

- *Smaller audiences*

One or several people need more personal, individual information as well as the basic overview. Your perceptual instincts (which we'll work to enlarge through these pages) can quickly fill in what personal characteristics your opposite number(s) seems to display once your meeting gets going, if you look and listen hard. Then you can adapt and correct your previous plans, if you need to.

But in either case, you need first to find out about the self-interest or motivations of that audience in order to plan your communications strategy effectively.

We established earlier, with Mike and the Exec, that Fore-Thought is able to save you time and unproductive effort. We also discovered how predictable many needs and responses can be. Since your audience's motivations are the key to persuasion, how do you figure out what kinds of questions to ask yourself in order to prepare? How should you organize the answers into a usable strategy?

To codify how to do this efficiently every time, here are some basic principles and techniques—a system.

THE FORE-THOUGHT CHART

The Basic Idea

The best system for Fore-Thought is to make a chart describing the motivations already in place and being brought to the encounter.

It's not only your *audience* you need to know more about as you sit down to plan your message or meeting; it's your *own* motivational profile, too. There's some deliberate self-discovery you need to go through to be sure all your bases are covered and that your goals will be achieved.

The chart's focus:

- What does the other person (or persons) want, need, and expect—both specifically and generally? What's important to them?
- What do *you* want, need, and expect? What's important to you?
- Where is the energy and the motivation for action for *you* as well as for them?