

SIX STEPS TO RELIEVE THE MOST COMMON MEMORY WORRY

SORRY, WHAT'S YOUR NAME AGAIN? • ROGER SEIP • FREEDOM SPEAKERS AND TRAINERS

With the conference season almost upon us, memory consultant Roger Seip shares his expertise on helping people learn how to remember and associate names and faces. In this article, he makes it easier than most of us thought possible – read on – and enjoy!

If you live in fear of forgetting prospects' names, sometimes within mere seconds of being introduced to them, you're not alone. Surveys show that 83% of the population worries about their inability to recall people's names. Ironically, while most of us hate having our names forgotten or mispronounced, the majority of us claim, "I'm just not good at remembering names or putting faces together with names," when we meet people again.

If you have difficulty recalling names, you know the two most common scenarios are forgetting the name instantaneously upon being introduced to someone new, and failing to recall the name of someone you've met and interacted with in the past and should know but just can't pull up from your memory bank.

Forgetting names becomes more than just an embarrassing social faux pas in sales. Straining to recall a name can so preoccupy you that you are unable to fully pay attention to your client or prospect. He or she may perceive you not only as unfocused and easily distracted, but also as not very interested if you're unable to devote your full attention to him or her. Even worse, if you forget the name of a client with whom you've worked in the

past, he or she may view your memory lapse as a betrayal of trust, which can cost you a great deal of money if that client severs the relationship.

Integrating Learning Styles to Improve Name Recall

While common, this frustrating phenomenon can be relatively easy to overcome when you commit to taking steps to improve your memory. The most important key to really effective learning of any kind is understanding that there are three learning styles: 1) visual, 2) auditory, and 3) kinesthetic (physically interactive). The more you can apply all three of these styles to a task, the more quickly and solidly you will learn anything.

Practice each of the following steps to improve your name recollection in every sales and social situation.

Step 1. When you're first introduced to someone, look closely at his or her face and try to find something unique about it. Whether you find a distinctive quality or not is irrelevant; by really looking for a memorable characteristic in a new face, you're incorporating the visual learning style. A word of advice: if you do find something that really stands out about someone's face, don't say anything!



Within minutes of meeting someone new, it's generally a bad idea to say anything because you just might be thinking out loud something like, "Whoa! That's a huge nose!"

Step 2. The next step utilizes both auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. When you meet someone, slow down for five seconds and concentrate on listening to him or her. Focus on the prospect and repeat his or her name back in a conversational manner, such as, "Hello, George. It's nice to meet you, George." Also make sure to give a good firm handshake, which establishes a physical connection with the prospect.

Step 3. Creating a mental picture of someone's name incorporates the visual sense again. Many people have names that already are pictures. Consider Robin, Jay,



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People can't remember names for one main reason: they're not paying attention. The most important thing to know about this memory process is that even when it doesn't work, it still works! It forces you (and maybe only at a subconscious level) to try to remember.

Matt or Dawn to name just a few. Some names will require you to play with them a bit to create a picture. Ken, for example, may not bring an immediate image to your mind, but a "can" is very close. Or you might envision a Ken doll. The point is not to create the best, most creative mental image ever, so don't get caught up in your head during this step of the process, thinking, "Oh, that's not a very good picture, what's a better one?" The worst thing you can do when learning is to stress yourself out and over think the process. If an image doesn't come to you right away, skip it and do it later. You'll undo all of your good efforts if you're staring dumbly at your prospect, thinking, "Hold still for

a minute while I try to turn your name into a picture!"

Step 4. Once you've identified a mental image that you can associate with a person's name, the next step is to "glue" that image to the person's face or upper body. This bridges that gap many people experience between being able to recall faces but not the names that belong to those faces. If you met a new prospect named "Rosalind," for example, you might have broken her name down into the memorable image of "rose on land." Now you must create a mental picture that will stick with you as long as you need it and pop into your head every time you meet her; this should be something fun, even a little odd, that will bring "rose on land" to mind when you see her face. You

might even imagine something totally absurd such as her buried up to her neck in earth, with roses scattered around her, for example. Because you created the image, it will come up next time you see her and enable you to recall her name.

Step 5. At the end of the conversation, integrate auditory learning by repeating the prospect's name one more time, but don't over use someone's name in an effort to place it more firmly in your mind. Use the prospect's name only at the beginning of the conversation, and then again at the end. If you feel like you can do so naturally, you might insert the person's name once or twice in a natural fashion during the course of the conversation as

well. But if you've ever had a stereotypically pushy salesperson use your name a dozen times in a five minute conversation, you know how annoying, even weird, this can be, so don't over do it.

Step 6. Writing is a form of kinesthetic learning; you're getting a part of your body involved in the learning process. So if you're really serious about wanting to remember people's names for the long term, keep a name journal or a log of important people you meet, and review it periodically.

Forget Me Not; It's the Effort that Matters Most

The most important thing to know about this memory process is that even when it doesn't work, it still works! For example, if you get stuck trying to make a picture out of someone's name, skip it for now. The next day, when you have a chance, give the matter a few minutes of concentrated thought. If you still can't get a picture, stop and take up the matter a week later. Even if you're still unsuccessful at creating a mental image, you've thought about the prospect's name so much, there's now no way you'll ever forget it! So you've actually accomplished what you set out to do in the first place.

People can't remember names for one main reason: they're just not paying attention. This process forces you to think. If, for example, you struggle with the step of creating a mental picture, the other steps – looking at the prospect closely, shaking his or her hand confidently and repeating the name a few times – are easy to do, will solidify the name in your memory and will ultimately convey a positive image of you to clients and prospects. That positive image will certainly make you memorable to prospects, bringing your name and business to the forefront when they are considering your type of products. Chances are it will help you to close more deals and increase your bottom line. ♦

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