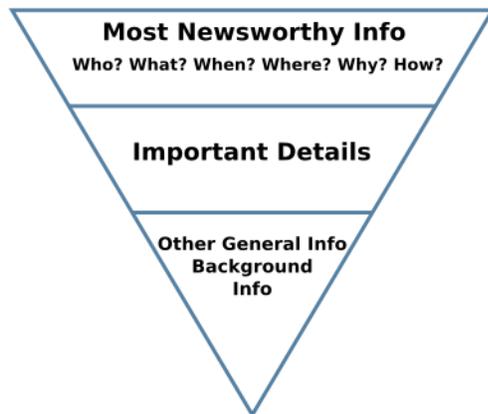


# Communicating using the inverted pyramid style

By A. Grant Lee, MCIInst.M., RPM  
Executive Director  
Canadian Institute of Marketing



When writing storylines for advertisements, video and blogs, don't wait to the end to make your point. Make it at the beginning and taper your message so the least valuable knowledge is placed at the end. Attention span of audiences has diminished significantly, in part (in my opinion) to the many distractions competing for the attention of an individual at any moment. Think about how comfortable and appealing that mobile device feels in your hand while someone is speaking to you. There is always that expectation of a vibration or ring tone. Many hear, but few listen.

The inverted pyramid is a style of writing used by newspaper journalists at a time when editors would adjust copy to accommodate space on newspaper sheets. To make room for an article, editors would begin cutting information from the bottom up. I suggest that the style is relevant today, albeit in an expanded notion.

In a time when people claim that lifestyles have become more complicated, the art of marketing communications is changing. By means of graphics, video and copy, marketers are messaging audiences through traditional and new media introduced through television, radio and the 'net. I believe that marketing communications can be more effective if the inverted pyramid is applied to verbal and non-verbal messaging.

To demonstrate the verbal use of the inverted pyramid style of communications, consider the 30 second elevator pitch. People seeking employment or going through changes in careers, are advised to have a brief pitch ready to answer who you are and what you are seeking. Employees and employers are advised to have a 30 second elevator pitch ready when asked about their business. The inverted pyramid can be used to structure the pitch. If you are still talking when the eyes of the audience start to glaze, you can move on knowing that you made your point before disinterest settled in. A good elevator pitch should last no longer than a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds.

In marketing communications, the inverted pyramid is either unknown or forgotten by many. It is more important today than ever before.

*Grant Lee is a Registered Professional Marketer and executive director of the Canadian Institute of Marketing. He is president of AGL Marketing Limited, a full service marketing consultancy providing*

services to clients in Canada and the USA. Contact him at [glee@aglmarketing.com](mailto:glee@aglmarketing.com); see his profile on LinkedIn; on the web at [www.aglmarketing.com](http://www.aglmarketing.com)...

###