

All the more reason for Mike to try. It will make his response to the boss so much more knowledgeable and effective, so much more responsive to the issues at hand rather than only to his own needs. Mike can then become oriented to my basic premise—give the other person what *they* need, first, and you'll get yours, too. Or at least *some* of yours.

Discovering, as he focuses on the boss's Goals, that the boss has other goals entirely; that they are practical and necessary ("How do I get Mike to give me those reports on time?") not just muscle-flexing, makes Mike think again about *his* attitude and what's a more appropriate approach to the meeting.

As he charts the boss's inner needs ("I need my people to do what I ask them to do"), Mike begins to develop sympathy for the boss's position, not just for his own.

As for Expectations, he could recognize that the boss would *expect* him to promise to do better. What else would the boss think Mike would do? Say, "Forget it. I'm doing the best I can"? So, if the boss obviously expects a promise but will probably not believe it, Mike had better do something else to shore up his credibility.

Recognizing all this, Mike could well begin to rethink his whole position about being late. Why is he? What *can* he do to change that? How can he get some good, hard advice about another way to do the reports? This thinking could open the way to Mike himself starting the conversation:

MIKE: "Before you begin, let me say that I know my reports have been late. I just haven't been able to short-cut enough stuff to get them in on time. Maybe if I talk it through with you, we can find a solution."

Bingo again! Mike gains points in three different areas:

- He surprises the boss! By *not* giving an excuse or a promise he gets the boss's attention and sets the boss off on another track.
- By taking the initiative, he shows the boss his good intentions and *true* desire to fix the problem. And that he has courage.
- Putting himself in the active "mea culpa" role lessens the need for the boss to make critical comments and shows another side of himself: Mike as positive problem solver, eager and able to change.

To sum up: Fore-Thought is crucial to effective communications strategies. Here's a summary and checklist from which to work your Fore-Thought Chart: