

## COMMUNICATING WITH PROSPECTIVE CLIENTS

Before you go into a meeting with a prospective client, you should make sure that you have answers to some of their questions, concerns, and objections. To help you prepare, use this checklist to gain insight into business owners' minds.

### Business Owners

- Seek challenges, initiate activity.
- Risk takers, nothing ventured; nothing gained.
- Goal oriented, driven by results.
- High ego.
- High energy.
- Want to win; inherent dislike for losing or failure.
- Work hard and long to be successful.
- Seek their own solutions to problems; in this way their independent nature comes into play.
- Creative and active minds; at times, visionary.
- Challenge people who volunteer their opinions.

### Communication "Dos"

- Provide questions, alternatives and choices for making their own decisions.
- Be specific and leave nothing to chance.
- Give strokes for their involvement.
- Provide suggested systems for them to follow.
- Be isolated from interruptions.
- Ask specific (preferable "what?") questions.
- Come prepared with all requirements, objectives and support material in a well organized package.
- Most comfortable in environments where constraints can be loosened.

### Why They Might Say "No"

- Don't perceive cost/benefit.
- Don't believe the hype; they've been burned before.
- The perceived pain outweighs the expected benefit.
- Perceived lack of time.
- They think they already have the answers.
- They think that they've already tapped their co-workers knowledgebase.
- View this as another "reengineering" program.
- Don't trust the individual selling it; lack of relationship and credibility.
- Think their CPA, CFO, etc., is already doing it.
- Don't want to risk the "time" even if they have a satisfaction guarantee.

- Don't want someone to take them back to "ground zero."
- Don't want to risk embarrassment.

#### What Might Make Them Say "Yes"

- Affordable - Time and money. Time may be more important than money.
- Easy - Easy to understand, easy to implement. Differentiate easy from simple...they know there are no simple answers, it just can't seem too complex or unfocused.
- Belief - Believe that the individual firm and product can get

Therefore, the business owners probably want to work with individuals who can help them take steps to measure change, rather than allowing change to measure them.

Individuals who can help make the process of change more predictable, who will help transfer knowledge and capabilities to their people, who will share in the risks and successes based on results. i.e.; profit improvement.