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Even if you own the company, you've still got to convince others that your ideas are good ones. Developing your skills to persuade others will increase your:

- Confidence
- Sense of mastery
- Influence

Selling an Idea? Know your Audience!

"In the modern world of business, it is useless to be a creative, original thinker unless you can also sell what you create."

David Ogilvy

Do you have great ideas that are rarely implemented?
Are your presentations falling on deaf ears?
Have you considered the behaviour style of your listeners?

When selling your ideas or explaining your point of view, consider 2 key aspects:

- a. The person or group you're speaking to
- b. Yourself

Almost all of our behaviour comes down to choosing or responding to various stimuli that take us toward our goals or move us away from our fears.

In other words, people do things for their own reasons, not yours.

That is why it's crucial to foresee the response of those you're aiming to influence. What motivates them? What are their goals? What are their fears?

When you know these answers, you will be able to frame your idea according to the pertinent motivators. The intent is not manipulation, but respect. By showing how your idea will achieve their goals and alleviate their fears, you demonstrate care and respect for your listeners' point of view.

Most of us assume: "If something is important to me, then it should be important to everyone else."

This is a flawed assumption! Very talented people have differing views of what's important. Knowing yourself is just as essential to successfully selling your ideas as knowing your audience. To present effectively, you must first be aware of how you tend to project your priorities onto others.

Let me illustrate with a story...

The D.I.S.C. Model

“D” values RESULTS

- Be direct
- Give alternatives
- Allow them to win (you win also)
- Be confident
- Disagree with facts, not person
- Pick up your pace
- Be organized
- Don't over-data them

“I” values

THE EXPERIENCE

- Be friendly, personal
- Joke around, have fun
- Allow them to talk, but keep focus
- Listen to their stories
- Don't over-data them
- Give recognition
- Follow-up

“S” values SECURITY

- Slow down presentation
- Focus on the person
- Be friendly and earn trust
- Present the facts
- Present logically
- Listen carefully
- Don't control or dominate
- Reassure them of the right decision
- Focus on reliability, service

“C” values

INFORMATION

- Present the data
- Be prepared with facts, figures, proof
- Don't oversell or be too enthusiastic
- Be straightforward
- Pay attention to details
- Give them their space
- Examine positives and negatives
- Follow-through on promises

Michael had formulated an improved system for processing customer orders. He was convinced it would work! But he had to convince Helen, his boss. His system required re-organizing the layout of the service counter, purchasing a few serving tools and training front-line servers to follow a specific new procedure.

Michael made many attempts to communicate his idea to Helen – without success. When he raised the subject, she always seemed to be preoccupied with other priorities. He hated how she changed the topic before he finished explaining his idea. This was so frustrating!

Recently, Michael attended a workshop on the **DISC** model. Tired of being ignored, he began to plan his strategy according to the following questions:

Consider the person you're trying to influence:

- What's important to her?
- What does she value?
- How does she like to receive information? (in person, in writing, email, phone, etc.)
- What are her biases, assumptions
- What do you anticipate her objections to be?
- What are her hot buttons?
- What words does she frequently use and respond to in a positive way?

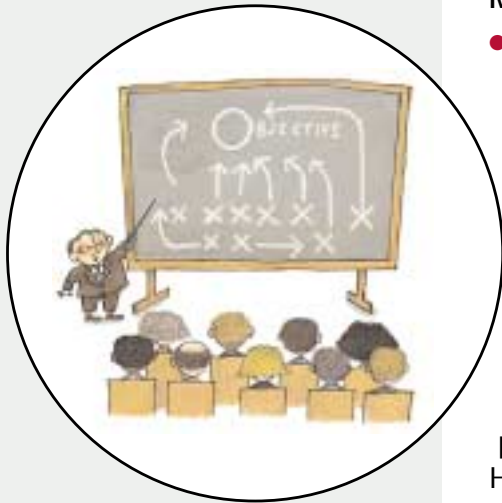
Consider yourself with regard to the above questions:

- Are the two of you on the same wave length?
- Do you tend to clash?
- Is your natural style of communicating a good fit with her style?
- Can you adapt your style for this presentation so that you will be heard?

Anxious to understand Helen's behaviour style so he could adapt his presentation to fit her, Michael figured out that Helen had a core D style, with an I-factor above the line. Her S and C factors were below the line. Michael read up on how someone with this behavioural style likes to be communicated to:

- They want you to get to the point
- They want you to be organized in your presentation
- They want you to give them the basic facts
- They want any support material in a package they can read later
- They want results
- They like a challenge
- They are risk-takers and open to new ideas
- They are not the best listeners
- They have a fairly high ego factor

Next, Michael examined his own behavioural style. A core S style with a C-factor above the line, his D and I-factors were below the line. Michael's style was exactly opposite of Helen's! This explained why he was having such a hard time connecting with her.



Michael's natural tendency is to:

- Be diplomatic and respectful rather than assertively asking for things
- Go slowly and provide background information
- Wait patiently for others to listen to him
- Be well-planned and organized

Michael used his natural tendency to plan and organize a discussion with Helen. He knew he'd be more likely to get Helen's attention if he asked for an appointment to "present an idea to increase efficiency," or "present an idea to reduce customer waiting time."

When Michael walked into the meeting, he was very organized and confident in his presentation. He carefully selected the key points and got to the bottom line quickly. He even prepared a package to leave behind with answers to any questions Helen might have.

Using active words such as "innovative, efficient, new, challenge," Michael got to the end of the presentation for the first time! Helen was left with a lot to think about... why hadn't someone suggested this solution before?

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But what if Michael's boss had a High S style like Michael's? She wouldn't have responded as favourably to a cut-and-dried approach. It's much easier to gain the support of a High S leader if you proceed softly, explain the idea and suggest another meeting once they've had a chance to think it over.

People with the High S style are concerned with maintaining harmony and not rocking the boat. In this illustration, Michael's boss would need assurance that her people would not be unhappy with the change and leave. As a presenter, Michael would be better off focusing on increased job satisfaction and reduced stress, rather than on increased efficiency.

Understanding behavioural styles – both your own and your listeners' – is the key to selling your ideas. To help yourself or your team communicate and present more effectively, call Rosslynn at 519 886-8876 to arrange an applied DISC workshop. You'll be amazed at the results!

Resources you can use:

Hogan, Kevin. *The Psychology of Persuasion: How to Persuade Others to Your Way of Thinking*. Pelican Books, 2001. ISBN 1-56554-146-4

An easy-to-read, practical and highly useful book with multiple examples of how to construct persuasive messages, understand your audience, and how to think in a negotiation. Hogan shares successful tools, strategies and techniques used by politicians, corporate leaders and others whose job it is to persuade.

Would you like to recommend a book or resource?

Please just send a review and why you like it and we'll post your recommendation!