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YES, YOU *SELL YOURSELF* EVERYDAY

It happens to everyone: you find there is something about your job you feel strongly about. It might be an idea you would like to try out, a suggested change you dislike, a promotion or transfer you want, more independence on your decisions... but whatever "it" is, you can't get it alone. You need the help or approval of other people—maybe your boss, maybe your peers, maybe colleagues in other departments or senior management. How are you going to get them to agree with you, and provide the support you need?

You have to sell your idea. You have to be persuasive.

What's more, you need a *persuasion strategy*.

DRAW YOUR ROADMAP

A well-developed approach to persuasion takes into account each of the major turning-points you need to negotiate:

- **Are you sending the right message to the right audience?** If not, you're going to fail. Tailor your message for the individuals you want to persuade. The better you know them, the more likely you are to know what matters to them.
- **Is the message being received?** Is the audience listening, and available for persuasion? If your emails get deleted and your phone calls put on eternal hold, you're not getting through. "Availability" is also key. If you have to influence someone who is already committed to

something different, you are at a strong disadvantage. On the other hand, if you have the "first mover advantage," you need to hang onto it and defend your position against others by reinforcing your message.

- **Is the message memorable?** Can the audience remember your features and benefits? Repetition is essential to successful persuasion. Use a variety of channels to get your message across—email, phone, personal conversations, newsletter articles, etc. Focus particularly on the benefits: what's in it for the individual you are persuading? How will your proposal help *them*, and address *their* needs?
- **Has the message been understood as you intend?** Has enough information been exchanged? Your goal is to have the audience understand your idea/product/service as you do. Use vivid words and pictures to make an impact—don't be shy about engaging people on an emotional level.
- **Has the audience's attitude been changed?** Do they agree with you now, and accept the features and benefits you described?
- **Will the audience act for you?** This is the ultimate goal of persuasion. Has behavior been changed, and will the audience do what you want? If so, you have succeeded. A final stumbling block may frustrate

you even at this stage, however: are they free to act, or are there still constraints that hold them back? If so, you may have more work to do...

USE SOCIAL INFLUENCE

You can boost the success of your persuasion strategy by using techniques that build on people's social expectations.

- **Leverage small commitments into larger ones.** A small, apparently innocuous commitment can become the start of a "slippery slope" to a larger commitment. Public commitments carry more weight than private ones, and are harder for people to justify getting out of.
- **Draw on the power of reciprocity.** The desire to reciprocate is a powerful motivator. If a relationship involves well-established expectations of mutual support, a person will be reluctant to betray those expectations. Whenever you do something for someone else, it creates a social debt you can draw on later. And remember: Favors do not have to be precisely balanced. Small favors can be leveraged into much larger reciprocal favors.

