

## **Elicit More Ideas** **By Robert T. Whipple MBA CPTD**



In many situations, if you are a leader, it is important to elicit many ideas. By holding back on your brilliant opinion of what to do, you can usually draw out more insightful ideas. Let's examine some examples.

To make enlightened decisions, leaders need good information. Sometimes it is helpful for you to just listen to the ideas of others. Rather than blurting out your preconceived notion, consider asking more questions. You will elicit far more information from other people.

The way to execute this strategy is simple. Refrain from making absolute statements, and ask a lot of open-ended questions. This process draws out alternate points of view from individuals. It allows you to hear many nuances before tipping your hand.

Don't display hubris, and expound your perspective on every issue before others have a chance to voice their ideas. Being too smart is often a dumb strategy. Of course, no rule of thumb works in every situation. You need to know when the time is right to divulge your opinion.

### **Making Decisions**

The same logic holds when making decisions after gathering information. You could ask, "What do you think we should do," instead of saying, "Here is what we should do." Doing this would draw out the best ideas available.

The antidote to this problem is simple. You need to understand this dynamic and catch yourself in the act. By being alert to the dangers of advocating too early, you can improve your batting average. You allow everyone to enter the conversation at an appropriate level. Make sure to consider using their ideas, not just default to your own opinions.

## **Sometimes You Need to Act Fast**

In a crisis situation, it may be necessary for you to be highly directive and quick on the draw. Usually, it is better for you to allow conversation around sensitive issues. Then work with people to find the best solution.

It is important to catch yourself on this issue and begin to train yourself to have more patience. God gave you two ears and one mouth, because you should listen twice as much as you speak. Many leaders do not understand this simple logic, and it works to their detriment.

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