

Dear Claudia,

How can I make them take my ideas more seriously?

Dear Claudia:

I have an excellent idea that would improve our office work flow—but no one takes me seriously. I feel I'm constantly trying to defend my new idea. How can I make them listen?

All Alone

Dear "Alone":

When we push against someone with logical arguments, they almost instinctively vocalize their energy in the form of counter-arguments. This dynamic increases the probability that the logical persuasion strategy will lead to an extended debate or argument.

So what can you do when persuasion doesn't work? First, acknowledge up front that what you want might inconvenience the others so they can let their guard down and explore the idea with you.

Second, open the conversation by asking what they think. Finally, by accepting rather than questioning or refuting the problems raised, you'll avoid the "pushing back." Then find ways to resolve those problems or satisfy additional needs the other people may have in order to gain their cooperation.

Dear Claudia:

I have a vision for my company—specific goals and the steps needed to achieve them. But I'm having trouble selling it to my staff of five.

Stuck

Dear "Stuck":

A vision is expressed and explained through words and actions in three ways: First, a clear and brief statement of the vision, a sort of organizational philosophy must be made. Such a statement must be so clear that every person in the organization can express it.

The second step is for the organization to put its money where its mouth is. Policy must be developed, and programs must be initiated to carry out the policies. This requires commitment

of resources.

The third and deciding factor concerns the personal actions of the leader. The leader must communicate the vision in a way that reaches out to people, gripping them and making them want to get involved in carrying out that vision. Rethink your current strategy and approach your staff again.

attention on them. Just pointing them out isn't enough. Leaders should ask questions, such as: "How did this happen?" "How long has this been going on?" "Why does it continue to happen?" and "What do you feel would be the best solution to this problem?" Asking questions turns the searchlight on an issue.

his reactions to lighter things. Try to identify what he finds humorous—certainly there must be something. If he fails, you could always ask him what he finds funny or enjoys doing to lighten up.



Claudia is a local, professional presenter for personal development and approaches her column from a behavioral (vs. psychological) viewpoint. Questions about on-the-job communication and interpersonal concerns can be mailed to Claudia at P.O. Box 5262, Tacoma WA 98405.

For a list of (1) productive listening (2) effective communication, (3) top management, or (4) support staff efficiency skills, send \$2 and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Please specify the list of your choice.

1/7 1987 Dear Claudia

Career Communications "Getting Along on the Job"™

Dear Claudia:

I can't find quality leaders anymore. They all want control and power, but I don't think they want to lead. Why?

Looking for Leaders

Dear "Looking":

Why has leadership evaporated? Possibly too many years of prosperity have allowed us to run organizations with managers at the helm—leaders became unnecessary.

Maybe business schools' single-minded focus on management has contributed to the decline. Maybe the lack of operational definition and description of leadership, combined with a lack of ways to teach it, has undercut its importance.

Leadership also has become linked to goals that the intellectual elite find repugnant—power, efficiency, productivity, and profit. Our best graduate schools produce many who want to counsel the leader, but few who really want to lead.

Dear Claudia:

I keep pointing out our department's problems to my staff, yet they still exist. I want them to take care of the problems.

Angry

Dear "Angry":

Leaders need to identify key issues and tough problems, then focus

Remember to be issue/solution-oriented. Attack the problems, not your people.

Dear Claudia:

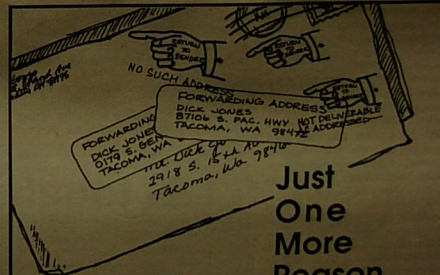
I work for a boss with no humor. He takes everything so seriously. What can I do to make him lighten up?

Humor in a Closet

Dear "Humor":

Humor is a vital part of a balanced life. People have different ways of expressing humor, ranging from subtle innuendo to sarcastic, outlandish jokes.

Pay close attention to your boss and



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