



## How to Think on Your Feet

Your Practical Communication Took Kit



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### An article from: **MONDAY MORNING MANAGER**

Harvey Schachter's guide on how to handle everything from overflowing e-mail to meeting overload

Report on Business  
*The Globe & Mail Business  
Newspaper, Monday, April 20, 2009*

**Excellent verbal and written communication is still important to employers, but increasing value is now being set on the ability to think and act quickly and well.**

Some 20 years ago, most career ads required candidates to demonstrate "excellent verbal and written communication skills. They still do, but now take it further by highlighting the skill of "thinking on your feet".

Employers are advertising for team members who respond well under pressure. That means being organized in their thinking, as well as being able to respond quickly.

Research by Roger Davies, chief executive officer of Toronto-based communication consultant shows that roughly 90 per cent of all verbal communication in business is impromptu, rather than formal presentation. Today, we would like to offer the following tips from the two-day Think on Your Feet® Workshop:

### Think on Your Feet® Public Workshop

*Recognized as the best business communication workshop taught today.*

**25-26 June, 2009.**

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### **DON'T WAFFLE**

Get to the point. No one has time for a lengthy presentation of any kind. If you know the answer, answer the question promptly, don't beat around the bush. A direct and quick response rarely harms the cause.

### **IT'S OK TO SAY YOU DON'T KNOW**

But promise to promptly get back with the answer. And deliver on that promise. Fast! Don't bombard the audience with too many verbal details. Focus on the big picture. Then offer the details in writing. Don't assume your audience processes your verbal messages well - many still prefer to see key messages in writing.



### **USE STRUCTURE**

If you're analytically inclined, structure your response into two or three items. Then walk the audience through the items succinctly. Clearly enunciate each item, stating No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 (or first, second, third), providing audible signposts so your listener can follow you.

If you tend to talk fast, structure your ideas into two or three items - to slow you down and increase the chances of your message being retained. Don't count on your listener absorbing every point first time.

### **BRIDGE THE GAP**

Master the art of "bridging" from question to answer. Techniques include rephrasing the question to give yourself time to think, as well as to ensure you understand the question. You can also compliment the question and the questioner. But don't overdo this technique - the "Oh What A Great Question!" response - since it's the most common bridging tactic, and can get overused.

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