

EPISODE 122: ARE YOU NUMBING THEM WITH NUMBERS?

1. RELATE THEM TO SOMETHING FAMILIAR

- From ABCNews.go.com:
 - “Meteorologist Ryan Maue of weathermodels.com calculates that Hurricane Florence is forecast to dump about 18 trillion gallons of rain over a week over North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Maryland. It doesn't include rain after it dissipates and its remnants circle back to the northeast. That much rain is 2.4 trillion cubic feet (68 billion cubic meters).”
 - But then they went on: “That’s enough to cover Manhattan with nearly 3,800 feet of water, more than twice as high as the island's tallest building, One World Trade Center.”
 - “Florence's 18 trillion gallons is as much water as there is in the entire Chesapeake Bay.”
 - “It's also enough to cover the entire state of Texas with nearly 4 inches of water.”
 - “North Carolina alone is forecast to get 9.6 trillion gallons of rain, enough to cover the Tar Heel state in about 10 inches of rain.”
- Size of the sun relative to the earth.
 - “The Sun has a diameter of about 865,000 miles, while Earth's diameter is 7,917.5 miles. The diameter of the Sun is thus 109 times greater than the Earth's diameter.”
 - The sun is so big, you could fit more than a million Earths inside of it.
- What’s familiar to your audience? Do the math and relate to something they know
- Remember to use the metric system outside the U.S.!

2. VISUALIZE THEM

- Take advantage of the visual nature of memory. Images stick, numbers don’t.
- Learn to create a visual picture with words.
- Four goals when presenting:
 - Easy to follow.
 - Easy to understand.
 - Easy to believe.
 - Easy to remember.
- Use a prop or infographic to visualize your numbers.
 - Is it SIMPLE?
 - Does it convey a SINGLE IDEA or have you crowded your visual with other information?
 - Is it UNDERSTANDABLE to others?

3. TURN THEM INTO A STORY

- The average person can hold a set of about 7 digits in their working memory at any given time. But can remember the complete plot of a three-hour movie.
- Stories stick, so take advantage of the power of story.

4. PERSONALIZE THEM

- WDTM: Why does this matter?
- Numbers numb us because they seem so impersonal.
- Make your numbers *personal*.

5. MAKE THEM TIME-SENSITIVE

- We're all time-conscious: Schedules, deadlines, competing demands. Relating your numbers to time can make them seem relevant, even urgent.
- Every 60 seconds:
 - McDonalds sells 4,500 hamburgers
 - 15,000 songs are downloaded from iTunes
 - 2700 smartphones are sold
 - 2.3 million searches are made on Google
- "In the time we've been sitting here..."

Sources mentioned in this episode:

[Communication Guys, Episode 108: "Tell Me a Story or Tell Me Goodbye, Part 1"](#)

[Communication Guys, Episode 109: "Tell Me a Story or Tell Me Goodbye Part 2"](#)

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