

Leadership Caffeine Jam Session Series
Notes to Energize
The second Friday of the month at 12 PM CT

Use chat to share your ideas, comments, and questions!

IF YOU SEE THE QUESTION MARK, SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

IF YOU HAVE THOUGHTS AT ANY POINT, SHARE THEM VIA CHAT!

Video with Mind Map PDF forwarded Sunday night

want bonus materials or any questions: art@artcothy.com

Welcome!

Sharing professional development insights in about the time it takes to consume a cup of (large sized) coffee!

Communicating Successfully with Executives

Why this topic?

- It comes up fairly frequently in workshops
- My articles on this topic are consistently the most read month after month
- Been on both sides; important for executives to gain insights/input/feedback & essential for you to build the confidence to engage!
- Goal today: send you out of here with renewed confidence for and commitment to engaging with your execs!

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU'VE EXPERIENCED/OBSERVED IN APPROACHING/ENGAGING WITH PRESENTING TO EXECUTIVES?

What are some ideas for helping Jeff get beyond his executive anxiety?

The Worst Weight Loss Program Ever!

"I can't take the elevator anymore because every time I run into an executive, I say something that makes me sound ridiculous."
 -Jeff, Senior Manager

Jeff lost twenty pounds taking the stairs!

His awareness of the power distance generated anxiety that led to him being tongue-tied.

"It felt like over-preparation. We were trying to mask the big problems in our business."

Global firm; our division hosting a senior director/board member (very high ranking)

GM was obsessed with preparing reports to present to the visiting dignitary

The day came; introductions were made; people were seated.

The senior director/board member looked at the neatly six inches of paper stacked in front of him...and...

...angrily slammed his hand down and said in an exasperated tone, "Excuses!"

Followed by, "Now, tell me what's really happening in your business?"

The follow-on dialog was frank and constructive, and we gained the support of this powerful person in the firm.

The Executive View

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: What are the BIG issues renting space in the minds of executives?

- Stock price
- profit
- Customer pain points
- Strategy, execution
- What's really happening in the market
- Implications from Covid
- Supply chain
- Relevant, technology; retention; recruiting; morale;
- Change initiatives... culture...
- Working across functions
- Completion: Upcoming board meeting
- Diversity opportunities

(Most) executives want more interaction with people close to the work and close to customers

Few executives get anywhere near the volume of feedback they need or want. People tend to tell them what they think they want to hear. Echo chamber

Executives are excited to find people with ideas, insights, and great questions!

Curiosity is a hallmark of good executives & they know you have a unique perspective

Do you have input that will help them/your firm? Use these insights to approach/engage!

Note to self: this is a great way to make yourself visible and valuable

"I want your input, I just want you to get to the point."

Brevity and clarity are highly valued!

Tailor your updates, insights, and ideas to the issues on your executives minds

"Don't pull your punches with me. Give it to me straight."

Cultivate the confidence to speak truth to power

At Least Nine Tips for Presenting to Executives

1. What are your tips for presenting to executives?
2. Frame the invitation as a GREAT BIG OPPORTUNITY
3. Align with your sponsor and define success for the presentation
4. Map your audience & strive to assess: What do you want them to know/What do you need from them?
5. Design and test your message using Strategic Message Mapping
6. Bring your confidence & back it with transparency
7. Passion is powerful, but there's a tipping point ...
8. Don't over-engineer your visual and supporting materials
9. Know when to stop.

NEWSFLASH-1: Executives appreciate individuals who have command of their areas of responsibility, are sound critical thinkers, and are passionate about their work!

NEWSFLASH-2: Your executive audience wants you to succeed!

THINK ABOUT IT: Your invitation to present to one or more executives is an opportunity to showcase your command of your area of responsibility, your critical thinking skills, and your passion for your work.

Tips for Success (or, how to get beyond nervousness and the sleepless nights leading up to the presentation)

NEWSFLASH-1: "Someone always chooses us to be successful!" -Jeffrey Pfeffer

NEWSFLASH-2: "I mention this communication tool in just about every Jam Session! It's that valuable!"

The Message Map enables you to get to the point; explain the high-level conclusion and rationale and then open up dialog quickly!

"B.L.U.F." (bottom line up front)

Allows you to expand/contract your presentation on-the-fly

Want this sample plus instructions? Send a note to art@artcothy.com. Include your top 10 for communicating with executives!

Sometimes you just have to resist blinking!

A well developed message map will bolster your confidence for presenting & Q/A

Offer your clear recommendation!

If possible, ditch the slides. Use your message map as a visual/aidout.

The Case of Joe:

Pictures rock!

A timely exit is appreciated. Make your point, establish your follow-up and exit.

LEVEL UP POWER SKILLS

CREATING THE MAP:

The Message Map is a tool to create and share challenging to understand or act on. It is a visual tool that helps you to communicate your message clearly and effectively. It is a tool that helps you to communicate your message clearly and effectively. It is a tool that helps you to communicate your message clearly and effectively.

Watch Out for these tripping points

Rambling

Ouch!

Making it up in response to questions

Not clarifying what you need from them

Not trying to do something that matters to them/the firm esp. customers

Burying your assumptions

Failing to think through the other side of your request: "What happens if we don't do this?" -Jeevan Balani

What are some of your tips?

Ask for specifics; clear your head and be present.

Expecting to close the sale in one step:

Remember the Persuasion Process

From resisting to listening

From listening to considering

From considering to doing

From doing to glad they did

Closing Recommendations:

Deliberately develop your confidence for engaging with executives

Seek opportunities to showcase your curiosity/expertise/passion

Don't be afraid to "ask"

Just as you should/would with any human, empathize with their situation/challenges and help them solve problems that matter

Remember when it's your turn as an executive to make it easy for others to share their ideas!

Leadership Caffeine Jam Session #10

Growth Hacks to Turn Your Career Around

August 10th, 12 PM CT