



Pitch Perfect

How to Say It Right the First Time, Every Time

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

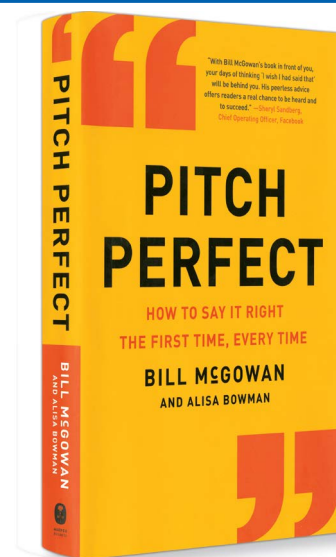
During the pivotal moments of our lives, results are often determined not only by our actions but by our words as well. Saying the right thing the right way can make the difference between sealing the deal or losing the account, advancing your career or suffering a demotion. During these moments, it's important to be pitch perfect — to use precisely the right tone to convey the right message to the right person at the right time. Such pitch-perfect moments are crucial in our personal and professional journeys.

In *Pitch Perfect*, the renowned media coach Bill McGowan shows you how to craft just the right message and deliver it using the right language — both verbal and nonverbal. *Pitch Perfect* teaches you how to overcome common communication pitfalls by using McGowan's simple Principles of Persuasion, which are highly effective and easy to learn, implement and master.

The right language can make you more confident, persuasive and certain. With *Pitch Perfect* you can harness the power of persuasion and have people not only listening closely to your every word but also remembering you long after you've left the room.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why Pitch-Perfect moments happen in business every day.
- The Seven Principles of Persuasion.
- How to stand out by displaying genuine interest.
- How to create compelling stories, anticipate questions and speak with conviction.



by Bill McGowan and
Alisa Bowman

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THE COMPLETE SUMMARY: PITCH PERFECT

by Bill McGowan and Alisa Bowman

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The Language of Success

If eloquence were a commodity listed on the New York Stock Exchange, every analyst on Wall Street would issue a buy order. That's because its value constantly rises, and investment in it pays increasingly huge dividends. Great communication skills are your secret to holding someone's attention, making a persuasive point, being remembered, and appearing smart and confident. Every time you speak, it's an opportunity to inform, influence and inspire.

Saying the right thing the right way can make the difference between sealing the deal or losing the account, advancing in your career or stagnating, earning a powerful ally or burning an important career bridge. Get it right, and your reputation will shine from that halo effect awarded to those who are seen as confident, smart, likable and sincere. Get it wrong, and you run the risk of being labeled annoying, tedious, ineffectual or irrelevant.

Pitch-Perfect moments serve as crucial junctures in our personal and professional lives. In business they take place every day, sometimes several times a day. They come up during meetings, presentations, events, parties, in hallways, over coffee, on smartphones and in front of cameras.

We can all remember a few Pitch-Perfect moments. Maybe we muddled through the experience and managed to somehow get it right. Or maybe things didn't go so well. Rather than wow someone, we underwhelmed. We were Pitch Poor, and whenever we think about that experience we cringe, because there's no take two.

The thing is, it's not over. Sure, that one Pitch-Perfect opportunity has passed, but many, many more opportunities lie ahead. It has been estimated that we spend 70 to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of com-

munication. During many of those hours, we absolutely need to say it right.

Secrets of Pitch-Perfect Communicators

Great communicators are not genetically predetermined. They are made. Nearly all great communicators have been coached. They also do the following:

Practice: Most professionals who make their living in front of audiences and cameras would never dream of ad-libbing. They all decide what they want to say long before they say it.

Develop Distinctiveness: Spoken communication today, especially in the workplace, has a numbing sameness to it. Many of us have adopted a monotonous lexicon of meaningless phrases that get delivered the same way. It's nothing more than a conformity zone that denies us the opportunity to develop a personal style that's distinctive.

Show Crisp Conviction: Good communicators don't equivocate. They don't start sentences with "I think that ... " They also avoid wishy-washy language, such as *sort of* and *kind of*. They have the courage to say what they mean and confidently state their point.

Keep It Short: More is not more. Researchers at Saint Louis University have found that 10 to 18 minutes is the length of time past which you begin a game of diminishing returns on your listener's attention.

Display Sheer Delight: Even if you need to fake it, you want to exude a palpable enthusiasm for the chance to get up and speak. If your audience is getting the sense that you're loving every minute of the opportunity, they will see your performance through a more favorable lens. Conversely, if you look uptight and nervous, that anxiety will spread to your audience. ●



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The Principles of Persuasion

Holding your audience's attention is like winning a tennis match at Wimbledon. You better have a clearly defined strategy, execute it brilliantly and muzzle any inner voice of self-doubt, or you'll get crushed. And thanks to a number of complicating factors brought on by the times in which we live, winning is getting harder.

For starters, we have a tortoise-and-hare-style speed disparity that exists between our brains and our mouths. Your listener is capable of absorbing 400 words per minute, yet you are capable of voicing only 125.

So what does the human brain do when it is not challenged to its full information-processing potential? It wanders far off the trail you're verbally trying to blaze, which is why your audience is hardwired to contemplate in the middle of your presentation such weighty issues as *I wonder if my son finished his science project. Is this guy kidding with his shirt-and-tie combination?* Perhaps not surprisingly, only about 20 percent of what we say makes a lasting impact.

And the quest for listener engagement is only getting tougher. Research commissioned by Lloyds TSB Insurance shows that 10 years ago, the average person could easily pay close attention for roughly 12 minutes. Now five minutes is more realistic. Why? Pinging, poking, tweeting and Snapchatting have recalibrated our definition of sustained focus, with the average person being exposed to 5,000 messages a day. As a result, our collective attention spans seem to be shrinking faster than the ozone layer.

As attention deficits grow, the techniques we use to keep people's attention need to be more and more effective.

The Seven Principles

No matter how toned or flabby your verbal communication muscle, the Seven Principles of Persuasion can help you get into game shape.

The Headline Principle: Get attention by starting with your best material, especially a grabbing, thought-provoking line that makes listeners think, *I want to know more.*

The Scorsese Principle: Hold attention with visual images that illustrate a story.

The Pasta-Sauce Principle: Cure boredom by boiling down your message, making it as rich and brief as possible.

The No-Tailgating Principle: The speed with which you talk should be directly proportional to how certain you are about the next sentence coming out of your mouth.

The Conviction Principle: Convey certainty with words, eye contact, posture and tone of voice.

The Curiosity Principle: The best broadcast interviewers earn trust by displaying genuine interest, as if there is nowhere else they'd rather be.

The Draper Principle: The best way to stay on point is to make sure the flow and focus of the discussion plays to your strengths. If it strays elsewhere, away from an area in which you can shine, transition it back.

When you use the Principles of Persuasion to your advantage, you'll feel confident and at peace as you win the client, nail the job interview or deliver the best speech of your life. ●

The Headline Principle

The first 30 seconds of any conversation or presentation are like the last two minutes of a football game. This is when victory or defeat is determined, the period of time when your audience is deciding whether you are interesting enough for them to continue paying attention. Say just the right thing, and the communication game is yours. Your audience gets hooked, and they're enticed to hear what you will say next. Get it wrong, and your listeners start daydreaming, checking their smartphones or plotting their conversational exit strategy. Unfortunately, more speakers get it wrong than right.

Talk Like a Journalist

Think of how a journalist writes a news story. Good journalists put their most compelling material in the first paragraph, known as *the lead*. This is the sentence or paragraph that grabs the readers or viewers, enticing them to want more. An effective lead is often surprising — even counterintuitive. It makes the reader think, *What's this about? I want to know more.*

In television, "teases" are short snippets of copy that come just before a commercial break. Teases are meant to discourage viewers from surfing other channels or getting up and leaving the room. The elements of a good tease are the same as a good opening for a conversation or presentation. Good teases generally have three characteristics:

Short: Convey it quickly, in just a line or two.

Suspenseful: Include an element of intrigue. Beginning your remarks with a story or some declarative, provocative statement works nicely. It gets your audience mentally chewing on something right away, which is what you want to accomplish.

Surprising: Make your tease the opposite of a cliché, something that makes your listeners think, *This is new. I've*

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never heard this before. Do the unexpected, and employ a different style.

Not every opener includes all three traits, but great openers include many of them. Steve Jobs once opened a speech back in 1984 with the line, “Hi, I’m Steve Jobs.” It was short, and it was also surprising. You wouldn’t expect Jobs to introduce himself, considering that everyone in the auditorium knew him and had come specifically to hear him speak. After laughter and applause faded, he hooked his audience by immediately launching into a story: “It is 1958. IBM passes up the chance to buy a young, fledgling company that has invented a new technology called xerography.”

Notice that he did not start by saying, “I want to spend a little time this morning walking you through some of the historical context of the early days of personal computers and illustrate how it relates to Apple’s current mission from an innovation perspective.”

Don’t spend hours trying to force your openers into a three-S box. Just use the three S’s as a guide and a source of inspiration that helps you find your best material.

Where Great Headlines Lurk

Simply put, your headline is your best material. It’s the lines that come after “You’ll never believe this!” and “Did you know that...?” When coming up with headlines, consider the stories you tell friends and coworkers as an aside. Also look for strong statements, ones that you might be tempted to bury later in a conversation or speech. Many people make the mistake of building up to a provocative statement rather than leading with it. Often they’ll be five minutes into their prepared material when I’ll stop them and say, “The line that you just said? That’s your opener.”

They often reply, “Really? You want me to start there?” Absolutely. ●

The Scorsese Principle

Visual storytelling is the sweet spot of good communication. In this way, good communicators are a lot like film directors. They tell stories that paint visual pictures in the minds of their listeners. They provide rich detail but also manage to keep it tight.

According to a recent study, facts are 22 times more likely to be recalled when they are told in stories, and images are 60 thousand times more memorable than words. That’s because humans are visual creatures. A movie reel is constantly spinning inside our brains. As a speaker, you want to be the director of that reel. If you illustrate your

point with colorful stories your listeners can imagine, you will keep your listeners satiated — and satiated listeners are engaged listeners.

The Formula for Great Stories

So maybe you don’t think you’re a good storyteller. Perhaps you feel anecdotes don’t come naturally to you. If you’ve told jokes in the past, only to have the punch lines land with a thud, the traumatic memory now probably puts a crimp in your storytelling style.

The good news is that telling a good joke or story is a product of both nature and nurture. If storytelling is not an innate talent, then for the time being, let’s think of it as having a certain formula:

The Setup: Resist the urge to forecast or signpost. Many presentations are ruined by the speaker saying, “To illustrate this point, I’d like to share with you an anecdote.” Does a Broadway actor stop in the middle of a scene to announce that a dramatic section of dialogue is coming up? Weave stories into your presentations, but don’t make them feel like an afterthought that got shoehorned in to an otherwise bland presentation.

The Build: Your build sets the scene, introduces key characters, and hints at some tension or conflict to be resolved. It also takes your listeners out of their heads and puts them inside yours, helping them to see exactly what you are visually describing.

The Reveal: This is the anecdotal equivalent of a joke’s punch line. It’s the payoff or the reward to your listener for staying attentive through the buildup. It’s even more potent when it’s counterintuitive, something your listener is not expecting.

The Exit: Once you deliver the reveal, let it sit there for a beat or two. Many people worry that they’ll lose the audience when they stop talking. Yet, pausing creates the opposite effect. It allows your story to sink in and ensures that your audience can fully take in the meaning of what you’ve just told them.

How to Add Some Scorsese

You might be tempted to think, *Some stories just aren’t visual.* Not long ago, an economist was in my office for media training. He wanted to make the point that countries like Brazil had improved their economies immensely in just 30 years. His inclination was to deliver the point as if he were in a Harvard Business School lecture hall: “When you look at a country like Brazil from a short-term historical perspective, the macro view you have is of a country that has transformed itself from one of enormous currency

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volatility and hyperinflation to one of stable growth.”

That’s the kind of point that is begging for visual detail. It’s also precisely the kind of point that many people assume can’t be made visual.

Except it can. I asked this client to describe what was going on in Brazil back in the 1980s. “If you remember in Brazil 30 years ago, people were loading bags of suddenly worthless cash into wheelbarrows and carting them off to their local bank to trade them in for a mere wad of the new currency the government had introduced that week ... that’s how bad inflation was. It was like showing up at a boutique with a dozen tattered and soiled evening dresses and hoping to exchange them for one new blouse,” he said.

Now that’s better. Visual anecdote + analogy ≠ boredom. ●

The Pasta-Sauce Principle

There are several incredible parallels between cooking and communicating. Two in particular stand out: less is more, and simpler is better. In fact, good communication is a lot like pasta sauce. The more you boil down and reduce a sauce, the more dynamic the flavor. Speaking redundantly and using filler words in your communication is like adding water to the sauce. The result is something bland and forgettable.

Why do people go on too long? Usually they do it for one or more of the following reasons: to drive home a point, to seem smart, to take up the full time that was allotted, poor planning and to exploit a captive audience.

How to Boil Down a Message

If you struggle with the whole notion of brevity, it might be useful to think of words like calories. Every day you have a set number to play with, let’s say two thousand. Exceeding that amount never leads to anything good. If we were all put on a verbal diet, we’d make what we say really matter and become more effective communicators.

Your communication should leave people feeling satisfied, not stuffed and bloated. But being concise is hard to do. It takes practice. If you struggle to boil things down, try this:

Develop Decisive Starts and Finishes: Know your opening — the first 60 to 90 seconds of content that will come out of your mouth — and have it down cold. That’s when you’re going to be the most nervous, so leave nothing to chance. Once you’re out of the starting blocks cleanly and smoothly, your confidence will build. The same holds true for your close. It should be a defini-

tive destination you’re driving to with a sense of purpose. Make it firm, and give it a little punch.

Sever Your Emotional Ties to the Content: Rarely do I come across a client’s presentation that isn’t improved by cutting it by 25 percent. Don’t fall so deeply in love with your own content that you can’t see that some of it is excess. Your audience will not miss all the elements that were in the original version.

Use the Headline Principle: Get to your point immediately. Don’t slowly build up to it.

Practice, Practice, Practice: Time yourself each time, continually shrinking your delivery until you’ve got your message boiled down to its most flavorful essence.

Don’t Commit to a Number: Do you remember the moment Rick Perry lost his bid for the 2012 Republican nomination for president? It was when he said he would eliminate three departments from the U.S. government, but he could remember only two of them. Forecasting exactly how many points you are going to make is riskier than leaving it more general with “several” or “a few.”

Always Leave Them Wanting More: Nothing makes people sink down into their chairs more than the line, “So let me just quickly recap what we just went over.” Instead, at the end of your presentation, suggest they try something new or adopt a new strategy or way of thinking, and then project the future benefits they’ll reap if they heed your advice.

The best way to master the Pasta-Sauce Principle is to pay attention to your words as well as the words of others. Do that, and you’ll find that much of what you and others say just isn’t necessary and that every point could be made better and clearer with fewer words rather than more. ●

The No-Tailgating Principle

Think of your brain and your mouth as two cars traveling down a road. The brain is the lead car, and the mouth is drafting a millisecond right behind, conversationally steering in the direction the brain tells it to go. At any given moment, the brain is choosing which verbal road to travel and the exact words needed to articulate each thought.

The more slowly you drive the rear car (your mouth), the more time you give your brain to carefully decide where the mouth is going next. Likewise, your mouth has more time to smoothly turn in any given conversational direction the brain tells it to go. It’s like following a friend who is driving in a separate car in front of you. The more time you give each other to prepare to turn or stop, the smoother and less dangerous the maneuver will be.

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The object is to keep your mouth a safe car length from your brain. The more quickly you talk, however, the closer the mouth travels to the brain. I call this verbal tailgating. When this happens, the brain doesn't have enough time to make careful and thoughtful decisions. End result: the brain is forced into choosing the first direction (or thought) rather than the best one. This is why we often find ourselves in a conversational dead end, saying something irrelevant or, worse, inappropriate.

How to Maintain a Safe Talking Distance

You probably think you talk more slowly and pause more often than you really do. A recording will give you an accurate measure of your vocal pace. It will also help you to hear your fillers, verbal backspacing and other foibles. Modern technology makes recording yourself quite easy. You can use a webcam, a tablet or a smartphone. When you play back the recording, take notice of filler words, verbal fender benders, verbal backspacing, tangents, repetitions and lost trains of thought.

As you work on improving your delivery, use these pointers:

Mix Up Your Pace: Feel the freedom to briskly deliver thoughts that are quite familiar to you (ones you've said repeatedly to others), and then slow down to drive home your most important points or content that is less familiar to you.

Talk Cleanly: The idea is to eliminate all the obscure jargon, the filler, the showoff vocabulary and the complex, flowery, verbose sentence structure. Keeping it simple, straightforward and clean gives your brain enough time to sort out the next thought, allowing you to progress from one idea to the next in an orderly, focused and persuasive manner.

When in Doubt, Stop Talking: The more uncertain you are about your next words, the more slowly you should speak, even coming to a dead stop if needed.

Focus on What You Want to Say, Not on What You Think the Audience is Thinking: There is not enough bandwidth in your brain for you to concentrate simultaneously on your point, your delivery, and what you think your listener might be thinking based on his or her facial expressions.

Listen More, Talk Less: Listening is one of the most effective compliments we have to offer. It validates others and makes them feel supported, and it also gives us a chance to thoughtfully prepare what we want to say. Attentive listening is becoming an increasingly rare commodity, which is why it is so easy to stand out and make a

great impression by demonstrating that the art is not lost on you. ●

The Conviction Principle

When you speak, you want to sound filled with relentless conviction, exuding enthusiasm for the value of the information you're sharing. Your words, eye movement, posture, pitch and tone of voice must convey certainty. But demonstrating unshakable self-confidence is a process, especially if deep down you're feeling anything but. I often tell clients there are three stages of public speaking:

Stage 1: Dread

Stage 2: Tolerance

Stage 3: Enjoyment

Just because you may be starting in stage one doesn't mean your audience has to know that. The trick is to simulate your sense of enjoyment until you can actually experience it for real.

Don't Copy Your Colleagues

One of the worst ways to practice the Conviction Principle? Watch what many of your colleagues do and then try to emulate them. Three bad speaking habits pervade much of the business world:

Cliches: In a recent poll, Britons chose the insipid expression "at the end of the day" as the number one cliché infecting the king's English. Another cliché that has infected every corporation in America is referring to a problem as a "challenge" or, worse yet, declaring that "we don't see this so much as a challenge but rather as an opportunity."

Industriespeak: Every industry has its jargon — words and phrases that everyone uses but hardly anyone truly understands. Using meaningless corporatespeak is a crutch that obstructs the true depth of your knowledge. To kick the jargon habit, practice your next presentation out loud using the recording device on your smartphone. Then take the audio content and have it transcribed. You see all those red lines under words like *efforting*, *choiceful* and *incentivization*? That's a gentle reminder from your computer that you are using a made-up word. If it's not real, you shouldn't be using it.

Oversimplification: The opposite of industriespeak is what many people call "dumbing it down." I'm all in favor of keeping communications simple and straightforward, but I've seen too many videos of people who think they're great communicators talking to people as though they're four-year-olds. Such verbal pabulum is downright offensive.

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Staying Confident in Rough Conversations

Nowhere is the Conviction Principle more important than during uncomfortable and tense conversations, the kind we all try hard to avoid. When you find yourself amid conversational tension, try these tactics:

Validate; Don't Bully: Validating others' opinions, even if they're contrary to our own, is mistakenly thought of as a sign of weakness in this era of cable-news bombast.

Find a Way to Agree: Highlighting even the tiniest sliver of common ground is such an outdated notion that it actually is fresh and new again.

Point Out a Strength: Acknowledging people's strengths while telling them they've got some issue to resolve is a good way to bring balance to the conversation and avoid making them feel ashamed or embarrassed. Think of adopting the "critique sandwich" model. In it, the critical meat of what you have to say is sandwiched between two acknowledgments of their strengths or something they do well. ●

The Curiosity Principle

Have you ever come home from a party and felt exhausted, as if every conversation sucked the life from you like one of those Dementor creatures in Harry Potter? With any luck, those occasions are more than balanced by the social events that leave you feeling invigorated and happy. The key ingredient that makes a conversation truly great is curiosity. Too bad it's an ingredient that's becoming harder and harder to find.

The majority of us have no idea what kind of vibe we give off when we're listening. We may very well be captivated, yet we inadvertently come off as if we're really thinking about something else. The Curiosity Principle will help you to overcome this mismatch between how you feel inside and how you appear on the outside. It will also help you to fuel important conversations, score personal points and take someone's pulse. The more often you listen with curiosity, the more skilled you will be at reading people, an enormously valuable asset to develop and fine-tune.

The Elements of Curiosity

The art of conversation seems to be going the way of the pay phone. Hardly anybody uses it, so you don't find much of it around. That's because many people mistakenly

believe that the most important skill a conversationalist needs is the ability to talk endlessly. So they talk *at* people rather than *with* them.

In reality, the best conversationalists are extremely good listeners, and they display three rare characteristics:

Interest: Being a good conversationalist requires attentiveness and enthusiasm. It doesn't mean that you have to create a new BFF. The trick is to listen for some nugget of information that inspires you to want to know more about a particular topic.

Generosity: Your likability is central to your success; people will seek you out if you are a generous conversationalist. If you're a selfish hog who talks only about yourself, you'll quickly become known as the crashing bore everyone wants to avoid. But if you include people, ask for their input, seek out their stories, thoughtfully consider their dissenting opinions without bombastic ridicule, you will exude an aura others gravitate to.

Modesty: It's easy to trick ourselves into thinking that modesty and humility have no place in today's ubercompetitive business world, where we're all told to advertise ourselves as diligently as Disney markets the magic of its theme parks. But in the art of self-promotion, there's no need to be shameless. It just requires a little finesse. If someone is blathering on about clients who don't pay their bills on time, say, "I also see a lot of that in my work," or "Fortunately, I don't have to contend with that too much in our business." Only somebody thick as a brick would not be lured into asking, "Oh yeah, what do you do?" Self-promotion and modesty are not mutually exclusive. ●

The Draper Principle

Don Draper, the main character of the hit show *Mad Men*, spouts advertising advice that's nearly identical to what I tell my clients for public speaking, job interviews, media interviews and just about all high-stakes conversational situations. One Draper mantra has risen above all others: "If you don't like what's being said, change the conversation."

Many people go into job and media interviews disregarding Draper's advice. Rather than steering the conversation away from areas that are not their strength, they obediently answer just the questions the interviewer asks. This is like sitting in the back of a car being taken for a joyride. Will the car end up where you want it to go?

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Probably not. Passively allowing others to dictate the content and flow of a discussion takes the steering wheel out of your hands, something you want to avoid.

How to Talk Like Don

Here are some techniques that might help you to steer any conversation in any direction you choose — without leaving the other participants feeling as though you've hijacked the discussion.

Get Inside Your Interviewer's Head: Before heading into any Pitch-Perfect situation, think about the types of questions and topics you might encounter. What will others likely ask you? What material might your listeners want to know about? What is most likely to come up?

Anticipate the Question: Curious listening allows you to better plan your response. To get a jump on where a question will go, pay close attention to the very beginning of what someone says. Before someone ever asks you a question, she or he gives you plenty of contextual clues that set up that question. You'll hear opinion or observations that relate to the question someone is going to ask many sentences later.

Line Up the Pitch-Perfect Triumvirate: When you develop the new skill of listening to the question with heightened attention to the first sentence or so, you will find that you can identify the topic of the question much earlier. This will allow you valuable time to answer three key questions:

- 1) What's my point?
- 2) How will I illustrate it (an example, story or data)?
- 3) What are the first five words out of my mouth?

This three-step process will keep you from rambling and meandering your way through some long-winded and redundant speech. ●

The Seven Principles at Work

Many of my former colleagues wanted help navigating delicate situations: delivering bad news, admitting a mistake and rectifying it, managing a contentious relationship with a rival colleague. It seemed that no matter the specifics of my advice, the basic equation was the same: Fairness + Honesty + Empathy = Good Outcome.

The empathy piece is huge. The value of getting outside our own heads and understanding how a problem looks to the other person cannot be overestimated. In addition, actually validating another person's position, even if counter to your own, is often a powerful part of the mix.

How Do I Reprimand Employees While Keeping Them Motivated?

Communicating a delicate, sensitive or unwelcome message to someone is the ultimate high-wire act. Too much diplomacy and subtlety might result in your message not coming through. Position it too bluntly and aggressively, and the recipient winds up wounded, defensive and incapable of seeing the merit in your point. How do you find the rare middle ground between these two extremes?

First, don't initiate the conversation with "We need to talk" or mention anything about "paying dues." To turn this problem employee around, blend empathy with concern for his or her well-being. To do so, start off with an empathetic question. Wait for the answer. Then offer the reason for your concern. You want to make it absolutely clear that you are an ally and not an adversary. Put yourself in the role of mentor rather than boss. If your employee is convinced of that, then he or she will be more open and receptive to what you have to say.

How Do I Apologize for a Mistake?

If you're going to say "I'm sorry," don't make it half-hearted. Don't try to qualify or justify. Don't point fingers or shift the blame. Don't drift into TMI territory, providing endless detailed explanation nobody wants to hear. The more details you offer, the worse you look, and the more you call the authenticity of your apology into question. Think of an apology as a three-part process: own the mistake; couch it as the rare exception — not the norm; and forecast a positive result still ahead. No matter what the situation, no matter what the mishap, people essentially want to be reassured by a calming, confident voice that everything's going to be okay.

You face Pitch-Perfect situations every day. Use them to your advantage. Put the principles into practice everywhere you go. ●

RECOMMENDED READING LIST

If you liked *Pitch Perfect*, you'll also like:

1. ***How to Say Anything to Anyone* by Shari Harley.** Learn how to ask for what you want at work, improve relationships, reduce gossip, tell people when you're frustrated and get honest feedback on your performance.
2. ***Well Said!* by Darlene Price.** Price presents field-tested techniques, guidelines and checklists to help you present yourself and your message with clarity, credibility and confidence.
3. ***Crucial Conversations* by Joseph Grenny, Al Switzler, Ron McMillan, Kerry Patterson.** Learn how to handle crucial conversations that occur when the stakes are high, emotions run strong and opinions vary.