

- What sources on both sides can you tap into to fulfill your intention for this encounter?
- How do they complement, interact, or collide?

No matter what communications challenge you face, the following chart will give you a basic framework within which to collect your thoughts in a disciplined, orderly fashion. It will organize the insights you need to design how and what you should communicate.

And the chart works whether you are the originator of an encounter or the responder to an invitation or summons.

### *Why a Chart?*

Making a chart forces you to sit still and purposefully think about motivation issues; it graphically shows you and makes you consider both sides.

Writing helps to clarify:

- It takes your thoughts to a much more clear-headed level, away from the instinctive, emotional one of operating by reflex alone.
- It forces you to reduce ideas and feelings to simple, succinct statements of fact.
- It makes ideas concrete. They stand still so you can reread and ponder what you're actually thinking.

### *The Process*

Let's go back and use our example of Mike and his Exec. How should the Exec go about figuring out the predictables? How could he/she know how to make the exchange different and more effective than the initial unproductive encounter I described? By "coaching" the Exec through the steps of creating a Fore-Thought Chart and then showing the changes he/she would therefore make in a communication strategy, I can demonstrate, concretely, the uses and values of the Fore-Thought Chart.

### *The Format*

Three categories—"Objective Goals, Emotional Needs, and Probable Expectations"—will cover the basic kinds of insights you'll need to prepare effective communications strategies. It will look like this: