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## Get the CEO to Buy Your Idea

by *Franne McNeal*

Are you intimidated by presenting your ideas to the decision-makers? Are you great in front of the mirror, your staff, your friends and in networking situations, but when it comes to selling the person with the cash—you get nervous or the sale just doesn't go through?



You can get the CEO to buy your idea, product or service. You should reach for the top decision-maker and create a compelling reason for the CEO to want to write checks to your business. CEO's are motivated by their own business vision and mission—so you need to help them further their agenda. Do your homework, share the data and ROI that makes it easy for others to choose you.

Tip #1: What have you got to support their major goals and vision.

Know your client's strategic plan, vision, mission and goals. Your business, products and services need to clearly demonstrate a solution or benefit that is in line with the client.

Show how your solution solves their current problems. You can't just toss a standard brochure or a power-point in the direction of the client. Customize your presentation. Do your homework. Include relevant facts and figures that speak to specific data that your client values.

Tip #2: Speak the language of business, ROI, return on investment.

Your solution (products and services) cost money. Everyone has limited money, time and resources.

Be clear and specific on how your solution provides a return on the client's investment. What resources (financial and non-financial) will be required, what benefits will the client receive?

Tip #3: Make it easy for them to choose you.

Share key assumptions so that the decision-maker is not guessing about your perspective or thought process. Provide alternative options so that clients have choice, but be clear and concise on why your preferred option, the ROI, and the client benefits.

Clarify and quantify the consequences of inaction. Many people act to avoid a loss, minimize risk, and reduce threats. Create a clear case for them to see what will happen if they don't consider your proposed solutions.

Tip #4: Be prepared for the process to take time.

Solutions that make a difference usually involve many people. It may take time for the decision process to be finalized. Start by talking to the person who can sign the check, but recognize that others may need to be part of the decision process. Be persistent! Rarely will you be flat out rejected if you have followed the above steps. Frequently you will be deferred. Know the difference and ask for further direction on how to proceed next.

Tip #5: Be professional and enthusiastic.

Goethe said, "Be the change you want to see." Successful leaders want to be surrounded by champions. Champion your cause!

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