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NEXT STEP

PITCH PERFECT

Have a brilliant idea, but don't know what to say to your boss? Here are some practical strategies that you can use to deliver an airtight pitch in five minutes.



PREPARING YOUR PITCH

1. The five whys

Accurately defining the problem and its causes makes it easier to find the best solution. Asking yourself why five times is a good way to do this. For instance, if clients are complaining, ask yourself why. Maybe it's because deliveries are not being made on time. Why? Because completing orders and deliveries is taking too long. Why? You underestimated the complexity of the process. Why? You didn't fully explore the stages involved in processing completing deliveries. Why? You were too focused on product development.

2. Find the solution

Come up with as many different solutions as you can in 30 minutes. Then select only the ideas worthy of being developed, or combine ideas to form one, really great idea. Lay out step-by-step plans to test their viability, and finally, pick the one that works best.

3. Be ready for tough questions

No matter how well you thought out your pitch, your employer will ask you some hard-hitting questions to gauge the viability of your solution. Prepare answers for the following questions: How does your idea contribute to the company's mission? How does your idea impact your colleagues? Will you need extra staff, resources, or space? Will there be a

transition period for implementation?

4. Prep a one-page summary

After your pitch, your boss will probably want to mull over your proposal or discuss it with peers. Do yourself and your employer a favour by readying a one-page overview that includes a clearly defined description of the problem or opportunity, data that backs you up, the plan, and the desired outcome with specific examples of expected improvements.

5. Choose the right time

Catch your boss at the wrong time and they may not take your ideas seriously at all. Psychologist and author Shannon Kolakowski says the beginning of the week is busy, stressful, and more likely to induce negativity. So don't ask on a Sunday.

Career coach Lynn Ellis says the key is to find a moment when your boss is not rushed and actually has time to listen. Afternoon, after lunch, is a good time when they have time to sit down and hear you out.

6. Test your message

Ask a co-worker to hear you out to test whether your idea makes sense and is persuasive. Ask for clear feedback: Was the problem or opportunity clearly identified? Were they sold?

You could also record your pitch and play it back. The way you use your voice can determine how well you capture and hold

the attention of your audience. For example, lowering the pitch of your voice has been found to increase persuasiveness. Find out which pace and tone makes you sound most confident.

DELIVERING YOUR PITCH

1. The rule of three

The rule of three is a simple template with which you can create a memorable and convincing sentence. Here's a sample: "Have you noticed that [insert your department] has [insert specific problem]? My idea will make sure that [insert your desired results]." Or, "The problem with [insert current process] is that [insert specific problem]. And that's why we came up with [insert your idea]." This might sound stiff, but the idea is to include all three points in one sentence to make a statement that will stick.

2. Eye contact

Researchers from Friedrich Schiller University in Germany have found that direct eye contact promotes trust. Maintaining eye contact for too long, however, can be off-putting. Remember to break off every five seconds by looking to the side as if you're remembering something, or shifting your attention to a different person each time you start a new sentence if you're pitching to multiple people. Personal development author Steven Aitchinson suggests

another trick: Rotate between looking into each eye and the mouth (visualise a triangle) for five-second intervals while listening.

3. High-power body poses

According to best-selling author and Harvard Business School professor, Amy Cuddy, high-power body poses decrease the level of the stress hormone cortisol by 25 percent. So simple changes like standing tall, pulling your shoulders back, and holding your head straight can relax you, making you more confident.

4. Close the case

The way you close your pitch can make or break your chances of getting a positive result. Make sure to reiterate the main message, summarise any follow-up actions, and ask for a decision deadline.

5. Get your boss' input

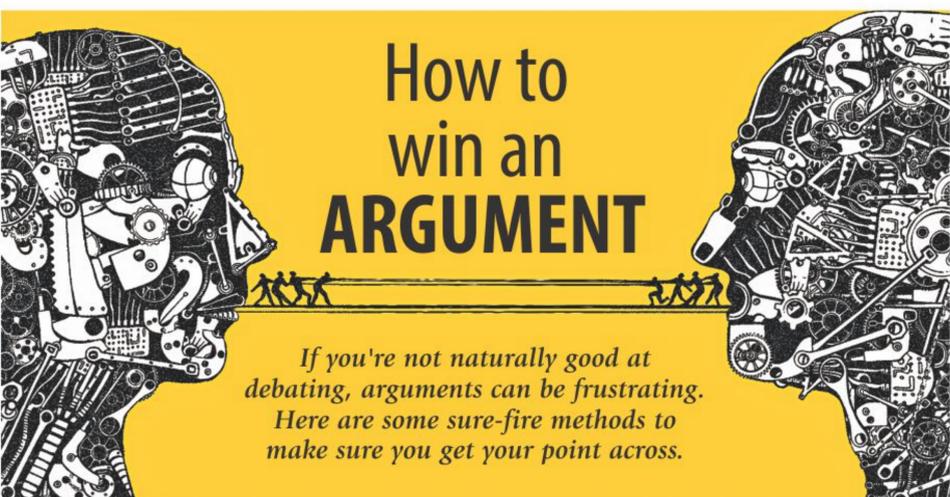
Last but not least, make it a point to get your boss' input. Involving them in the development of the idea makes them more open to it. Thank them and ask for suggestions to increase clarity: "What would you need from me?", "What would your ideal outcome be?", "How would that work?"

AMIYA HALDER

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THE BOSSMAN

BY E. RAZA RONNY



ENGAGE YOUR OPPONENT

1. Ask them to explain their side

A hostage negotiation technique described in a research by Gregory Vecchi of the FBI illustrates that to gain trust and build rapport, you need to hear out the other person without interrupting or disagreeing. Try open-ended questions such as: "What makes you think we won't colonise the moon?"

2. Mirror your opponent

A study in the Journal of Consumer Research points out that if you mimic your opponent, they are more likely to believe you. Are they sitting with their arms crossed? Let some time elapse and cross your arms too, but not too obviously.

3. Make direct eye contact

Researchers at the University of Freiburg and The Wharton School say that making direct eye contact while you listen makes the speaker's arguments less persuasive, thereby making yours look stronger.

4. Reiterate what you picked up

Hostage negotiation techniques also show that repeating an argument back at the speaker develops a sense of trust by proving that you're actively listening. Paraphrase whatever much you understand, e.g. "So you're saying we can't colonise the moon because we don't have the technology?"

5. Share what you can relate to

If you can successfully build a rapport with your opponent, you can

encourage them to see things from your viewpoint. Try this: "You've made a good point; I agree that the issue of technology makes the colonisation of the moon much more difficult, but..."

PRESENT YOUR VIEW-POINT

1. Get your facts right

Opinions might feel logical until we're asked to explain ourselves. The phenomenon of "illusion of explanatory depth" shows that people understand their own arguments far better than they really do.

2. Demonstrate that others agree

Robert Cialdini, psychology and marketing professor at Arizona State University, calls this "social proof", and it works by showing that the opponent's peers agree with the statement you're making.

3. Soften the tone of your argument

Hedging is using a phrase to indicate a degree of uncertainty, e.g. "It could be the case that..." The researchers at Cornell found that doing so makes you seem more invested in finding the truth than just winning the argument.

4. Deploy verbal affirmations

Agree with your opponent on finer details with affirmations like, "Isn't it?" or "Wouldn't you?" According to *The Definitive Book of Body Language* doing this helps to win them over.

5. Lower your pitch

Researchers at the University of

Illinois, University of British Columbia and Harvard have found that lowering your voice pitch, regardless of what you normally sound like, enhances your powers of persuasion.

GET AGREEMENT

1. Dazzle them with "extreme agreement"

A study by researchers at Tel Aviv University and The Hebrew University recommends taking your opponent's most basic beliefs and developing them into an absurd conclusion, i.e. instead of attacking someone's ideas, say, "Are you 100 percent confident that we could never colonise the moon, even with all the great minds in the world working on it?"

2. Flag their dangerous beliefs

Cyber-security researchers at the University of Twente and Delft University in the Netherlands found that making your opponent aware of the risks involved with what they are saying has a positive effect on neutralising them. Try the following: "If we assume it's impossible, we might never try, and then if something endangers our existence on Earth, where would we go?"

3. Established shared ground

According to Cialdini, developing a positive environment of mutual liking can improve your power to convince: "It's great we agree on the need for a solution in the event that the Earth's existence is endangered."

Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

3 more ways to motivate yourself

Why are we so good at thinking of what to do but terrible at doing them? Feelings are a fundamental and unavoidable part of why we do what we do. Because of the way our brains are structured, when thought and feelings collide, feelings almost always win. Here's how you can rile up those emotions and get things done.

1 Get positive

Research shows happiness increases productivity and makes you more successful. So how do you get optimistic when you're not feeling it? Harvard Business School's Teresa Amabile's research found that nothing is more motivating than progress. So monitor the progress you're making and celebrate it.



2 Get rewarded

Rewards are responsible for 75 percent of why we do things. So treat yourself when you complete something on your to-do list. If you're having trouble finding a reward awesome enough to get you off your butt, give your friend 100 takas. If you get a task done by 5pm, you get your money back. If you don't, you lose it.

3 Get peer pressure

Research shows that friends and the groups you associate with often determine the type of person you become. So surround yourself with people you want to be like and it becomes far less taxing to do what you should be doing.



Infographic:
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