

When you have the floor, it should be clear to everyone in the room that you are in command of your audience. You command attention with your vocal volume, direct eye contact, and confident delivery. During the crossfire periods, you should take advantage of every opportunity to explain, provide an example, or tell a story to illustrate your points. This doesn't mean that you must dominate or monopolize the crossfire exchange; it simply means that you maximize every opportunity.

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

Your language should be economical, starting with sentences that are short and to the point. The argument briefs you prepare should have two or three reasons in support of each position rather than five or ten reasons. The evidence or example under each of your headings should also be short. Use single-page briefs or even briefs that fit on a single note card. The brevity of the argument brief will serve as a reminder to avoid lengthy responses.

Business communication coach Barbara Gibson emphasizes the importance of eliminating BTC:

“What? You don't know what a BTC is? Surely that must mean that I am smarter, more in-the-know, cutting edge, than you, mustn't it? Er ... well ... actually, I made it up. You see, I've somehow worked in or with acronym-loving industries for most of my career, including telecommunications and technology. So, in order to hammer home my point that acronyms and insider jargon are Barriers To Communication, I made up my own and began to interrupt the alphabet-speakers with, I'm sorry, but that's a BTC. Or in meetings, I'd hold up a BTC little sign. Since, of course, my acronym had no meaning to anyone but me, the speaker wouldn't have a clue what I was talking about. It was really fun watching them puzzle about it, sometimes try to fake it, and finally ask what a BTC is. And it was the most effective way to get them to understand what they were doing to their audiences.”

MAXIMIZING THE NONVERBAL

Most communication texts (whether for public speaking, small group, or interpersonal communication) report the findings of Albert Mehrabian and his research associates in a classic study presented in the 1967 *Journal of Consulting Psychology*. The assumption of this study is that 100 percent of social meaning comes from lexical cues (the literal meaning of words), vocal cues (the way the words are vocally produced), and facial/physical nonverbal cues. Mehrabian found that only 7 percent of meaning comes