Selling Your Technical Recommendations and Ideas to Management

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Agenda

- Life cycle of ideas
- Challenges
- Elements of persuasion
- Planning and preparing
- Building the presentations
- Improving your skills

Life cycle of ideas

- Aha! - the birth of the idea
- Mull it over
- Explore the feasibility
- Test it out in a limited way
- Roll it out to a broader population
- Provide ongoing support
- Death of the idea

Challenges

- Myth: Good ideas don't need selling
- Audience may not understand value
- Presenting solid business reasons
- Others representing your idea
- Extended chains of approval

Elements of persuasion

- Understanding the audience
- Clarity and value of the proposal
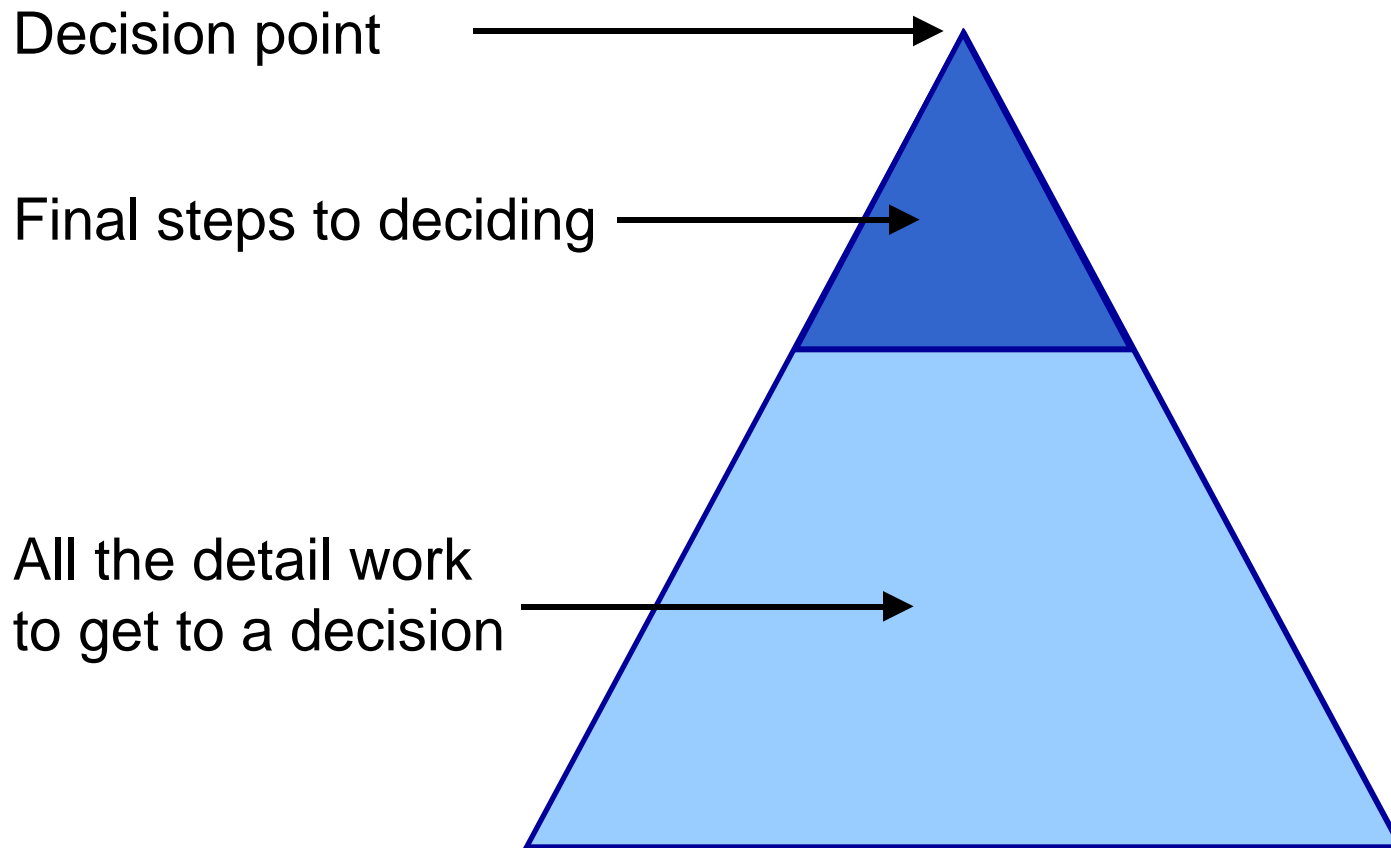- Your belief in the message
- Your credibility

Understanding the audience

- Ticking time bomb or imploring child?
- Selling idea or method?
- What information does this audience need to make a decision?
- What depth of technical information do they need?

Sources of credibility

Personality and Presence   Knowledge   Position
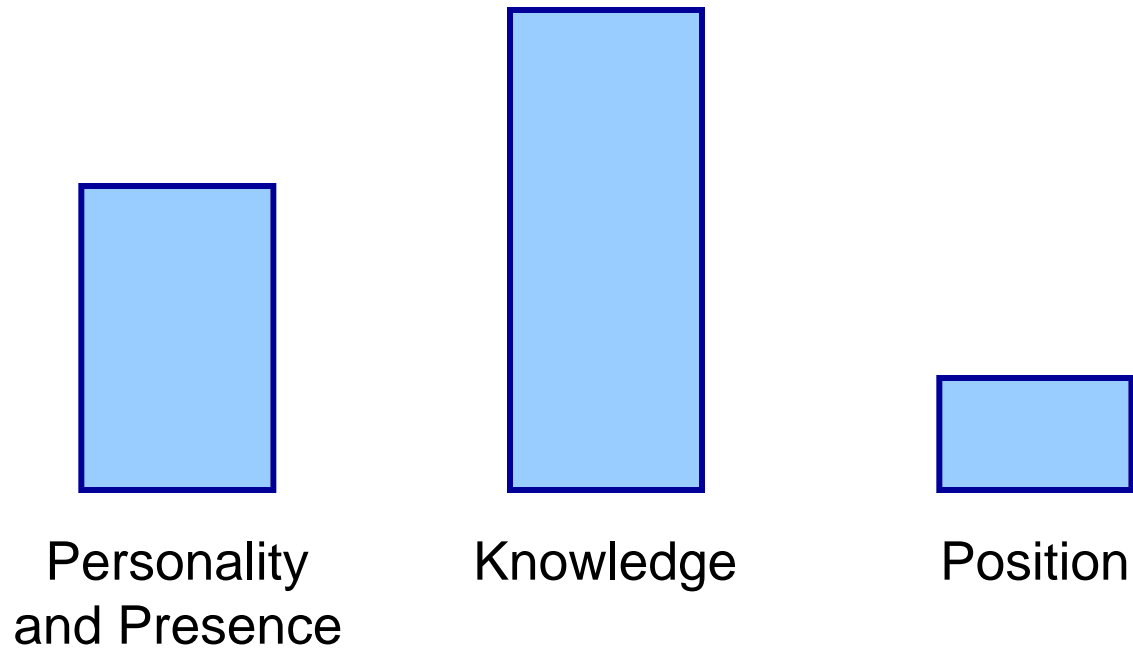
Recommendation example

Decision point

Final steps to deciding

All the detail work
to get to a decision

Planning and preparing

- Understanding the full scope
- Chain of approvals

Understanding the scope

- How many people will it affect?
- How much money is required?
- How many groups need to participate?
- What level of commitment is required?
- How much time is involved?
- What is the time frame?
- What are the dependencies?

Chain of approvals

- Who will be involved at each stage?
- How will the decisions be made?
- What information is required?
- In what sequence must it be done?
- Who needs to fully support it?
- Who are the sponsors?
- Is the timing right?

Building the presentations

- Who will be in audience?
- What is goal of communication?
- What information is available?
- Which is relevant or important?
- What is the best way to present it?
- How do I open the discussion?

Elements of communication

- Content
- Organization
- Delivery

Content

- Issues driving the idea
- Background info
- Industry trends
- Experience with vendor
- Fit current architecture?
- Opinion of others in IT
- Visuals and hand-outs
- Financial stability of vendor and market share

- Company strategy
- How does this fit in?
- Benefits and risks
- Process followed
- Approval points
- Resources required
- Next steps
- Business rationale and sponsorship

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Organizing for persuasion

- What problems are you solving?
- Summary of your plan
- How the plan works
- What are the anticipated results?
- What are the next steps?

Delivery

- Voice
- Gestures
- Movement
- Confidence
- Posture
- Eye contact
- Presence

Improving your skills

- Get feedback
- Work with someone
- Seize every opportunity
- Get outside training
  - Listening skills
  - Presentation skills
  - Non-verbal communications

Summary

- Thoughtful preparation will increase ability to sell your recommendations
- Constantly build your credibility
- Understand your audience at every step
- Fortunately, it can be learned!