

Brush up your persuasive skills

By **CHRISSY SCVICQUE**

WHETHER you're looking to convince your boss you need some additional training or you're hoping to show an interviewer you're the best candidate for a job, persuasion is an essential tool for professional success.

Below, I've outlined the three basic steps you should follow to be persuasive in the workplace.

Know your position (and believe in it)

First and foremost, what are you fighting for? You have to be clear about what you want to accomplish and why. Set out the specifics. How much money do you want for that training course? How much time off do you need to attend? Be clear about your goal. If you don't know where you're aiming, it's easy to get off course.

Beyond that, it should matter to you. If you don't care, don't bother. Whatever you want to persuade another person to do (or think or feel), you simply must believe it's the right thing. The more confidence you can demonstrate, the more convincing you'll be.

You want a raise? You want your co-worker to take over a project for you? Step No.1 is to believe it's deserved. Or, at the very least, to believe it's rational.

Are you asking this person to do something you wouldn't do if the roles were reversed? If so,

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re-evaluate your position.

Predict and prepare for objections

I have one mantra for professional success: Be proactive. Don't

react to what's going on around you. Instead, predict and prepare.

Be actively engaged in the discussion. Don't wait for objections to come up. Anticipate them and know how you will respond.

Be ready to have your request

declined, and be prepared to rebut the verdict.

What could make this person refuse your request? What concerns will he or she have? How can you diminish those concerns and help this person see the

wisdom of your point of view?

It isn't always easy to get agreement, especially from superiors in the workplace. They need to be convinced. Appeal to their logic and remember to tune into WIIFM (What's In It For Me?). Tell the person how this decision will impact him and, on a bigger scale, how it will impact the company.

Have evidence to support your position

Facts are hard to deny, especially when they can be proven with evidence. Whatever your position, be prepared to back it up with concrete proof. If you're going to a performance review, for instance, take samples of your work, complimentary letters from clients and anything else that demonstrates your excellence.

If you're asking for a raise, take documentation that shows why you deserve more reward for your work. You may also want to take research that shows the appropriate salary range for a person in your field with your experience.

The more you can point to tangible evidence (from reputable sources) to support your request, the more reasonable it will appear and the more likely you'll get agreement.

Follow these steps and you'll be much closer to achieving your long-term career goals. — www.careerealism.com

