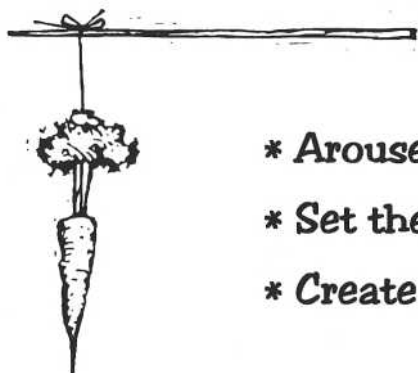




THE BEGINNING



- * Arouse Interest**
- * Set the Mood**
- * Create Anticipation**

“May I have your attention please! May I please have your attention!”

You’ve got to get everyone’s attention right off the bat. I’ve found the best way to do that is to surprise your audience and make them wonder, “What’s going on here?” Arouse their interest so they are curious about what’s going to happen next.

You’ll also need to set the mood right away. Everyone at the meeting should quickly feel comfortable (or on the edge of their seats if that’s what you prefer) and realize that they are in for a good time. The mood I usually try to create is one that encourages playful cooperation.

After you have their attention, and while you’re setting the mood, you’ll want to create anticipation. You want everybody to be thinking, “This is going to be a cool meeting that will help me.” You’ll see that many of the tips I’m going to give you are ways to get your audience involved in the topic.

Tip #1



Change the setting

When you change the way a room is normally set up, it makes it seem like something special is going to happen – and it is. If the chairs and tables are normally lined up in straight rows, then angle them. Present from the back of the room or from one of the sides now and again.

You'll be surprised how much of an impact moving the chairs and tables around can have on people, especially if it's a break room or some other area that has been set up the same way for years.

Even if it's **not** the most efficient way to arrange a room, it's worth it to change the setting if it's going to arouse interest and make your audience wonder, "What's going on?!"

Tip #2

Engage your audience

Start by asking someone a "personal" question – one that is an opinion question (this way you won't be putting them on the spot) such as, "Do you drink coffee in the morning?"

The question should start a discussion that eventually ties in with your topic. To start off my "Dangerous Daze" talk on accident behavior, I ask someone in the audience if they are married. If they are, I ask them to tell me how they got married. Was it in a church? Was it a large wedding? I'll sometimes even ask them to tell me if everything went smoothly.

I'll ask these same questions to three or four members of the audience. Then I'll ask the same people **why** they got married.

Of course, that opens up wonderful possibilities for humorous replies. It's a cool opening. Not only do I get my audience engaged right away, but it also leads to an important discussion about the difference between **how** accidents happen and **why** accidents happen.

Tip #3

Start with a bang

"Well, it's time for another safety meeting. Umm, I'm glad all of you are here. And, umm, it's been quite cold lately, hasn't it? All right; here's what we're going to talk about."

DO NOT START A SAFETY MEETING LIKE THAT!!!!

It's weak. It's called "palaver" – it means small talk. Start with a punch instead. And start on time. I like to walk around and shake hands with as many members of my audience as I can before a session (see tip #14) – even with people I already know well.

However, once "show time" arrives, I speak up in a way that signals the meeting is starting. And I do it with a bang. You should too. For example, during my talk on back care entitled "The Back Break," I pull out a whip and start lashing the floor. That gets everybody's attention. Then I describe how we whip our backs day in and day out and rarely give them a break.

