

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR YOUR IDEAS™

A BlessingWhite Fact Sheet

Having a good idea isn't good enough

To thrive in today's economy, your organisation must continually and rapidly bring new and improved products to market. That requires a relentless search for creative ideas and fresh approaches. While your staff may have great ideas and the technical skills to pull them off, ideas are wasted if they get lost in the communication process. Contrary to popular myth, even the best ideas can't sell themselves.

The challenge

Your technical staff was hired for their technical competency, not necessarily for their interpersonal skills. Yet it's those skills that will often spell the difference between an idea that moves and one that disappears. Too many projects are fighting for limited amounts of time, resources and funding. For an idea to turn into action, its value must be persuasively communicated to those whose support is necessary for implementation.

Soft skills with hard results

Often considered a soft skill, persuasive communication works hand in glove with technical skills in bringing an idea to fruition. When technical professionals become adept at interpersonal skills, the entire organisation benefits. People are encouraged to strive for innovation and see ways to prevent roadblocks from stalling their progress. Product-cycle times are reduced and good ideas make it to market more quickly and efficiently.

"Instead of approaching people and asking them to do something for me, I find myself explaining the background and benefit to them, almost without thinking about it. It gains their cooperation so much faster."

BSI participant

Building Support for Your Ideas™

Designed for technical professionals, managers and project leaders, *BSI* equips employees with the skills that are fundamental to having their ideas — ideas that can improve the productivity and profitability of your organisation — considered, approved and implemented. Participants learn how to apply communication skills to overcome resistance to change, present and defend ideas and proposals and win the cooperation of others.

Organisations use *BSI* to:

- Improve communication, influencing skills, teamwork and cooperation
- Promote innovation and change
- Reduce product cycle time
- Better utilise limited resources
- Enhance interpersonal effectiveness of knowledge workers.

Four influencing situations

BSI will teach your staff how to gain support in these four situations:

1. Gaining cooperation from others

The complexity of technology makes it more difficult to finish any kind of project without the contributions of others. In today's flatter organisations, employees must gain cooperation from people over whom they may have no authority: peers, other departments and outside resources. *BSI* participants will become adept at persuasively communicating their ideas in truly collaborative ways.

2. Obtaining management support

Conflicting priorities and agendas can sometimes prevent an idea from getting through to the people who need to hear it the most. Participants will learn to create awareness among decision-makers in order to gain their commitment and resources.

3. Selling an idea to a group

Gaining the buy-in of a group requires presenting to people with different views and agendas. Participants learn the skills necessary to deliver ideas that are clear, compelling and to the point. *BSI* also helps participants motivate others to work together and approach ideas from a team perspective.

4. Facilitating change

Overlapping responsibilities, aversion to change, sensitive political and organisational issues — these hurdles can prevent employees from getting their change ideas implemented. Participants learn how to respond to these challenges and bring about change in the organisation.

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Reinventing leadership and the meaning of work™

Critical communication skills

Throughout the workshop, participants will learn and practise these strategic communication skills:

- Clarifying needs/questioning
- Communicating benefits
- Gaining commitment
- Reading cues
- Testing for reaction
- Listening actively
- Reinforcing positive responses
- Handling objections
- Creating need awareness.

Why does BSI work?

Research-based — BSI is based on extensive research with successful technical professionals, those whose effectiveness is proven to be directly linked to their ability to gain cooperation and commitment from others for their ideas.

Real situations — Using a combination of behaviour modeling, video examples and scenarios specific to the technical environment, participants are given numerous hands-on opportunities for practise, feedback and reinforcement. Practise sessions are based on real work situations, giving participants the chance to hone new skills and behaviours that will apply directly to their job.

"I liked the fact that I had a chance to practise certain skills during the workshop using my own real situation. I now feel confident enough to try it out on the job tomorrow."

BSI participant

The BSI process

Pre-workshop assignment —

Participants complete a self-evaluation survey covering a range of interpersonal skills and influencing situations. Their managers and/or peers complete two additional surveys. Finally, participants prepare for real work situations they will practise during the workshop.

Two- to three-day workshop —

The workshop teaches participants the basic building blocks of the influencing process: how to utilise powerful and effective interpersonal skills, how to prepare their ideas and how to present their ideas so people get behind them.

Ongoing Development — BSI sets the stage for ongoing use and reinforcement of these skills in three ways: participants use what they have learned in real work situations, honing their skills day by day; participants can create informal practise sessions to refresh what they've learned; and any BSI participant can lead formal practise sessions at regular intervals.

Easily tailored to your specific needs

The BSI process can be customised to support or complement an existing system, target a specific population or reflect your distinct organisational culture.

Global implementation

A leader in worldwide implementations, BlessingWhite has qualified and committed instructors around the world and our material has been translated into several languages. We also have a top-rated train-the-trainer programme to certify internal staff members.

When we recently surveyed 898 managers of highly skilled employees across four continents, 77% indicated that it was critical that their team members present ideas to gain commitment from others. Only 45% of those managers, however, believed their team members are actually effective doing so.