Q. I don’t have time for ramblers who fail to edit themselves. How do I express to someone that the clock is ticking on my attention span?

A. Don’t forget the role of body language in this. Slowly angling yourself away from someone or subtly moving away little by little tells them you’re ready and anxious to go.

Conversationally, I’ll rely on the trick of forcing the big picture on them if they’re slow in getting to it themselves. I’ll say, “OK, what’s the action plan then?” This lets them know that the talk needs to be about getting a result. Another useful sentence is, “What are you concluding from this?” This gives them the feeling they’re teaching me something while forcing the issue to a faster conclusion.