PRESENTING NEW AND CRAZY IDEAS
(IN A WAY THAT GETS THEM NOTICED AND ACCEPTED)

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CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Agenda

- Challenges as Givers and Receivers of ideas
- Three steps (and tools) to increase acceptance
  - Profile
  - Prepare
  - Present
- Learnings
Five most common obstacles that can sink ideas

1. Unreceptive beliefs
2. Conflicting interests
3. Negative relationship or a lack of credibility
4. A belief that there are no systematic ways to persuade people to accept an idea
5. Failing to adjust one's communication mode to suit a particular audience or situation.

Three Step Process...

- Profile
- Prepare
- Present
Create a Profile of your Receiver

As we go through the next slides on the 3 dimensions of Problem-Solving Style, use your “Profile of Receiver Preferences” page and …

1. Identify which preference your receiver is most likely to have

2. Check off 2-3 approaches you might take to increase their comfort with you
Orientation to Change

The preference for responding to and managing structure, novelty, and authority when dealing with change or solving problems.

- How do they prefer to deal with novelty and boundaries?
- How do they feel about and react to structure?
- How do they prefer to respond to authority?

EXPLORERS prefer to…

- Do things differently
- View structure as limiting, confining
- Challenge the problem definition
- Challenge authority, “bend” the rules
- Be seen as ingenious and unconventional
- Emphasize originality and uniqueness
DEVELOPERS prefer to...

• Do things better
• Find benefits and support in structure
• Accept the problem definition
• Work within stated rules
• Emphasize improvement and usefulness
• Be seen as precise, thorough, dependable

Influencing based on Receiver’s Orientation to Change

With an Explorer, emphasize...

How the idea...
☑️ is novel, never done before, cutting-edge
☑️ provides radically different options to consider
☑️ takes an unpredictable approach
☑️ connects to the ‘big picture’ of organizational goals
☑️ answers the “why”
☑️ could provide new opportunities

With a Developer, emphasize...

How the idea...
☑️ provides stability, order, and continuity; builds on ‘what is’
☑️ makes options more workable and understandable
☑️ provides a step-by-step approach, making work easier
to understand, carry out, and share
☑️ provides precision, accuracy
☑️ answers the question “how”?
☑️ provides a safe base for riskier operations later
Manner of Processing/Communicating

How you use your own inner energy and resources, and that of others, when managing change or solving problems.

- How do I prefer to manage information?
- When do I share my thinking?
- Does interacting with others build or spend energy?

EXTERNAL communicators prefer to…

Engage in a variety of tasks and discussions of possibilities

- Derive energy from interacting with others
- Share options freely with a broad range of people
- Seek a great deal of input from others before reaching closure
- Press for action, sometimes without thought and reflection
INTERNAL communicators prefer to…

- Take advantage of quiet, opportunities for concentration
- Draw energy from reflection and consideration
- Share options with others after having time to think them through
- Share options with others after establishing trust and confidence
- Think before acting, sometimes without acting

Influencing based on Receiver's Manner of Processing

**With External communicators:**
- Meet to discuss the ideas, real time. No need to give idea in writing ahead of time.
- Be involving...asking what they think, what ideas do they have to expand on yours, etc.
- Discuss how others could be involved.
- Act and respond quickly

**With Internal communicators:**
- Give them your idea in written form in advance for ‘review’.
- Invite them respond in writing or for them to schedule a time when ready to discuss.
- Put a watermark “DRAFT” on the written idea.
- Don’t push. Allow them incubation time between meetings.
Ways of Deciding

Your preference for task concerns or personal and interpersonal needs when focusing your thinking and moving toward decisions and action.

• What factors get first priority when I focus or decide?
• Where do I start?
• How do I make trade-offs?

PEOPLE-FOCUSED
Decision makers prefer to…

• Promote harmony and positive interpersonal relationships
• Use criteria that are personal, sensitive to feelings, more subjective
• Consider the personal impact or consequences of a decision
• Find what’s good, attractive, or pleasing about an option
• Seek options or decisions that all involved can buy into
• Put people’s feelings over the quality of the outcome
TASK-FOCUSED
Decision makers prefer to…

- Focus on what is logical or rational
- Use criteria that are authoritative, verifiable, more objective
- Consider standards, rigor, or quality
- Find what’s wrong, what’s lacking, or what an option needs
- Seek the best solution or response
- Put the quality of the outcome over people’s feelings

Influencing based on the Receiver’s Way of Deciding

With People-focused receiver:

Share how this idea:
- might help the team to work better together, build partnerships with other departments, etc.
- would solve a people-problem (or if the problem left unsolved how it might hurt working relationships in the future)
- may ease conflicts or tense situations among the group
- was shared with members of the team and got support
- share anecdotes

With Task-focused receiver:

Share how this idea:
- will bring reason and clear thinking to the group
- is based on logical and rational thinking and data; use charts
- will help to achieve outcomes in a more efficient manner
- will help to address the root issue of a problem rather than symptoms
- will address areas needing improvement
- share charts, numbers, graphs
Additional considerations…

- when is best time to approach?
- how far in advance would she/he want to have the idea before discussing it with you?
- what words do they commonly use in meetings and discussions?
- what do they care about?
- what are their business or departmental objectives?
- who do they listen to? Should you be talking to that person first?

- Profile
- Prepare
- Present
Top Ten Objections to Ideas

Objection #1-PRICE
"We don't have a budget for this"

Objection #2-TIME
"The timing isn't very good"

Objection #3-INTEREST
"I'll get back to you if I'm interested"

Objection #4-NEED
"We don't need it"

Objection #5-RISK
"It's too risky"

Gerald Haman

Objections, cont.

Objection #6-CHANGE
"We just shouldn’t change for change sake"

Objection #7-QUALITY
"It won't work"

Objection #8-IMAGE
"It doesn't fit our image"

Objection #9-TRUST
"I need to think it over"

Objection #10-APPROVAL
"I want to talk to some other people"

Gerald Haman
Tool to keep ideas alive

Idea Proposal Worksheet
- Advantages
- Limitations

Idea Proposal Response

• Profile
• Prepare
• Present
Idea Influence Planner

Let’s think about what you might need to consider to make the case for your idea (strategy)

- Complete Part 1 – Making the Case
- You may want to refer back to the preferences page
- Take about 3-4 minutes

PRESENT: Words are powerful

Offering ideas....
“I have an idea I’d like to share with you…”
“I have a possible solution for that problem with….is now a good time?...”

Receiving ideas....
“That’s an interesting perspective…”
“Tell me more….”
“How would it work?...”
Structure for discussion

- **OPENING**: Make opening statement that will invite them to explore and address their personal preferences. “I’d like to explore an idea to…”

- **SHARE OPPORTUNITY OR PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSED**: Explain the potential improvement/problem that your idea addresses; ask Receiver if he/she sees this as an area of concern as well.

- **DISCUSS IDEA/SOLUTION and UNIQUE QUALITIES**: Share the advantages of your idea/solution, including relative advantage over current state and the idea’s unique qualities.

- **DISCUSS LIMITATIONS**: Discuss limitations, both your own and those of the Receiver. If there are limitations discuss what needs to happen to overcome the limitations as a “work in progress”; if few or no limitations, discuss what resources will be necessary to implement idea.

- **NEXT STEPS**: If working on limitations, make plans for next steps and follow-up discussion(s); if few or no limitations, discuss action plan and support needed.

Practice giving/receiving ideas

- In pairs, decide who will be the Idea Giver first.

- Have 4-5 minute discussion between Giver and Receiver.

- Give feedback to Giver.

- Switch roles and repeat.

- Total time 15 minutes.
For more information

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Idea Proposal Worksheet

Idea champion: ________________________________________________________________

Proposed to: ___________________________________________ Date: __________________

What is the current opportunity or problem to be solved?
____________________________________________________________________________

What is your proposed idea/solution?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Advantages

Identify the strengths, plusses, unique properties, or positive aspects of your idea/solution:
✓  ____________________________________________________________________________
✓  ____________________________________________________________________________
✓  ____________________________________________________________________________

What’s the relative advantage over the “old” way? The new idea will:

☐ save time? If so, how much time saved? __________________________________________

☐ be customer focused? If so, how will it build loyalty of internal or external customers?
____________________________________________________________________________

☐ improve performance of people? If so, please explain how?
____________________________________________________________________________

☐ streamline a process? If so, what steps would be eliminated?
____________________________________________________________________________

☐ align with departmental strategic initiatives? If so, what is the link?
____________________________________________________________________________

Limitations

(Keep these in “back pocket”...good to anticipate) What are the concerns, challenges or weaknesses of your idea/solution? These may need continued exploration and discussion in future meetings.

? How to... ______________________________________________________________________

? How to... ______________________________________________________________________

? How to... ______________________________________________________________________
Idea Proposal Response

Idea Recipient: ____________________________________________________________

Response (to Idea Champion): __________________________ Date: __________

The current opportunity or problem to be solved:
________________________________________________________________________

Your proposed idea/solution:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Advantages

What I like about your idea/solution is:
✓ _______________________________________________________________________
✓ _______________________________________________________________________
✓ _______________________________________________________________________
✓ _______________________________________________________________________

Limitations

Some concerns, challenges or weaknesses in your idea/solution that you may need to address are:
? How to... __________________________________________________________________
? How to... __________________________________________________________________
? How to... __________________________________________________________________
? How to... __________________________________________________________________

Moving Forward

What I see you doing is...
✓ _______________________________________________________________________
✓ _______________________________________________________________________

To support your effort I will...
✓ _______________________________________________________________________

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## Part 1: Profile of Receiver Preferences

### Orientation to change

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<tr>
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<th>Developer</th>
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### Manner of Processing/Communicating

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### Way of deciding

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Part 2: Profile of Receiver Preferences

With an Explorer emphasize:

How the idea...
- is novel, never done before, cutting-edge
- provides radically different options to consider
- takes an unpredictable approach
- connects to the ‘big picture’ of organizational goals
- answers the “why”
- could provide new opportunities

With a Developer emphasize:

How the idea...
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- give them your idea in written form in advance for ‘review’.
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- don’t push. Allow them incubation time between meetings.

With People-Focused Receiver:

Share how this idea:
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- may ease conflicts or tense situations among the group
- was shared with members of the team and got support
- (share anecdotes)

With Task-Focused Receiver:

Share how this idea:
- will bring reason and clear thinking to the group.
- is based on logical and rational thinking and data; use charts.
- will help to achieve outcomes in a more productive manner.
- will help to address the root issue of a problem rather than symptoms.
- will address areas needing improvement.
- (share charts, numbers, graphs)
### IDEA INFLUENCE PLANNER

#### Thinking Through the Strategy

<table>
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<th><strong>Situation Summary</strong> – what’s the current ‘challenge’; what’s your idea, solution, issue?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objective</strong> – what are you hoping for as a result of this meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong> – how could HE/SHE (or the department or students) benefit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation Strategies</strong> – who are you influencing, what’s his/her style (BEST, Explorer or Developer?); data collected, possible objections from their perspective? What might you emphasize in your plan that would appeal to his/her style? What words might she/he respond well to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation Actions</strong> – missing information you need to gather?</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>When and Where</strong> – neutral location, timing</td>
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**Finding the Right Words**

**OPENING**: Make opening statement. “I’d like to explore an idea to...”

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If you prefer, you can use your “IDEA PROPOSAL WORKSHEET” and continue discussion, or you can transfer that information onto this Planner.

**SHARE CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED**: Explain the challenge that your idea addresses. *Ask Receiver if he/she sees this as an area of concern as well.*

---

**DISCUSS IDEA/SOLUTION and UNIQUE QUALITIES**: Share the advantages of your idea/solution, including relative advantage over current state and unique qualities. *Ask Receiver what advantages he/she sees.*

---

**DISCUSS LIMITATIONS**: Discuss limitations, both your own *and those of the Receiver*. If there are limitations discuss what needs to happen to overcome the limitations as a “work in progress”; if few or no limitations, discuss what resources will be necessary to implement idea.

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**NEXT STEPS**: If working on limitations, make plans for next steps and follow-up discussion(s); if few or no limitations, discuss action plan and support needed.