LAYMEN'S TERMS

KEEP IT SIMPLE

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ABOUT US

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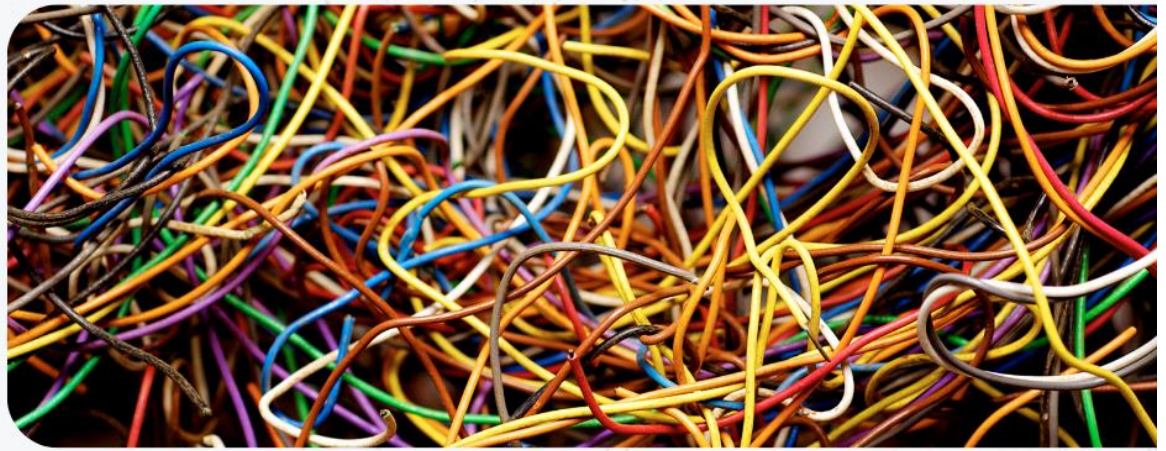
DANGERS OF COMPLEXITY



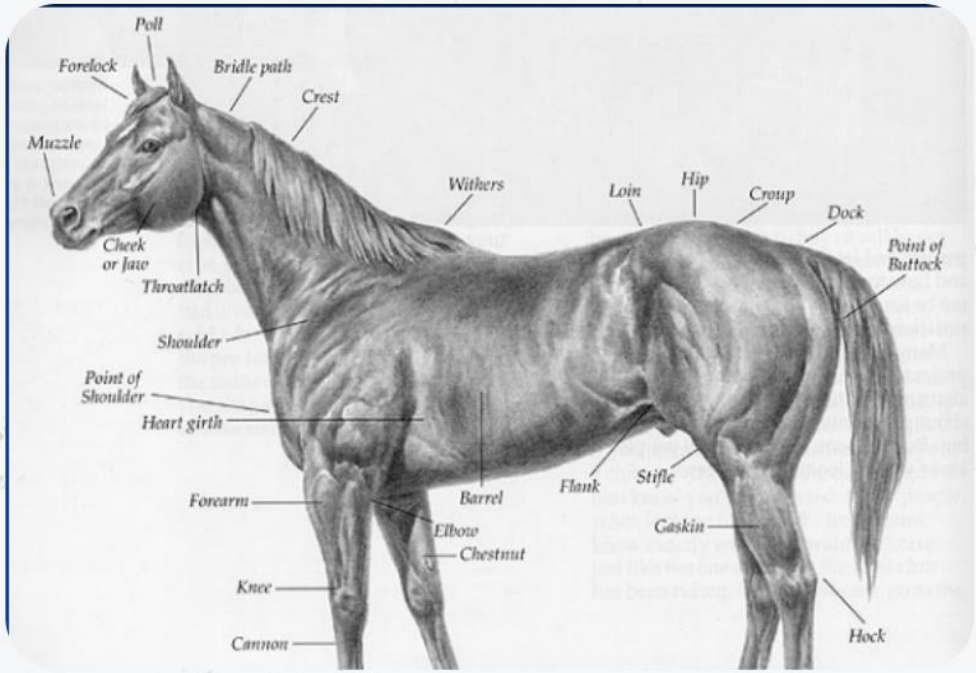
Requires Effort

Dopamine Addicts

Lose Attention/ Distracting

BACK TO BASICS

We have to know the basics —
We have to know what everyone else sees as basic



Curse of Knowledge

Identify Audience

Define Terms

LEAD WITH CONCLUSION

Tell Them What You're Going to Tell Them

Tell Them

Tell Them What You Told Them

SIMPLICITY ANCHOR

CLARITY

COMPLEXITY

- Use big words sparingly - Learn when to toss them
- 8th Grade Reading Level
  - Shorter sentences, paragraphs, chapters

ABOUT JARGON...

Identify Jargon

Acronyms = Alphabet Soup

CONSIDER CULTURE

What's rude?

Think Big Picture

WORD CHOICE

BEST WORDS

MORE WORDS

“If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now.”

—Woodrow Wilson

TELL STORIES

STORIES STICK 22X MORE THAN FACTS

Dr. Jennifer Aaker, Stamford University

GAME TIME

LEARN SOMEONE ELSE'S JARGON
IDENTIFY YOUR JARGON

QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU SO MUCH!

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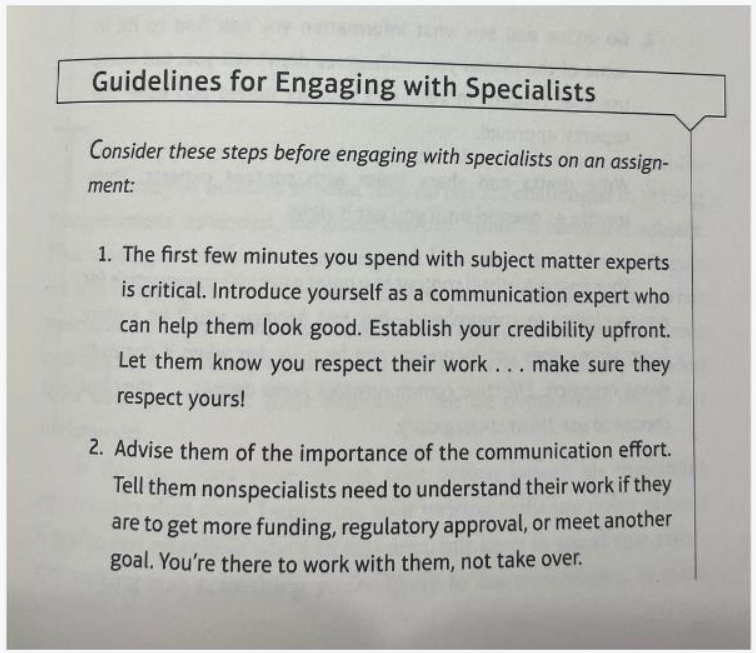
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

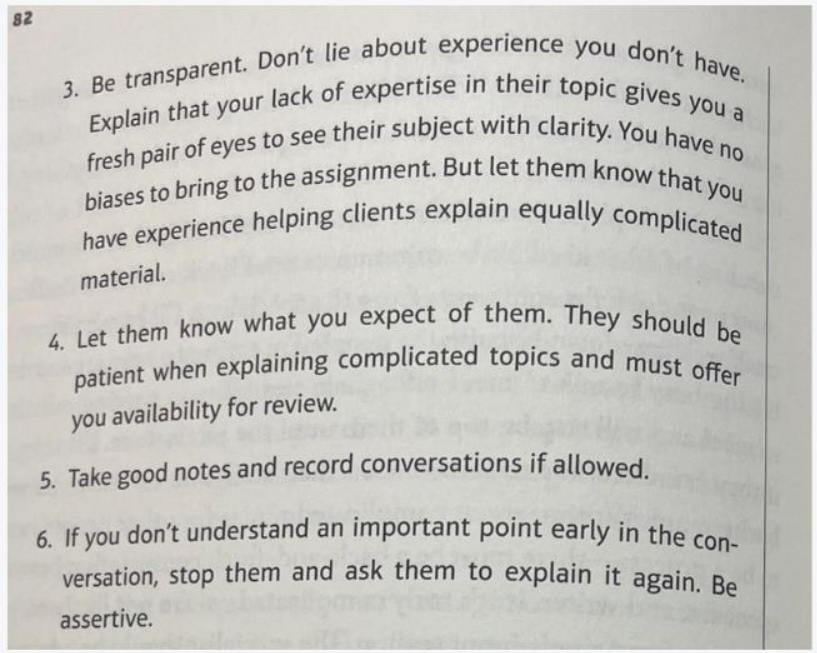
GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGING WITH SPECIALISTS



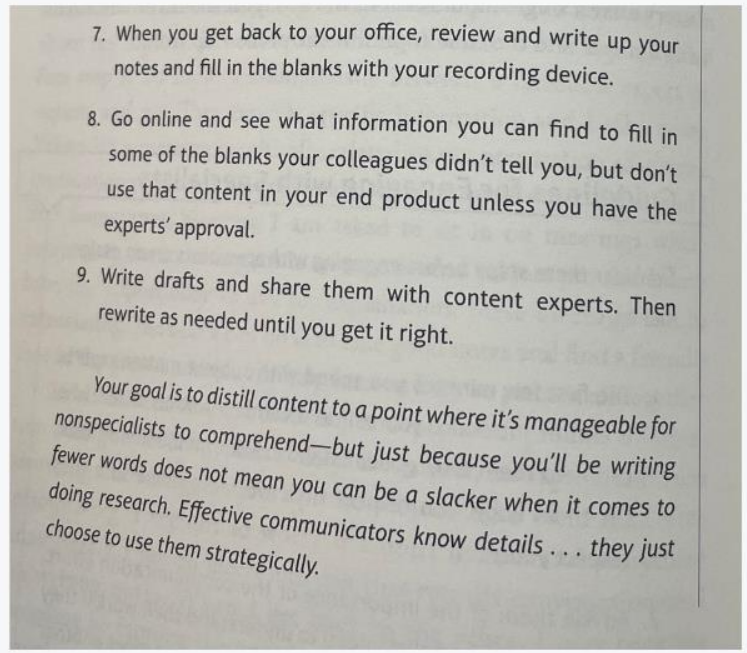
Guidelines for Engaging with Specialists

Consider these steps before engaging with specialists on an assignment:

1. The first few minutes you spend with subject matter experts is critical. Introduce yourself as a communication expert who can help them look good. Establish your credibility upfront. Let them know you respect their work . . . make sure they respect yours!
2. Advise them of the importance of the communication effort. Tell them nonspecialists need to understand their work if they are to get more funding, regulatory approval, or meet another goal. You're there to work with them, not take over.



3. Be transparent. Don't lie about experience you don't have. Explain that your lack of expertise in their topic gives you a fresh pair of eyes to see their subject with clarity. You have no biases to bring to the assignment. But let them know that you have experience helping clients explain equally complicated material.
4. Let them know what you expect of them. They should be patient when explaining complicated topics and must offer you availability for review.
5. Take good notes and record conversations if allowed.
6. If you don't understand an important point early in the conversation, stop them and ask them to explain it again. Be assertive.



7. When you get back to your office, review and write up your notes and fill in the blanks with your recording device.
8. Go online and see what information you can find to fill in some of the blanks your colleagues didn't tell you, but don't use that content in your end product unless you have the experts' approval.
9. Write drafts and share them with content experts. Then rewrite as needed until you get it right.

Your goal is to distill content to a point where it's manageable for nonspecialists to comprehend—but just because you'll be writing fewer words does not mean you can be a slacker when it comes to doing research. Effective communicators know details . . . they just choose to use them strategically.

From *Super Communicator* by Frank J. Pietrucha