

# Getting your boss on board with ‘the best idea ever’



by Kim Bassett, President and CEO, Steward Norwood Hospital, Massachusetts

We've all been there. That moment when you present your boss with the best idea ever and their response is not what you imagined. You can see your amazing idea crashing and burning right before your eyes, stamped out before it even got off the ground. At this juncture you must make an important decision. To let "no" mean "no" or to retreat and re-evaluate your next move.

I'm a strong believer that when you want something bad enough, you should not give up at the first road block. When someone tells me no, I simply think to myself, "I must not have explained myself well enough." I retreat, revise my game plan, and relaunch my idea.

## How to get to yes:

- **Listen to your employer's needs.** Although making your pitch is important, listening to your employer's response during the pitch is important. Understanding issues and needs your boss brings up during your pitch can give you an understanding of what you may be missing. Everyone has needs. Your boss has lots of issues on their plate and you are just one of them. Take the information you hear from the meeting and find some way to show how your idea meets the company's needs or strategy. Changing your idea a bit to meet their needs will be a surefire way to get your boss on board.
- **Don't bury the lead.** Once you've identified your boss' need, start modifying your idea where possible. Put your idea and changes on paper and figure out the best way to communicate your idea with these modifications in as little time as possible. Practice running through your pitch over and over. You may only have 15 seconds to run this updated pitch by your boss so get to the point.
- **Gather supporters.** If possible, talk with a few colleagues about your idea. Get their input about possible changes. Get them excited about your idea. Let them be cheerleaders for your idea when you are not around. You may even want to do a group meeting and present the idea to your boss together. Their input may help convince the boss this idea is worthy of consideration.
- **Be enthusiastic but professional.** If you are successful with the first three items your passion and dedication to your idea will show. Be sure to thank whomever you are meeting with for the opportunity to come back and pitch your idea again.

Being passionate about your ideas is positively regarded in the eyes of most employers and is often rewarded. There are times, however, when your incredible idea is not going to be entertained by those in your corporate office. When this happens, you need to practice grace. Sometimes great ideas are just overlooked or it's just not

the right time. When this happens, gracefully thank those that considered it and set your idea aside—just for now. Staying professional allows you the opportunity to retreat, rethink and rework your idea.

What doesn't work today, may work tomorrow. If your idea is a good one, its time will come. Be ready to make your pitch at every opportunity. Persistence and confidence in yourself are key. In business, "no" only means "no for now."

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*As an experienced healthcare executive, [Kim Bassett](#) is a strong believer in the "can-do" attitude, focusing on team-building, communication and creativity to find the "win-win" in every situation. She thrives on challenges, especially those that involve bringing teams and people together to provide exceptional healthcare. Her mission in life is to care for every patient as if they were family.*