

Why Your Ideas Don't Get Accepted

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There are three reasons ideas don't get accepted according to Rick Maurer, author of *Why Don't You Want What I Want?*

Reason #1: "I don't get it."

Reason #2: "I don't like it."

Reason #3: "I don't like you."

Reason #1 "I don't get it." If customers don't understand your argument, they certainly aren't going to buy it. As you plan out your next presentation, very carefully analyze your audience and how much they know about the topic. Put yourself in their shoes. Then, think about the best way to explain these ideas to them, based on what they know and who they are.

Consider whether there is a logical flow to your argument. If you are explaining a process, are the steps in the right order? If you are explaining the benefits of a program, do you state your points in the order of importance?

One of the biggest reasons people get their ideas rejected is that they overload listeners with information. The more you say, the less people hear. While you want to create the evidence, three key points are plenty. Too much information frightens people. So does speaking in generalities. When explaining your points, don't use adjectives; use stories or examples. This will not only help to support your case, but also, it will minimize confusion. Word choice is also critical. Simple, clear language, devoid of jargon, insures that everyone gets the point, not just those with technical expertise. Remember what happened in the O.J. Simpson case. People didn't understand the evidence.

Reason #2 "I don't like it." When customers don't like your idea, typically it means you didn't show value. You didn't relate your ideas to their needs. You didn't give them one good reason to buy. The acid test to preparing any presentation is to ask yourself "Is there any good reason why they should say no?" Even if you feel a positive reception is a sure thing, don't overlook that timing may be an issue. The sluggish economy or a behind the scenes projection may cause an idea to be rejected today when it might be applauded six months from now.

If there is anyone in the organization who might champion your ideas, be sure to approach that person ahead of time so they can promote them behind the scenes. An "insider" can also help you to better understand the audience's primary needs and understand where the resistance might come from. Once you know this, you can anticipate objections and be ready to answer them.

Reason #3 "I don't like you." First, impressions are lasting and are formed within a few minutes. A nervous presenter almost always scores poor marks. If you believe in what you say, listeners need to see it in your body and hear it in your voice. They need to feel you are looking them in the eye so that they can trust you. It is important to get feedback on your delivery style. Video tape feedback is ideal. Sometimes, people can come across as arrogant, insincere or even unfriendly without even knowing it. It is only after they see themselves on video tape that they realize there are some things they need to change.

Every speaker has a natural style. When presenters capitalize on their natural style, they win people over. When they try to imitate the speaking style of a boss or a colleague, they come across as fake. Be sure that when you speak, people feel they are getting the real "you."

Selling your ideas requires a lot more than showing up and plugging in your power point. Doing your homework so that you can understand your listeners' needs is critical. So is being a strong communicator and relating to your customers. If your

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ideas are rejected, take a good look in the mirror. Analyze where things turned sour so that the next time, you can convince people to move forward.

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