

Exercise 5: Five-Sentence Briefing

When you're addressing a handful of VIPs, plan exactly what you want them to take away from your remarks. How?

View your briefing as a ladder with each rung as a new point you want to implant in your listeners. Start at the base of the ladder with your opening premise, and build on it by assembling vital facts that lead toward your conclusion.

To fit your briefing into this tight format, streamline your message. Eliminate unnecessary or ancillary points. You'll know you've prepared well when you've reduced the body of your briefing into just five sentences. Below is an example.

CONCLUSION:

- 5.
- 4.
- 3.
- 2.
- 1.



OPENING PREMISE:

CONCLUSION: We should hire a safety consultant, beef up HR and redouble our employee training and communication efforts.

5. We've received four anonymous complaints from employees about safety violations.
4. OSHA has notified us that it intends to monitor our safety practices.
3. We've repeatedly ignored our outside counsel's recommendations.
2. Turnover in our HR department was at 40 percent in the last year.
1. We've been hit with three employment lawsuits in the last year.

OPENING PREMISE: Our legal compliance procedures need an overhaul.

