

Selling Tech to Your C-Suite – 3 Tips to Make Them Say “Yes”



Budgets are tight and we’re all being asked to do more with less. At the same time, technology continues to advance and customers are demanding more. So, how do you make the case for your organization to invest in **new technology**? Here are three pointers to help you get a “yes” for your major tech project.

1 Know who your audience is

Who are you trying to convince? Are you going up the chain of command, so your audience is your immediate boss? Is it some other influencer? How many middle steps are involved in an approval? Ultimately it will come down to **the final decision-maker** – the person who is “writing the check” or whose budget is affected – **most likely the C-suite**. That person will be the most important audience, so even if you have steps along the way, you need to prepare for that final approval.

So, is that C-suite person a technical person?

Maybe.

A businessperson?

Probably.

Know who your C-suite audience is, and what’s important to them, so you can craft your message accordingly. (That message will probably be different for the C-suite vs. other levels in the process.) Unfortunately, often we prepare a presentation or request based on “ourselves” – we make ourselves the audience. We’re not the people who need convincing. You need to be audience-focused and know what **business benefits** will convince the C-suite to go forward.

2 Features vs. benefits

What is a feature, and what is a benefit? This is an easy trap to step into – even the most experienced requisitioners, presenters (and sellers) fall victim to features vs. benefits.

Always remember:



A feature is something an item has or does



A benefit is how a specific person (your audience) will use or gain something from the feature

Don’t mix up the two

Don’t assume the audience understands the benefit by knowing the feature

Don’t just list features – describe benefits that are important to the audience

Here's a very simple example. Real estate agents always add descriptions of the houses they're selling, like, "...it has a big backyard..." But, what does that really mean? If presenting that to an older couple, they may not want the headaches of taking care of a big backyard – so the sale is lost. But "a big backyard where the grandchildren can play" may make the sale. The big backyard is a feature of the house, not a benefit in itself. The specific benefit – happy grandkids, a place for a vegetable garden, an area for the family dog to run around in – must be connected to the specific audience.

This does apply to technology – even more so, as tech people often just think in terms of the tech features – or the tech benefit the C-suite may not understand or care about. For example, a desired software's feature that will integrate your warehouse operations with your independent carriers may not impress your C-suite, but the benefit that customers will get their items quicker and then buy more often will. Complex technologies can have many features – and many benefits. What are the benefits your C-suite decision-maker wants to see?

3 Don't "bury the lead" – and have a call to action

Many times, people seeking approvals feel the need to be long-winded and use big words to impress the C-suite. This is usually not the case – know your audience. The C-suite has a lot going on; they'll appreciate brevity and getting to the point. "Bury the lead" is a journalism term – it means when the most important fact, figure or outcome is buried so far down in a story that it gets lost or loses its impact.

If a new technology will help generate **\$10 million in new sales**, don't tell a long and complicated story to get there. **That's your lead – start with that.**

To end, all your communications **must have a call to action**. You want your C-suite audience to take that next step, so make it specific and as immediate as possible, and tie it back to the benefits. "Please approve this new integration software purchase by month's end so we can start generating more repeat sales."

Remember ...



Know your audience



Outline the business benefits



Don't bury the important stuff, and have the call to action –

and you'll be successful dealing with your C-suite and helping your company achieve critical business goals.



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