

Clear Communication Company

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Communication Quips & Quotes

Count Your Junk Words Before They Do!

I count junk words as a teaching technique! I learned this when I first worked with professional athletes. They are notorious for their frequent use of “**uh**” and “**you know**”. They are also accustomed to being coached. Counting junk words is like counting your errors or strikeouts! It helps you get rid of them.

I have been to Toastmasters meetings where one person is called the Wizard of Ah's - the junk word counter - another learning technique. Your first step in getting rid of junk words is to count them. If this sounds elementary, be warned. If you have more than an occasional junk word, the audience will start counting! You want to be remembered for your ideas, your plans, your integrity, and your vision. You do not want to be remembered as **Mr. 28 uh's** or **Miss 12 you know's!**

I am sometimes asked, “How many junk words can you get away with before they start counting and lose your message?” I do not know the exact number, but I have a goal for you - **zero tolerance for**

junk words. Get rid of all of them to be safe.

Here is the process I recommend to help you **Trash Those Junk Words!** Record a presentation or listen to a voice mail that you have sent. Count your junk words! Try the presentation or voice mail again. When you feel or sense a junk word coming, **STOP TALKING!** That's a dramatic way of saying, **pause**. Then you can start talking again with a valuable word rather than a junk word.

Talk like you write, not like you think. I confess to you that I think junk words all the time, but I never deliver them aloud. Remember that you cannot speak as rapidly as you think. If you try to stay apace with the speed of your brain, your output will be very difficult to follow. Your goal is to deliver aloud like your final draft on the word processor.

How do you hold all this together? By remaining focused. My best success with helping athletes get rid of junk words comes when they focus

themselves using eye contact.

For practice, read aloud the message in the box below. Then read it again, substituting a pause every time you get to a junk word (**in bold**). Practice this exercise and then apply the principles to all of your messages. The audience will no longer spend its time counting your junk words!

C. Mike Jousan

Our new **uh** program will add significantly **you know** to our **uh** bottom line. **and uh** We can move to the top five **uh** companies in **uh** customer service rankings. We can enter the **uh** emerging markets in **you know** India and **uh** Brazil. **and** Our shareholder value **uh** will be enhanced.

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Call 1-800-544-9551 for more information and pricing.

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