Skill 4

POWER CLOSES:
How to gain the commitment of your audience

This chapter focuses on the key aspect of how to close your talk in the most effective manner. You will learn the simplified three step sequence, which can turn an ordinary end of presentation into one that the audience will remember, and pave the way for commitment for all those who heard the presentation.

How the applied closing technique works

By the time you reach your closing, you should have received some forms of commitment from the audience, or an indication that your message has been not only heard, but also accepted. As a result, your audience should now be:

♦ informed of a particular situation (and in a position to do something about it)

♦ persuaded by your talk to take some form of action

♦ reinforced by a current attitude (whether positive or negative)

♦ stimulated to enter into type of behavior change

♦ motivated to take or develop a new course of action

There are three steps of closing technique involved:

Step 1: Rephrasing of key points

To help build the proper power close, the speaker needs to reinforce positively the main elements of the presentation-with special highlighting of the key points that each person in the audience should remember after the presentation has concluded.

Using audiovisual aids during rephrasing can be extremely effective; for example displaying your summary points on the slides, overheads, or flipcharts.

Sample rephrasing technique

There are numerous benefit in implementing our proposed employee performance appraisal plan. The key benefits featured are:

- ♦ The system supplies every manager (and supervisor) with a more effective performance measurement tool and a built-I mechanism for more effective employee coaching where required.
- ♦ It is perceived as a much fairer system than the current one, the purposed system should provide a definite boost to employee morale.
- ♦ The revised system not only provides for continuity on a six-month basis, but also supplies an easy to use coaching tool to improve employee performance between formal appraisal periods.
- ♦ The new system is highly flexible, such that performance criteria can be modified where necessary and mutually participate with both supervisor and employee working closely together for the common good.

Step 2: Power close summary

With the completion of the rephrasing, the speaker is now ready to highlight the power close summary. The important of this step cannot be overemphasized. If it is done correctly, at the conclusion of the presentation, the audience probably remember both the rephrasing of key points and the power close summary, and perhaps very little of the presentation's other parts.

Sample power close

"Apparently, the amount of time and effort that went into the revised performance appraisal system is now ready to pay-off. All that is required to implement it, is a three quarter affirmative majority vote from the management committee. Once approved, the system should be fully operational within three to four weeks."

Step 3: Use a benefit statement

Let's take a look at how the speaker connects his power close summary with a final benefit statement that triggers an action request.

***Sample** use a benefit statement*

"By approving the plan now, we are assured of implementing one of the finest performance appraisal systems available today and having it completely installed before the end of the month. It's an opportunity that none of us can afford to miss!"

Tips for using power closes

To strengthen your power close, keep the following tips in mind:

1. Always bridge the power close from the main body.
2. Built your power close around something the audience will easily relate to.
3. Increase use of nonverbal communication aids.
4. Use your voice to its best advantage.

Creating your own power close

Here is an example of how to summarize a closing

Summary Points	**Visual Aids**
Power Close:	**Transparency 6: BENEFITS OF PROPOSED SYSTEM** ♦ **Simpler, easier to implement** ♦ **Performance measurement** ♦ **More effective coaching** ♦ **Fairer system than before** **Transparency 7: BENEFITS (Cont'd)** ♦ **More help morale** ♦ **Link performance and compensation** ♦ **Highly participate** **Transparency 8: NEED TO DO** ♦ **Vote yes as a committee** ♦ **¾ majority required** ♦ **Can install in next 4 weeks** **Transparency 9: SUMMARY** ♦ **More quickly, or we miss the chance**
BENEFITS OF REVISED SYSTEM	
Performance Criteria	
♦ More effective performance measurement	
♦ Much fairer system	
♦ Definite morale booster	
♦ Provides direct line between performance and compensation	
WHAT'S NOW REQUIRED	
♦ ¾ Affirmative majority vote	
♦ System can be operating within a month	
SUMMARY	
♦ We need it	
♦ It's here	
♦ Let's move on it	