

10 STEPS FOR SELLING YOUR TECH PROJECT INTERNALLY

GUIDE





CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION

You have goals to accomplish, results to deliver and corporate expectations to meet. You've also got a keen awareness of the capabilities of the tools and resources at your disposal. Maybe these are adequate to achieve the company goals, but typically there are outdated technologies, minimal headcount and inefficient processes getting in the way.

Moreover, chances are, you're not the only department in this predicament. While your company has a budget, it is limited, and the inter-departmental competition to secure funds can be a challenge, particularly in enterprise technology spend. Within the world of accounts payable, automation is the new standard, and while the benefits may seem obvious to you, the task of selling this initiative up to (and including) the C-class can be daunting, and maybe even seemingly impossible.

However, by keeping a few thoughts in mind, you can help your chances of getting sign-off and moving forward with the project. This guide sets out to provide you with a simple 10-point guideline for selling your ideas internally.

1



COMPARE PATHS

The simple approach of “before and after” can go a long way in illustrating a concept, or the ramifications of a decision. By providing a projected result (based on current projections or prior results) compared to a detailed account of how your proposed solution can benefit the business, you remove the abstraction and place it firmly into well-understood context.

But be advised, this is not the time to provide detailed information about the solution – instead, focus on clearly articulating how incorporating it will benefit the stakeholders involved.

2



INDICATE SUCCESS ALONG THE WAY

It's easy to get overwhelmed by thoughts of integrating expensive and highly-sophisticated technology, and in doing so, the decision can commonly hit a standstill, or fall out of consideration altogether. When the undertaking is this massive, it can be helpful to explicitly identify both significant milestones as well as smaller achievements to focus on post-launch, which help to define success and validate the decision to purchase. If you can associate these with business-critical KPI, all the better.

3



APPEAL TO YOUR STAKEHOLDERS

The financial functions within your company do not exist in a vacuum, and the stakeholders involved come from various departments, each with their own needs, goals, and agendas.

To effectively communicate your project, take the time to have conversations with these stakeholders. Learn about some of their challenges, and even try to pick up on the lingo. Pitching your idea to the head of IT about how it can help justify the allocation of budget toward a new AP automation tool isn't going to get you very far. However, mentioning how it can eliminate ongoing platform maintenance costs, well that's something he or she would find interesting.

4



LEVERAGE CORPORATE MOMENTUM

As corporate goals and initiatives gain definition within your organization, it makes sense to position your pitch accordingly. If the company's direction within a given year (or quarter) is adopting digital business, then craft your presentation to be in alignment with this. If it's about data or cost-savings, craft your approach to the project such that it aligns with those defining the goals. This alignment can make a pitch to the C-class much more compelling from a strategic standpoint.

5



CONSIDER YOUR PRESENTATION APPROACH

It's important not to present your solution as a disruption. Preferably, frame it as a solution which can easily incorporate itself into the daily operations of the business. Resistance to change, even minor, is human nature, so it's understandable how this could cause objection. When discussing your idea, it can be positioned as a transition, and augmentation, or an evolution rather than a wholesale re-design of current operations, which might evoke fear of the unknown.

6



PREPARE FOR OBJECTIONS

When it comes to making a compelling argument, preparation is vital. So, in processes such as these, there will be no shortage of pushback to your proposed solution. Some points may be well-founded and clearly-presented, while others may merely be objections for the sake of objecting. There's no way to precisely predict what your peer's sticking points may be, but it benefits you to be prepared to speak to these points knowledgeably and confidently.



7



BE CONSIDERATE WITH YOUR WORDS

When proposing any new initiatives, it stands to reason that it is in response to inefficient, broken, redundant, or ineffective tools or processes. However, keep in mind that these tools and protocols were championed at one point by current colleagues or former employees for a reason. Any negative or critical remarks can come across as disparaging their efforts, which in turn can sour them on your alternative approach and potentially lose their support for your cause. Be tactful, and speak instead of existing shortcomings as valuable steps in the continued evolution of your company's growth.

8



BE PATIENT

As frustrating as it can be, these processes can take a significant amount of time (maybe even years). However, when you consider the number of initiatives going on at any given time, all of which are designed to move the business forward, these timelines are easily understood. So as with the previously mentioned momentum approach, timing can be the factor that makes or breaks your pitch.

You may be aware of some future initiatives in which your proposal makes perfect sense. Let's say, for example, that the company focus in Q1 is efficiency. Timing a project such as AP automation to support this mantra will be much more timely than doing so when the corporate sight is set on product excellence or client satisfaction. While it can be easy to become impatient, utilize this time to refine the business case and develop a compelling argument for change.

9



PROJECT THE BENEFITS ACROSS DEPARTMENTS

For your project to gain serious momentum, it helps to illustrate how your solution extends beyond your departmental gains. Given the financial nature of your role, finding ways to win allies in Sales, Marketing and Technology could help drive your initiative to the top of the consideration stack when it comes time for budgeting or allocation. Also, by doing so, the business case can be more holistically crafted to illustrate the transformative impact such an initiative can make.



FACILITATE DEPARTMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Virtually every function within a company is going through some degree of transformation. For instance, for the marketers, it might be a shift to account-based targeting. For IT, it could be from in-house technologies to SaaS. And when it comes to Accounts Payable, it's the migration from simple operational work into a strategically-focused profit center.

The manner in which your organization is embracing transformation can be a crucial part of communicating the value of your proposed solution. In particular, familiarizing yourself with the changes tasked to the various functional C-class members can help provide an avenue to showcase ways in which your proposal can facilitate their transformations.

Ultimately, the process of selling your ideas up the chain is a difficult task, which requires dozens of parts to come together at the right time. There's no set formula for guaranteeing success, but by carefully considering better ways to demonstrate and communicate the value, the higher your chance of getting elusive budget dollars becomes.



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The Circulus AP automation solution was created to provide businesses with the tools they need to harness the power of an automated and online AP workflow. It is our goal to offer a solution that is affordable to any business, while not compromising on technology or features. With Circulus, we have developed a solution which allows users to streamline processes, enhance data quality, tighten AP controls, and consolidate invoice management into a single interface.

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