



## Pitching a project?

# Go from Fizzle to Sizzle and Get to Yes !

It's the big day. The proposal you've sweated over is finally ready to present. Your Power Point slides are perfect. You're even wearing your lucky tie (or blouse). So why do you have that gnawing feeling that somehow the proposal you are pitching is going to get shot down in the first round of decision making?

Gaining acceptance for your project is not just about presenting facts and figures. Unless you know how to avoid resistance, and how to position your proposal from the angle of "It's not about you, it's about them," walking into that meeting is like throwing yourself to the lions.

Presenting just the facts fails to persuade because it only appeals to the logical part of us. Quite frankly, logic often has little to do with decision-making. Emotions still lead the way, with facts used as the rational justification.

### What Does Resistance Really Mean?

At first glance, resistance can seem like it's only about being contrary or obstructionistic. Scratch the surface and you'll quickly discover that it's typically "code" for something else. The meaning of resistance is often, "You must have your own agenda," or "Why should I risk making a mistake in trusting what you say?"

Understanding ahead of time what the code means gives you an edge in preparing your presentation. Let's take a look at exactly what you can do to put yourself ahead of the game in winning approval for your proposal, and minimizing resistance before you make your pitch.

### How Do You Reduce Or Eliminate Resistance In The First Place?

You have to discover what objections you are likely to encounter. Ask yourself, "Who is most likely to resist and why?" To overcome resistance, you need to know *their* story before you tell *yours*.

Their story is what is influencing their behavior. Miss this critical piece of information and all the



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Power Point slides in the world won't help you get to yes. Find out what preconceived ideas already exist about your project or service. If you can't talk to key people, you can still predict the standard objections of not enough time or money.



#### Here is a tip --

**Shelle Rose Charvet, author of *Presenting Ideas To Skeptical People* ([www.successtrategies.com](http://www.successtrategies.com)), suggests in your preparations, ask, "Do you mind if I ask you a question? What's important about \_\_\_\_\_ from your point of view and why is it important?"**

When people answer the question "Why?" they give you one of two kinds of answers. One refers to what they'll gain – "Why is increasing efficiency important? We can do more with less, increase our production, increase sales." On the other hand, someone else might answer that same question with what they'll prevent or avoid – "Why is increasing efficiency important?" "Because if we don't, the competition will kick our butts." Knowing if the person you need to convince uses the language of gaining and getting, or preventing and avoiding, tells you what kind of language to use to match their way of thinking.

#### What Does Your Client Or Boss Really Want To Hear?

Decision makers are up to their eyeballs in data, statistics and Power Point presentations. What they really want to know is, "Is this going to work the way you say it is?" For that, they are looking for you to give them faith that you will come through. Faith is best conveyed by meeting doubts head on. Let your pitch demonstrate that you've thought through potential obstacles. Use examples, brief stories or case studies to illustrate and add life to the bullet points on your slides.

#### If You Blow It, Can You Pitch Your Idea Again?

Surprisingly, the answer is often yes. Don't assume the topic is closed because of a setback. Charvet advocates, "Phone the decision maker after a few days and leave a message like, "You know what we discussed the other day? Well, I've been thinking and I have another idea," as a way to reopen the topic.

Here is a powerhouse of a question you can ask either before or during presenting your idea, "What would need to happen for you to say yes to this idea?" Their response will tell you exactly what is needed. This information is often the key you need to unlock the "Yes" answer hiding behind a previously closed door. After all, "It's not about you, it's about them!"

### Top 5 Tips When Pitching Your Proposal

#### 1. Don't try to sell someone on an idea.

Instead give them information to help them come to their own conclusion. Use phrases like, "Here is an idea...", "What do you think...", or "Here is something to consider and why...", in order to avoid coming on too strong.

#### 2. Don't be too self-deprecating.

Being too humble and modest in your body language or voice tone destroys credibility. Aim to strike a balance between openness and credibility.

#### 3. Don't tell your story before you hear the other person's story.

Find out what they are telling themselves about you and your idea ahead of time so you can determine their values and predict any objections.

#### 4. Don't start trying to convince before you connect with your listeners.

Talk first about what you know is important, the problem your idea will solve, and why it is important.

#### 5. Don't rely on Power Point to convince your audience to say yes.

Build your case using a mixture of Power Point, story, examples, and even live demonstration if possible.

#### At A Glance

**Questions are your best tool for avoiding resistance and gaining acceptance of your ideas.** It only takes two or three good questions to discover what objections are likely to surface.

- Who is going to be the biggest resistor to your proposal?
- What matters to them most?
- To elicit their values, ask "From your point of view, what's important about \_\_\_\_\_ and why?"
- Are they naturally a problem-oriented person (the "glass is half empty")? If so, then don't sweat their jabs at your pitch. Orient what you say in terms of avoiding problems and your detractors will begin to relax and think maybe your idea isn't so bad after all.
- If they are a goal-oriented person (the "glass is half full"), then talk about the accomplishments and achievements they'll receive as a result of your idea.