

Linda Swindling JD, CSP



IMPROVING YOUR INFLUENCE RESULTS FAST

Go face to face. We communicate through technology that focuses on short, quick responses. So much of the rapport-building opportunities have been eliminated. You deal with different people each transaction and there isn't the time to really form long-lasting relationships. Look for those opportunities to persuade on a personal level. Try to find ways to actually talk to human beings instead of pressing buttons and filling in forms. Invent ways for the other party to put a face with your voice or a voice with your email message.

Watch your manners. Most people are starved for respect. Many of us will go the extra mile for people who are simply considerate to us. Just showing common courtesy and listening to others will increase your results.

Start asking. Make outrageous requests. See what happens. So many of us stop ourselves by thinking "this person will never do that" or "I'd never give someone that" and this self-monitoring keeps us from getting the deals we could. Ask and see what the response is.

Involve the other party. Ask the other party what is important to them. Stop trying to be a mind reader and making decisions in a vacuum. Tell the other party your concerns and ask them for help solving them. Find out what other people have asked for or done. The old adage "people will support what they help build" works in negotiations as well. Let others help build or participate in the solution.

Stop looking in the rear view mirror. Stop limiting yourself because of a past mistake or a response you didn't like. We keep living in the past. If you made a mistake or someone didn't give you a request, let it go. Today is a new day, with new people who don't know that you made a mistake five years ago.

Don't be lazy. As pressed as everyone is for time, it is tempting to stop once a solution is found. Don't. There are many options in most negotiations. Once you find a possible solution, document it, put it aside and continue to brainstorm.

Determine the worst case scenario. Figure out what is the worst result that can happen. If you can live with the outcome, go negotiate. If you can't, go back to the drawing board and create some options.

Have a sense of humor. We can turn a negotiation into something as fearful as a firing squad. Lighten up. Most of our negotiations are not rocket science, thank goodness.

Practice, practice, practice. Your first goal should be to practice on strangers. Go to flea markets, garage sales and yard sales. Ask for an outrageous bargain or for something you stand no chance of getting and then see what happens. Practice with hotel front desk clerks, restaurant wait staff and service providers and practice. Practice on your family. If you can persuade your own family to help you out or do something, you can persuade practically anyone.

A recognized authority on negotiations, workplace issues, and persuasive communication, Linda Byars Swindling, is an author, television expert, a former employment attorney, and a Certified Speaking Professional. As a chair for Vistage International, the World's Largest CEO Development Organization, Linda has more than 2,000 hours as a CEO advisor and facilitator. She can be reached at linda@lindaswindling.com or 972-416-3652.