

## **Prerequisite to Persuasion**

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The skill of persuasion can seem difficult and elusive, belonging to a small group of elite and successful individuals. In its essence, persuasion is really a straightforward two-step process:

1. Identify the other party's priorities
2. Connect your desired outcome to the other party's priorities

It's simple. If the other party is convinced that your product or service will shorten the time and effort needed to achieve what he most wants in the world, he will be eager to buy.

The supremely tricky thing, of course, is identifying the other party's priorities.

The problem isn't necessarily that the other party's priorities are difficult to discern. The problem is that we are so immersed in our own priorities that *we make unwarranted assumptions*.

1. We assume that other people are, in essence, just like us, even though they have different exteriors.
2. We also assume that people will see obvious connections between what we offer and the outcomes they are seeking to achieve.

The truth is that people have different priorities and different nuances to those priorities. It's not that most people hide what they value; it's that we don't bother to look for the information or ask. We are lost in the maze of our own perspectives and our own assumptions.

A prerequisite for persuasion is to slow down long enough to examine your assumptions about the other party's point of view. Slow down and develop the art of asking good questions. Then listen carefully. In the rush of everyday business this can be hard to do.

Here are some suggestions to help:

- Ask clarifying questions to identify the other party's frustrations. Do not assume you understand.
- Uncover priorities around performance, profit, teamwork, and life/work balance. Do not assume that all managers, owners, or colleagues value the same things.
- Find out how the other party defines success and failure. Do not assume that others' values match yours.

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- Communicate to bridge any gap between what you propose and what the other party is looking for. If you offer the highest quality or the quickest turnaround, for example, explain what that means in practical terms for the other party.



When you or someone in your organization needs coaching in presenting, writing, or influencing others, Bonnie Budzowski is the perfect resource. She is a keynote speaker, seminar leader, and coach, with engagements across the country. Bonnie brings over 20 years experience in increasing business results to your organization. She is author of *Secrets to Get Busy People to Respond to Your Messages* and *Clickety Clack: 86 Ways to Keep Your Speech on Track*. Contact her at 412-828-1629 or [Hbonnie@inCredibleMessages.com](mailto:Hbonnie@inCredibleMessages.com).