

Play the linking game

By Daniel Theyagu - Nov 1, 2005
ST Recruit

YESTERDAY, I discussed the different types of memory people have. In today's article, I will tell you some ways in which you can improve your memory.

Creative sentences



One method of remembering things is to form creative sentences. For example, you are memorising the different classifications of length, which are: kilometre, hectometre, decametre, metre, decimetre, centimetre and millimetre.

You can take the first letter of each word above and make it into a simple creative sentence that the brain can remember easily, such as: King Henry's Daughter Makes Deadly Careless Mistakes.

This is easier to remember as the sentence will trigger your brain into remembering the units of measurement. You may have learnt this technique in school to remember the colours of the rainbow. This can be recalled with a creative sentence like this: Richard Of York Gave Birth In Vain.

By taking the first letter of each of the word above, you will have R.O.Y.G.B.I.V, which can be translated into: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet.

You can use a variant of this technique in the office to remember vital information such as a password to open a computer program. Let's say you have an alpha-numeric password like db45yrfm.

By forming this into a creative sentence you will find it easier to recall the password. Something like: David Bought 45 Yellow Roses For Me. Naturally, this is easier than trying to remember db45yrfm. The important thing to note here is that the sentence you create must be funny and abstract so that your right brain registers it effectively and you can recall it anytime.

Visual imagination

With this method, you need to visualise the things that you want to remember. Note that developing a razor-sharp memory is all about improving your powers of observation.

Suppose you need to go to the supermarket to buy the following items: Ham, eggs, calendar, cottage-cheese, newspaper, chicken breast fillet, tomato ketchup, a loaf of French bread, spinach, yoghurt, dishwashing liquid.

You can write all these down on a piece of paper or spend a few minutes memorising this list. It is not hard to do this. All you have to do is to translate the information into something abstract and silly that your brain can remember and recall. This is how you can do it!

Visualise yourself making a journey and along the way someone throws a piece of ham and an egg at you. You have to clean this off with a calendar (now that does sound silly?). As you are doing this, you notice that the calendar is made of cottage cheese.

Since you are feeling hungry, you decide to eat the cottage cheese with some newspaper. You still feel hungry and decide to eat a large chicken breast fillet with some tomato ketchup. As you are doing this, someone takes a French loaf and hits you over the head with it. You turn around and see Popeye the Sailor man with the French loaf and he is eating spinach. You offer him some yoghurt which tastes like dishwashing liquid.

How can you apply this technique in the office? Say you have 10 things you have to do in the office today. They are:

- Photocopy minutes of meeting;
- Call air-conditioner maintenance for servicing;
- Book air ticket for the boss;
- Order water for the cooler;
- Meet Jane for lunch;
- Send watch for repair;
- Collect parcel from post office;
- Pay phone bill;
- Schedule interview for job applicant with the boss; and
- Return library book.

To remember this, here is what you can do: Visualise that you are dreaming and in the dream you see a huge photocopier machine (this will remind you to photocopy the minutes of the meeting); and you notice that the machine feels hot.

So you decide to install an air-conditioner to keep it cool. When you do this, you will remember to call the maintenance company. Now go on to make a story to link the remaining items.

The visual imagination technique is excellent for remembering huge chunks of information. All you need to do is to link the first item to the next in one long chain and soon you will be exercising your memory.

The more you engage in this activity, the more active your brain becomes — and you are on your way to having an excellent memory.

Next: How to remember things in a random order.

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