 30 Seconds?

"If only he'd get to the point!"

"All right, she's got five minutes and out."

"I can't see him today. I haven't got time."

"Don't answer the phone. It might be Ellen. She talks forever."

"This is my first presentation to top management. I'd better be good and fast."

"What kind of memo is this? I haven't got time to read five pages."

"God, he talked for an hour, and I don't know what he said."

"If I get one chance to speak in the meeting, and I have to be brief, can I deliver my whole message?"

"How can I get my point across in a fifteen-minute interview?"

"They're tough businessmen. They won't listen long."

"He wants two or three minutes and that means fifteen or twenty, and it'll be a waste of time anyway."

In this hurry-hurry world, does all this sound familiar?

There are two clear and compelling reasons why 30 seconds is the ideal length of time in which to get your point across.

TIME CONSTRAINT

The first is *time constraint* -- not only on yourself, but also on those you're trying to convince.

Through my film and TV work, I've seen time and tastes change; fast food, fast cars, and fast deals are commonplace today. Time waits for no man; you have to move faster just to stay even. And to move faster, you must be concise.

Do you ever think about how people judge you and about how you judge others? Your deals, jobs, money, and success can all hang on first impressions. Isn't it true that with just a few words, an image is formed in your mind and in theirs, and you and they act accordingly? Often there's only time for a few words, so they had better be the right ones. The hour of years ago is the 30 seconds of today. To survive and move ahead in business or in any other relationship, you must be able to get your point across swiftly and succinctly in 30 seconds or less.

ATTENTION SPAN

The second and more important reason why 30 seconds is the ideal length of time to get your point across is that even when a person has time to listen to you, his mind can accept only so much information in one steady flow.

How long can you or anyone pay attention to what someone is saying without letting your mind wander off to sex, money, or the other good things in life? When I ask this question, I get answers of anywhere from four hours to four seconds. One businessman in a particularly sour mood from his most recent sales meeting said zero was the attention span of his associates. That happened to be true, but only because he always talked so long and boringly that his audience turned him off before he even opened his mouth. *The attention span of the average individual is 30 seconds.*

Let me give you an example. Look around the room and concentrate on a lamp. You'll find your mind goes to something else within 30 seconds. If the lamp could move or talk, or go on and off by itself, it would recapture your attention for another 30 seconds. But without motion or change, it cannot hold you.

Think of someone's attention span as a quarter slot machine. This machine must take in the first twenty-five cents before you can put in the second twenty-five cents. If you put in fifty cents or a dollar all at once, you'll have wasted your money and maybe even jammed the machine. It can take in only twenty-five cents at a time. Your listener can take in only 30 seconds at a time.

So if you want your listener to give up thoughts of sex and money and pay attention to you, you've got just 30 seconds. That is the attention span of the human race.

TELEVISION, RADIO, AND THE ATTENTION SPAN

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the field of radio and television commercials. Media research has determined 30 seconds to be the attention span of the average viewer. That's why you and I live with the 30-second attention span theory every day of our listening and viewing lives. Almost all commercials on television and radio are 30 seconds long. If those commercials didn't sell the product, whether it's a refrigerator or a politician seeking votes, the whole concept of radio and television advertising would change.

When I discuss the 30-second message with people in my communications workshops, I hear the same thing

over and over again: "I can't possibly make my point in such a short time."

My answer is that television and radio do it all the time. Commercials not only grab your attention but also tell you all about the product and where and when to buy it. Here's an example of a 30-second television commercial for Galpin Ford:

"Galpin purposely bought a lot of motor homes. But all the rain kept many of our customers away. We've got too many motor homes. Buy them during our three-day sale. Save up to eighteen thousand dollars off our regular list price. The savings can pay for your vacations for years. You can take up to twelve years to pay; many have an 11.9 percent finance plan. Prices start at \$16,996. See Friday's *L.A. Times* sports section. Don't wait forever. It's the things you don't do that you regret."

The result was the most successful sale of motor homes in the history of Galpin Ford, one of the largest dealers in the country. The commercial told the potential buyer what he needed to know, and all within his attention span. The important point is that a lot can be said and retained in 30 seconds. And if radio and television can do it, so can you.

THE SOUND BITE

Radio and television news also make use of the 30-second attention span. It's called the "sound bite." I asked a television news anchorwoman-reporter friend of mine, Terry Mayo, to explain to some business people just what a sound bite is, and she said:

"Because of attention span, the average time of all television news stories is one and a half minutes. The reporter needs 30 seconds to set up the story, another 30 seconds is reserved for the actuality, which means an interview or tape of what's happening, then another 30 seconds for the reporter to summarize and end the story. If I go out to interview someone about a story, I want that person to make his point in 30 seconds or less so I can pull it out and use it. That 30-second portion of the entire interview that I edit at the studio is called a 'sound bite.' If the subject doesn't make his statement in 30 seconds or less, I can't use it and it doesn't make the air."

Terry had something else to say about the 30-second rule on TV news:

"We've discovered that if you can't say it in 30 seconds, you probably can't say it at all. If you know how, you can make any point very well in 30 seconds."

An example is a moving message delivered in this dramatic and emotional television news story:

An old man had gone into the water fully clothed to save two seven-year-old children. He was still soaking wet when the television reporter interviewed him. He said, "Sure, I'm sixty-five. So what? Anybody who could swim would have gone in to save those kids, but maybe I did something else important. Maybe people should realize that when you're over sixty, you're not dead. You're productive, and retirement shouldn't be a mandatory thing."

There's a powerful message in less than 30 seconds, and the point certainly gets across. It was made by an average person under stress. It proves conclusively that you or anyone can do the same thing if you know how.

The 30-second message is always applicable, anytime and anywhere. It's a basic tool. When you master it,

it'll become second nature to you. It'll create a whole new mind-set. It'll transform the way you think and deal with others every day. You'll find yourself instinctively prepared and using it all the time.

Anybody can master the art of the 30-second message by mastering a few basic principles -- and these are what you are about to learn.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Herman Ovalle:

A lot of people always spent their very own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent these people free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun to suit your needs. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day long to reading a guide. The book How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds or Less it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of those who recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. If you did not have enough space to bring this book you can buy the particular e-book. You can m0ore simply to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book features high quality.

Deborah Rinehart:

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