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From "NATIONS BUSINESS"

HOW TO SELL YOUR IDEAS

**Advance planning and proper presentation
will boost your chances of success**

MILLIONS OF DOLLARS are lost to business every year because many valuable ideas stay locked up in the minds of executives and their subordinates.

Many men can't sell their ideas to the boss. The basis of this may be simply the fear of rebuff, sometimes based on past rejections. It also can be a reluctance to face up to the enormous task of preparing an effective, salable presentation for an idea. Or some men may feel that the extra effort it takes to convince other of the value of an idea is unimportant compared with having conceived it in the first place. They don't seem to realize that ideas must be sold.

Putting an idea into salable shape requires persistent effort. It may demand more work than origination of the idea. In addition, a lot of courage, imagination, foresight, initiative, resourcefulness, and staying power are needed.

Joseph G. Mason, management consultant in training and personnel relations, points out: "In many cases, the person you are submitting your idea to will not even realize that there is a need for it. You may have to begin at the beginning and go through the whole reasoning process that you yourself followed."

Presenting a new idea is in many ways one of the most crucial aspects of the creative process. Many a brilliant idea dies stillborn at this stage because the manager fails to communicate his brain child to others persuasively. Here are some guideposts that will increase your chances of success:

In most companies the person who must be sold the new idea first is your immediate superior. Selling it to top management then becomes much easier. Eugene Von Fange of General Electric suggests that the best way to secure your superior's backing is to "imagine what he believes is important, and then approach him from this vantage point."

If you have to present the idea to a committee, you should try to sell it before the time of the meeting to one or two members. These individuals often appreciate advance confidence and will rally to your side if the going gets rough during the presentation.

Before actually presenting the idea, you should give a short history of the problem, what led you to investigate the area and how you proceeded to solve the problem and create the new idea.

George R. Eckstein, research associate with Remington Arms Company, Inc., who has been training industry groups in selling ideas for over a decade, advises:

"Show by your conversation that this idea isn't the first one that's popped into your head. You've thought about the problem and you've made various approaches or made refinements until you're satisfied you've got something worth while. The purpose of this advice is to build up status so that when you open your mouth, something worth while happens. The person who goes off half-cocked continuously may be fine to stimulate other around him in an idea session, but when you're ready to 'sell' an idea, demonstrate that you've thought it through."

(Continued next month)