

Briefing Tips

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Briefing Tips



Briefing Tips

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**064 So I wanted to take a few minutes to talk about some briefing tips.

Intelligence Briefing Tips -1

- Follow the ABC's
 - **Accuracy**
Well researched and documented, try not to ad lib too much.
 - **Brevity**
Say only what you need to say; **tailor time to briefing not briefing to time.**
 - **Clarity**
Make it understandable to your audience.



James S. Major. *Communicating with Intelligence*.
Second Edition. London, 2014. Rowman and Littlefield.

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**065 A general rule of thumb is to stick with the ABCs. So, Accuracy. Ensure accuracy by doing careful research and analysis. Make your line of argumentation, your judgments, make sense, and you can back up what you're saying. Do your homework. So it's okay to say when you don't know something and that you will get back to your audience on an answer. The worst thing to do is to pretend you know something that you don't. If you ad lib too much, you could get caught saying something that is not correct and someone might call you on it.

Brevity. Be as brief as you can. Know when to stop. You should always attempt to tailor the time to your briefing, not your briefing to the time, meaning that if your briefing is only 20 minutes long and you were

given 30 minutes, stop at 20 minutes. There's no need to try to talk for the full 30 minutes. When you're done, you're done. Give people back their time.

Clarity. Use plain and simple and easy-to-understand words.

Intelligence Briefing Tips -2

Intelligence Briefing Tips -2

- Follow the ABC's
 - **Appearance**
First impressions do count, don't be a distraction.
 - **Bearing**
Have good demeanor and poise, demonstrate authority and confidence.
 - **Cognizant**
Know your material and your environment.



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**066 Some additional ABCs.

Appearance. Look sharp. First impressions do count. Don't be distracting either by pacing back and forth or having loose change in your pocket or too many gestures with your hands. Look people in the eye when you speak to them.

Bearing means keep your poise. It's totally natural to get butterflies, to be nervous. That happens to everyone. Just accept it, embrace it, and say it's all good. However, if you know your

material and you practice out loud, which is strongly encourage, then that will help. Try to demonstrate authority and confidence.

Cognizant means know your subject, your environment and your audience. In other words, for your environment, try to figure out what room you will be in, that you're going to be briefing in, and how many people will be there, and what the room looks like, and what the audio and visual setup will be. Try to understand the acoustics before you get in there.

Axioms for Intelligence Analysts

Axioms for Intelligence Analysts

- Believe in your own professional judgements.
- It is better to be mistaken than to be wrong.
- The Consumer does not care how much you know, just inform on what is important.
- Do not take the editing process too seriously.



<http://www.pherson.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Improving-Intelligence-Analysis-with-ACH.pdf>

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**067 I want to conclude with some axioms for intelligence analysts. The first is: Believe in your own professional judgments. So it's always good to be open to alternative points of view. However, if you

believe something, say it and stand by it. Be able to explain why you believe it. You might see things from a different perspective or be in the weeds when your boss doesn't have the time, and if you don't believe in your own judgments, nobody will.

It's better to be mistaken than to be wrong. So if new facts come in that make your initial assessment inaccurate, just admit it and move on to assimilate the new information. In this case, you don't want to hold the line to your argument.

The consumer does not care how much you know, just inform on what is important. Be humble. Being in intelligence as a cyber intelligence analyst or another type of intelligence analyst is not about being the smartest person in the room. It's not about one-upping the next person or competing with others or holding on to that one piece of information you think you know sets you apart. Rather it is about sharing what is important to get the mission done and what the policymaker or decision-maker needs to know, period.

Don't take the editing process too seriously also. Everyone puts a lot into their work and it's important to be proud of your work, but you have to appropriately find the balance, which is basically something that we hold dear where I work, and that is called Feedback is a Gift. So if you are unwilling to take feedback or have an angry reaction to

constructive feedback or get defensive, it's going to be detrimental to you and the mission. Remember to accept alternative views. Take ownership of your mistakes, but recognize that you really don't own a product. It's the company's or agency's that you work for. You have to be able to remove yourself from that and not take things too personally.

Notices

Notices

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