



2017  
**UNION LEADERS  
LEADING PARTNERSHIP**

COALITION OF  
KAISER PERMANENTE  
**UNIONS**

# B.L.U.F. your way through it

Using Answer First to capture your audience's attention

PRESENTED BY: Elaine Evans

# Agenda for the day



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**Extract the most important information**

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**Open with a short, clear purpose**

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**Tell the audience what to expect**

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**B.L.U.F. your way through it**

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# Guiding principles for participation



- Be present and participate.
- Take charge of your own learning.
- Stay open – respect others' viewpoints.
- Preserve confidences – “Vegas Rules”
- Practice, practice, practice...
- Have fun!



# In the first minutes, was your audience...



*Hooked?*



*Mind  
wandering?*



*Multi-  
tasking?*



*Checked  
out?*



# Here are some startling numbers

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**75%** of the audiences “check out”

during the first **60** seconds.\*

\*<http://www.twoconnect.net/and-your-point-is/>

# Your audience?

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- Why do we give presentations?
- Who do we give them to?
- What is maximum attention span of your audience?



# Attention span

Average adult attention span = **5-10 seconds**

Maximum adult attention span = **30 seconds**



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What unrelated things have  
you thought about?

# Are you paying attention?



# American Psychological Assoc.

## Study on selective perception



Active listening	20%
Reminiscing	40%
Looking ahead	20%
Mental vacations	20%



# Elevator speech

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You step into the elevator on the first floor, and the person you're giving a presentation to later that afternoon steps in with you.

They say, "I don't think I'm going to have time to see your presentation this afternoon, why don't you give me the particulars on the ride up."?



# Are you ready?

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# Activity – part one

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## 1. Read all three scenarios

- What's wrong with them?
- Would you want to ride in an elevator listening to any of them?
- What would happen if you tried to present any of that information in the elevator?
- What would make it better?

8 minutes

Before you begin, ask yourself...

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**Why?**

# What's your purpose?

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What's the message you need to get across?



Why is it important to them?



Why do they need to know it?



What changes do you want to see?

# What are you trying to do?

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- Persuade
- Inform
- Teach
- Motivate
- Inspire

# Translate purpose to audience action



**Purpose:**  
**Persuade**  
**Inspire/ Motivate**  
**Inform**  
**Teach**

**What do you want  
your audience to do?**

**How will it  
benefit them?**

# Traditional flow of a presentation

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## Traditional flow

Opening

Background

Supporting points

Bottom line

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## SBAR flow

Situation

Background

Assessment

Recommendation

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**Start here!**

# B.L.U.F. – alternative flow

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## Alternative flow

### **Bottom line + ask**

Opening

Background (if needed)

Supporting points

### **Review bottom line + ask**

## Alternative SBAR flow

### **Concise recommendation**

Situation

Background

Analysis

### **Review recommendation**

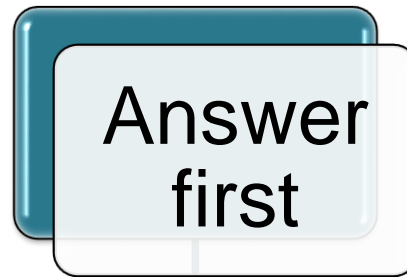
**B.L.U.F. = Bottom Line Up Front**

# Definition of “Answer first”

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A style of business communication in which the **main idea or “answer” is stated first.**



- Main idea or most relevant piece of information that your audience needs to know.

# “Answer first” can also be...

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- Bottom line + ask
- Recommendation
- Call to action
- Main point
- Provide information
- Statement of desired change in behavior or actions
- Statement of desired change in attitude or opinion

# Why is “answer first” effective?



Enables  
structured  
thinking

*Prevents  
internal scripts*

Supports  
comprehension  
and retention

*Reinforce  
your message*

Accommodates  
a pressurized  
environment

*Time well  
spent*

# Why is this important?



- Where could you use “Answer First”?
- Who would benefit from it?
- Any times/experiences where you could have used “Answer First”?
- How would data fit into this concept?

## Activity – part two

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2. Read your assigned scenario again
3. Carefully extract the most important information that you feel your audience needs to know
4. Write out (legibly) the main point on the handout
5. Be prepared to present it to the rest of your group

5 minutes

## Activity – part three

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7. Get into groups with people with the same scenario
8. Pass your handout and main point to the next person
9. Read their choice and see if it differs from your selection
10. Explain/discuss why you selected that specific main point and if/how they differ

12 minutes

# Add pizzazz to your “answer first”



## Make it memorable

- Never start with your name
- Ask a question
- Simple/Bold statement, no flourishes
- Startling statistic
- Inspirational or revealing quote
- Compelling data point or graph
- Short, punchy story



**Aim for the head  
and the heart**



# Other noteables

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- Books
  - Resonate - Nancy Duarte
  - HBR Guide to Persuasive Presentations – Nancy Duarte
  - Presentation Zen – Garr Reynolds
  - Presentations: Secrets to world class presentations – John Hughes

# Enjoy the journey

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