



More is Less & Less is More

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In the professional world time is a valuable commodity not to be squandered frivolously. Unfortunately, there is no shortage of time-wasting, mind-numbing tasks, meetings and people who insatiably devour this limited commodity.

One of the biggest time wasters is when people don't get to the point. When I get trapped into these types of conversation my mind always flashes back to the Seinfeld sitcom episode (<http://imdb.to/1PzuQuQ>) where Jerry, George, Ellen and Kramer spend the entire show wandering around a multi-level car park trying to remember where they parked the car. Instead of Kramer (or any of them) investing a moment to note down the car's location, which is both important and relevant, they need to search every corner, aisle and level for the vehicle. Of course all sorts of others antics ensue during their epic search.

If people spent even a moment to think about the importance and relevance of their point when communicating in a professional setting we would probably not get lost so often in irrelevant details and exhaustive explanations.

There is a tendency for people to admire and respect a person who is able to articulate their ideas in a clear and concise manner. It not only shows consideration for another person's time, but it shows their ability to have a meaningful and controlled conversation.

Taking even a few minutes to reflect on why you need to have the conversation, send the email, or call for a meeting can save you and those involved a lot of frustration and grief.

When working with clients with this particular issue I always ask them to equate their message with writing an article in a newspaper. People tend to scan through the paper to see if there are any headlines of interest to them.

If they find one the scanning continues to the sub-headlines in the article. If something peaks their curiosity then they can read the section for more details.

People tend to ask 2 questions when filtering through the headlines in a newspaper:

1. Why is this important to me?

2. Why is this relevant to me?

When you begin a conversation in a work situation people will be asking themselves these same questions. Invest a little time up front by knowing what the take home message is and then qualify it by answering the above two questions.

If your communication is an email, report or presentation then you might want to further consider the governing details, which are akin to the sub-headlines in an article. They are the major points to your take home message. If people are interested in the minutiae then they will ask.

When it comes to communication at work the dictum more is less and less is more is both important and relevant.

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