



- State what are the listener's interests, risk or opportunities. Example: "This is her file, but we have an interest and have been fully involved in preparing the regulation. Good collaboration."
- State whatever decision, key message or information item you want left in the listener's mind at the end. Example: "We recommend you supporting her."
- State what the listener might say. Example: "You might want to note that we have been fully involved." Or "You might want to note that this completes the policy work we began with her two years ago."

The Bullet: Out of these points, create a quick 15-second bullet message to start

subversive (what are friends for in a bureaucratic setting?). Your audience may also be an argumentative person who likes to think out loud and you, by your choice of words or even mention of someone else, set them off. No matter what you do, interruptions will occur. Here are some strategies for dealing with them:

**Control:** Whose meeting is it? The interruption may come from the person in charge and so, stand back, and let it flow.

**Bridge:** Answer the question and bridge back to the briefing, as in "Yes, it is was \$350 million last year and our recommendation here is to move that forward to \$395 million." This is bridging.

**Deflect:** Especially if there is a peer interruption, deflect to later: "I can get back to you." Or "I don't have that here but will follow up."

**Time Closure:** Try to remind the listener or interrupter of the time constraint as in "I am sure we can get to that once we work this through."

**Life Jacket:** Look for your boss for help to get things back on track.

**Go with Flow:** Depending on your level and relationship with the listener, an interruption may well open a Pandora's box of other issues way beyond your level of control or pay grade. There are times that these discussions are useful ways for decision makers to think out loud or sound off. Just understand that it is the use who is being served and not your need to get to the end of your piece of brilliant briefing.

## Mistakes to Avoid

**Speaking Too Fast:** An even pace is easier to hear and listen too. It is a common error, mostly generated by anxiety in the speaker, to think that talking fast will add more information. The reality is that people hear only so much and absorb only part of what they hear. Further, someone talking fast sounds panicky or anxious, reducing the professionalism of the delivery.

**Lack of Focus:**

opportunity as in "The details on this are in the Briefing Note and we can perhaps get to that another time." Or "I don't think these matters will come up as you only have ten minutes on this one."

Being Robotic: Nothing diminishes the effectiveness of an oral briefing than a monotone, rote-like diction. The aim is to be conversational and relaxed, even though the circumstances are often not relaxing. The objective is to make sure the listener hears and finds useful what you have to say to meet his or her needs. It is also to create a good impression on the listener so that they see your advice as helpful and trustworthy.