

Trust offers a clear path to successful solutions

When proposing a new solution, whether that be to your boss, your client or you are simply working to establish buy-in from a colleague, the biggest hurdle is to establish trust. If the other party does not trust you, how can they trust your solution? For me, I ask myself the questions, that I would expect my boss, client or co-worker to ask me. I poke holes in my theories. I play devil's advocate. I work to prove that I am wrong, right up until I am positive, that I am right.

First, identify the problem and give a brief overview of the solution. The problem is X, the solution is Y. This is pretty simple, as you already trust you, and you already have a solution in mind.

The next step is to ask and answer the following: "Why will it work?" I believe that this solution will work because I understand the problem, as explained above, and I'm addressing each aspect of the problem, as such. Provide examples of where it has worked before, other businesses that use the solution and their positive outcome. In this stage of your proposal, you are confident in yourself and your solution. Leverage your experience and really strut your stuff. If you are unable to get confident in this stage, reconsider your solution.

Now, here come those poked holes. What are the risks? What could go wrong? Why would it not work?



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Work through scenarios and list problems. Be realistic but be thorough. You do not have to explain why an alien landing could complicate the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, but you should consider all human, operational, tech-

nical, environmental and financial factors that could play into that successful or unsuccessful ERP implementation.

In this stage, you are looking to identify the problem, with your solution. Be tough on yourself. I assure you that your boss, client or coworker is going to be tougher.

Back to confidence. Identify how you are going to minimize those risks. Using the scenario from earlier, Jim in accounting may not have time to enter general ledger (GL) codes into that new ERP system.

You will manage that risk by bringing in a summer intern to assist with accounts payable and accounts receivable, thus freeing up Jim to enter those GLs.

What you are saying, is that you understand that the solution isn't perfect and that there are risks, but you have thought this through and have addressed each risk, with an appropriate solution.

Just as you did when identifying the risks, be thorough with your minimization of risks. Work outside the box and be creative with your solutions. Nothing is off the table except for the work that you will not actually do.

Do not offer any solutions that are unreasonable or genuinely unrealistic. For example, you cannot be in two places at once, and if you are not in a position to hire, do not offer resources that you do not have. Solve problems, do not write fantasies.

As I said earlier, it's all about trust. I get

all sorts of people emailing me, calling me and tracking me down at business events. The message is often about how great they are, how awesome their company is or how their solution is an open and shut case of absolute perfection.

"With our amazing solution, you can increase profits and lower costs," they'll say. "No muss, no fuss and it will even make you better looking."

Ahh... no. Wrong approach. Even if you caught my attention, you lost my trust, with your silly promises of perfection.

The right approach:

1. Understand the problem and show that by explaining the problem.

2. Have a good solution and demonstrate why it's a good solution by providing examples of where and why it has worked and your knowledge of the solution.

3. Acknowledge the risks, and then address each to manage expectation and build trust.

What that approach says is, "The most successful solution, to me is the one that works for you." You care about my needs, and you are honest. In our business and personal lives, we value trust and honesty. We also value hard work and thoroughness. If you want to gain my business, buy-in or approval, start by gaining my trust.

Scott Tornio is president of HawkPoint Technologies.

Appleton airport gets \$3 million from federal grant program

Appleton International Airport was awarded more than \$3 million dollars in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Infrastructure Grant program.

The grant, made available from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, has been awarded to more than 3,000 airports nationwide to invest in infrastructure projects including runways, taxiways, safety and sustainability projects, as well as terminal, airport-transit connections and roadway projects.



Weber

"With the increasing amount of travelers using the airport, it's imperative we have the infrastructure to meet that travel demand," said Abe Weber, Appleton Airport director. "Our current commercial aviation ramp was constructed more than 25 years ago and this federal funding will allow us to improve the size and safety of the ramp so we can service larger aircraft."

The Airport Infrastructure Grant program is one of three new aviation programs created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The law provides \$15 billion over five years for the program and allows airports to work on projects that will modernize their infrastructure.

Around NEW

Northeastern Wisconsin News Briefs

Applicants sought for Packers' mentor program

The Green Bay Packers' Mentor-Protégé Program is seeking mentor and protégé applicants for its 12th year of partnerships to foster business growth, economic development and job creation in Wisconsin.

In addition to seeking participants in Northeastern Wisconsin, the program is now recruiting businesses from the Madison and Milwaukee areas.

Protégé companies in the program will be matched with mentor companies that can provide technical, managerial, financial or other guidance to improve their competitive standing.

The program is open to all businesses. The mentor-protégé relationship requires at least a 12-month commitment.

Virtual Draft Days will be held via Zoom on Jan. 14 for Green Bay-area applicants and Jan. 21 for Milwaukee- and Madison-area applicants. The event will allow protégé companies

to meet with potential mentors and discover if a match would be beneficial.

The Packers Mentor-Protégé Program is administered by AFF Research LLC (AFFR). AFFR has consulted in the field of supplier diversity for 20 years, and has worked on the Lambeau Field redevelopment project and Atrium renovation project.

Applications can be submitted online at packers.com/community/mentor-protége.

Questions and requests for protégé and mentor applications should be directed to AFFR at (920) 884-5006 or via e-mail at aff@affresearch.com.

Dairy Business Innovation Alliance to offer grants

The Dairy Business Innovation Alliance (DBIA) is alerting small- to medium-sized dairy farmers, entrepreneurs, and processors to apply for a new, \$1 million round of grants administered by the DBIA.

The Dairy Business Builder grant competition opens Feb. 1 when applications will be available for download. Completed applications will be due March 31.

Eligible projects will include dairy farm diversification, the creation of value-added dairy products and efforts to market dairy products for

export.

Reimbursement grants of up to \$50,000 each will be awarded through a competitive review process.

Visit www.cdr.wisc.edu/dbia for more information.

Bay Bank to expand services with federal funds

Bay Bank received a \$300,000 Financial Assistance (FA) award from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFIF). The funds will be used to increase lending and investment activity in low-income and economically distressed communities.

Financial institutions receiving FA funds allow CDFIs to sustain and expand their financial products and services. The awards can be used for lending capital, loan loss reserves, capital reserves, financial services and development services.

"Receiving this award will allow us to better serve our customers here in Green Bay and in Keshena," said Bay Bank Vice President Nathan King.

Nationwide, the CDFIF awarded \$180.3 million to 265 Community Development Financial Institutions.