

7 STEPS TO ENROLL ADVOCATES IN YOUR BOLD IDEA

Here are the essential boxes you must check when you're enrolling people in your cause.

1. People know they are free to say no.

What?!!! That's crazy, isn't it? Actually, this may be the most important piece of all. You don't want people to say yes because they feel trapped. If it's a forced "yes," they'll find a way to sabotage later, even if it's unconscious. But a "yes" of their choosing is priceless. To choose "yes" emphatically, they need to know that "no" is a legitimate option. Put yourself in their shoes. How do you like it when your yes is expected? And how strong is your support when it is forced?

2. Demonstrate your shared concerns.

They must believe you're truly interested in their well-being and success as much as your own. If they believe you're all about you, they will opt out or stay at arm's length. Notice that Steps #1 & #2 have nothing to do with your idea. First, you have to convince their reptile brain they are safe.

3. Know their inner dialogue.

This is Sales/Influencing 101. Know your customer. Can you describe their hopes, dreams, fears, and struggles in their words? Use THEIR words, not your translation of their words. When you describe it, you want them to feel like you've been living in their head. How do you develop this knowledge? Question 1 to ask them is "what keeps you up at night?" Then, build from there.

4. Make the idea matter to them.

Connect your idea to what they told you matters to them. Your goal is that they understand clearly how your idea is going to make their fears and struggles go away and their hopes and dreams grow. Your idea feels personal.

5. Tell stories, thoughtfully.

You tell a story about the past, present, and future that they can see themselves in. Your story about the past and present must ring true to their experiences. (Meet them where they are.) Your story about the future shows how your new idea addresses their hopes, dreams, fears, and anxieties. (Show them that what they want is possible.)

6. Make it easy for them to say yes and to take action.

There is no confusion in their mind. The path forward is simple and clear. They don't have to pause and think about what to do next. It may not be clear what to do next week, but they know what to do now. You repeatedly make it easier to say yes to this new path than to retreat to the old one, even when things are stressful.

7. First find the fringe.

Rarely, will you get broad support immediately, especially if your idea is controversial or threatening to the status quo. Find the thought leaders and influencers on the fringes that others listen to. They may not be the obvious power brokers, but people trust and listen to them. Complete steps 1-6 with them, first. Once they're on board, invite them to help build the enrollment plans for more people.