

MASTERING WAYS TO REPLY TO OBJECTIONS

► Possessing persuasive arguments and creating a positive atmosphere are not enough to be convincing. The people you are talking to may object and in this case, you need to know how to respond. The risk when responding to objections is to become involved in a never-ending and wholly unfruitful game of argument and counter-argument – quite inadmissible in a management context and rather damaging to your credibility.



To cope with objections, anticipate

Distinguishing between three categories of objections.

There are three categories of objections. You will not address them in the same way.

- Problems that are very easy to resolve
These should be answered without wasting any time.
- Problems that are impossible to solve
You should not waste time with these, as they are impossible to resolve.
- Problems for which the solution is not easy but possible
A manager who has broad experience in the techniques of answering objections can resolve them.

Anticipating objections.

Anticipating allows you to respond better to objections. Ask yourself in particular if one of these frequent objections can be lodged against you:

- “Thank you, but we’re not looking for anything at the present time.”
- “We think your project is going to cost too much – it’s not possible.”
- “We already do that.”

- “It’s fine, but it is not very useful for us.”
- “Your idea is already being made use of by such-and-such a colleague, such-and-such a competitor, etc.”
- “The quality of your achievement is insufficient for such-and-such a reason.”

Anticipating your response to the objection.

You should ask yourself two questions.

- What should you say in response to objections?
To find as many answers as possible to objections, carry out a brainstorming. This will enable you to determine a very complete set of arguments that you can use in response and without hesitation.
- How should you respond to an objection?
Knowing all the responses to objections is not enough. Some discussions are simply interminable exchanges of arguments without any development whatsoever of the points covered.
You therefore need to conduct your argumentation in a way that will enable you to be heard.

Techniques for responding to objections

In responding to an objection, you run the risk of ending up in a confrontation. Each person digs their heels in and neither party seeks common ground. Several techniques make it possible to avoid this kind of standstill.

The technique of “yes... but”

This method consists of yielding diplomatically to then recover at the moment of the counter argument and





thus avoid contradicting the other person with brutality, which sooner or later always risks provoking a confrontation.

Instead of telling the other person they are wrong, you can answer, for example: *"Yes I understand the point of view you are developing there perfectly. But you see, in this particular case we could gain a certain advantage by proceeding differently for such and such a reason."*

The stalling method

This method consists of holding off before giving a response by saying, for example: *"If you don't mind, I'll answer you in a few moments..."*

This method works if the objection comes too soon or if it is a matter of obvious pretext.

The preventive method

This method consists of spontaneously raising an obvious objection yourself: *"You are going to tell me that..."*.

Elimination

This method is useful when one is confronted with several objections at once: you only answer one and then move on.

The questioning method

This method consists of asking questions in order to obtain information and so respond better to the objection.

The comparative method

This method makes use of an example or a comparison to give strength to the response.

Rephrasing

This method allows you to repeat the objection using different words to alleviate or prevent possible aggression and by showing the other person that what they are saying interests you.

The mirror questions technique

- Content yourself with reflecting your objector's words.

- Rephrase in the form of a question.

For example, confronted with the objection: "Your project is going to cost us far too much money!"

You ask: "Basically you are asking yourself: why give my project the green light given the money it will cost, is that it?"

- Your interlocutor can only answer yes. The secret of the mirror question is that the client has to admit that the rep is concerned with his or her problems. By answering yes, they open themselves to the arguments that will follow – that is, a demonstration backed up with figures.

"You see, the investment that I am proposing is going to give way to a whole set of services that will save you a lot of manpower in the end. Allow me to make a little calculation..."

- But be careful: this method requires that you first diagnose the real underlying issue the client faces – what really concerns them – before tackling this concern with a mirror question.

Formulate your mirror question.

To prepare your mirror question:

- Anticipate the other person's possible objections.
- Formulate your mirror question. Then ask yourself:
 - Are you going to obtain a frank and whole-hearted yes to your question?
 - Does it rephrase the objection well?
 - Have you correctly diagnosed the other person's concerns?

If this is not the case, rephrase your question.

- Prepare an argument that you will offer in response. Then ask yourself if it follows on logically from your mirror question.