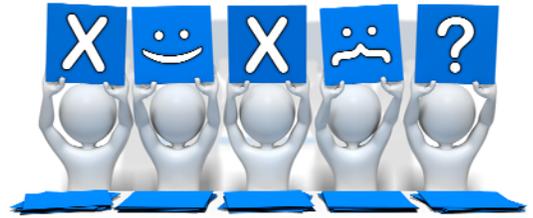


## But What If They Don't Like It?

Strategies for Persuading People to Agree With and Support Your Ideas

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Gaining others' acceptance of your ideas can be difficult, and even downright frustrating without the proper approach. Why do you think so many companies look to a marketing or advertising agency to promote their products and services?



Planning an effective persuasive strategy can be daunting; yet, with a few tips on how to do it, there is little reason why you can't soon be on your way to winning the support, getting the "thumbs-up", or whatever it is you need to move your ideas forward in your organization or with those whose support you seek.

### Plot Your Persuasive Strategy

In developing the strategy you will use to persuade others to agree with and support your ideas, it is important to understand not only to whom you will be talking but also how you will be communicating with them. Dedicate time to learn about your audience's vocabulary, social norms, and presentation preferences – as well as your own communication style, personality traits, and speech habits – will help you avoid misinterpretation and ensure the best possible presentation of your ideas.

Once you feel that you have a grasp of your own characteristics and those of your audience, you can apply four strategies of getting people to:

- **Listen to your idea,**
- **Understand your idea,**
- **Be willing to try your idea,** and
- **Be ready to act on it.**

Let's take a more in-depth look at each step and how to incorporate it into your overall strategy.

**Get them to listen.** Time is the most valuable currency. You need to know how

to use your audience's time wisely, *before* you present to them, so that they will listen to you and commit themselves to your idea. Your first step to getting your audience to listen to your idea is to capture their attention. Several ways you can capture their attention are:

- Create a buzz to build anticipation. Think billboards with exciting imagery and a website address – it makes you curious, right?
- Use humor.
- Apply examples or analogies.
- Create your own narrative.
- Address others' concerns by connecting them with how your idea solves their problem.

*For example:* "A more-consistent social media strategy is like the sand dropping in an hourglass. Our messages will flow consistently and steadily until they reach a volume people will pay attention to." (Idea = more-consistent social media implementation.)

**Get them to understand.** Once you have their attention, you need to ensure your listeners fully understand your idea. A tried-and-true technique to simplify your dialog is to use *Somebody – Wanted – But – So*, where *Somebody* is "Who will benefit?" *Wanted* is "Identify the need," *But* is "What prevents the needs from being filled?" and *So* is "Your Idea," or the solution to the problem. Check for areas where statements may need to be broken down into easier-to-digest components, but

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always aim to keep it simple to avoid confusion.

*For example:* “Dog owners wanted a better fastener for their dogs’ leashes. But the major pet companies say such a fastener costs too much to manufacture. So my idea of an ‘Easy-Slip Adjusta-Fastener<sup>®</sup>’ allows our small company to make one change in our machine process to inexpensively produce both standard fasteners and an ‘Adjusta-Fastener<sup>®</sup>’ to efficiently capture this additional dog-owner market.” (Idea = new product—Easy-Slip Adjusta-Fastener<sup>®</sup>)

**Get them to try it.** Now that your audience has listened to and understands your idea, it is important that you motivate them to try it out. One of the most effective ways to do this is to explain how your idea solves a problem they have. Incorporate logic into your discourse (such as historical data, sales averages, calculated outcomes) to convince them your idea is worth it. Or, appeal to their emotions by constructing a visualization that is personally relevant for them. Create a few powerful statements with logic and emotion that will open the door just enough to get the audience to see that they want to open it all the way.

*For example:* “Entrepreneurs must weigh heavily the benefits of a new investment with the ROI (return on investment) they receive. You’ve invested your time and money in this networking event to learn how to display your marketing materials more effectively. Take this diagram and set up your vendor table next week the way I suggest in the diagram. See if your ‘engage’ rate

improves. I’ll follow up with you next Friday to get your feedback and take your testimonials for fully marketing my model through your referrals.” (Idea = model for more-effective vendor table setup.)

**Get them to act on it.** This is the most significant persuasive strategy, and can be the one that makes – or breaks – your idea success. To help propel your audience to action, you need to clearly explain what they have to gain and how many steps are required to attain the result. Secondly, your listeners need to feel that you have invested your own resources and energy into the idea, especially if you are asking them to take the plunge with you. To get them to act on your idea, your strategy may include one or two requests for people to take specific actions – using active and demonstrable verbs rather than those that encourage reflection or deliberation.

*For example:* “Pull out your mobile devices now. Purchase and download my mileage tracking application. It’s saved me hours of end-of-month accounting reconciliation time and effort in my own business. You will see that with four easy steps your month-end accounting for mileage and expenses will be reduced by hours, too. What’s that savings worth to you?”

Now that you have a few techniques for how to create a persuasive strategy, make the time to apply one or more of them to your own ideas. It may take a significant planning investment on your part, but then again your idea is worth it, isn’t it?

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