



GroupWyse

Working Together Wisely

<http://www.groupwyse.com>

Responsive Conversations

When you need help or approval from a supervisor, manager or coworker and you perceive that the conversation could be risky (for either or both of you), you are more likely to influence the outcome you desire by following these steps:

Requestor Responsibilities

- ❁ ***Think the Problem Through Beforehand***
 - Time is money and attention is precious: value your respondent.
 - Be coherent; lay it out in steps. It may help to write it down, talk it over or practice the conversation with someone you trust, or read an article to help you think it through.
 - Seek to be understood: it's your responsibility, not the respondent's.
- ❁ ***Get an Engagement Agreement from Respondent***
 - Ask for a hearing.
 - Provide an estimate of time required.
 - Be prepared to accept postponement
- ❁ ***Seek agreement on your understanding of the problem(s)***
 - Know what you want from this respondent and clearly ask for it (her role, reaction, merge ideas, etc.?).
 - Discuss tentative recommendations and alternative solutions.
 - Discuss ramifications and agree on next steps.
- ❁ ***Welcome the Response***
 - You may walk away with a better plan!
 - Input could be valuable, even if it is disconfirming
 - Respondents will reply in their own way (some need to let an idea germinate for awhile: be tolerant and take care not to become defensive or close out their ideas.



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When you are approached by someone requesting approval or help in resolving a problem or difficult issue, you are more likely to influence the outcome you desire by following these steps:

Respondent Responsibilities

- ❁ **Choose to fully engage, postpone or don't engage at all.**
 - You are not required to engage, but you should carefully consider and explain why you would choose not to.
 - If you engage, be committed to active participation.
 - If you postpone, be sure to set up a time when you can be available.
- ❁ **Let the requestor present (it's her nickel).**
 - Let the requestor tell her story; don't change the subject or interrupt.
 - Don't redefine meanings; instead, ask for clarification. ("tell me more....", "anything else?"). Paraphrase to be sure you understand the issues.
 - Hold that thought (wait your turn); take notes if necessary.
- ❁ **No cross-contamination.**
 - The past is past. Don't introduce prior difficulties or attempt other control devices.
 - The present can wait. Other issues shouldn't influence this one.
- ❁ **Listen, listen, listen (actively, with attentive body language)**
 - Assume the requestor has thought deeply about the problem.
 - Treat the requestor as you would like to be treated.
 - Assume the requestor has at least some interest in your views; she wouldn't be here if you weren't important to resolving the issue.