

## 7 Tips to Engage C-Suite Executives







(<https://www.tlnt.com/7-tips-to-engage-c-suite-executives/>)

*“Never heard back on that.”*

*“They never took serious action on my recommendation.”*

*“Sure would like to have a seat at the table when that discussion comes up next time!”*

All of these are common laments from those who’ve had their day in front of C-suite decision makers — and for some reason left defeated and ultimately disappointed.

After more than three decades of listening to executives critique briefers, I have a long list of dos and don’ts for coaching (<https://www.tlnt.com/stop-talking-the-hr-talk-if-you-want-to-be-heard/>) clients as they head into the C-suite.

Whether you’re making a formal presentation or simply engaged in conversation, what does it take to gain buy-in at the executive level? Seven tips here:

### 1. Talk about profitability, not just revenue and growth

Salespeople tend to focus on revenue because that’s typically what generates their commissions and bonuses. Marketing teams and operational support folks focus on growth because that’s easy to measure. But C-suite leaders concern themselves with expenses as well as revenue and growth. That ratio translates to overall profitability — or not.



In fact, increased revenue and growth — with no control on related expenses — can drive an organization into bankruptcy! So if you want to speak the language of executives, talk about profit margins.

## 2. Answer the “So what?”

Some professionals are so steeped in their functional roles and jargon that they expect the facts to speak for themselves. They rarely do. The savvy communicator adds the “So what” (<https://www.tlnt.com/how-hr-can-become-more-strategic/>) to the conversation. For example: “We’ve had a reject rate of less than 2% on this latest model rolling off the assembly line so what that means is we should be able to shave more than \$800K off our projected budget for rework.”

## 3. Cut the clutter

Turn topics into takeaways. Cut the verbiage. Simplify the graphs (<https://www.tlnt.com/do-i-have-too-many-slides/>). Executives have many decisions, problems, and projects in their pipeline. They don’t have time to decipher the meaning of a slide deck of charts and graphs with a heavy load of data. So title the slide with the key takeaway, not just the vague topic. What point are you making with the slide?

Likewise with graphics. Don’t dump all the possible data you can display onto one slide. It’s far better to prepare three slides to make your three key points than to make one complex slide that requires three minutes for your audience to digest.

## 4. Pay attention to timing

Even generals try not to fight on all fronts at once. If you have crises on all fronts of the organization, be selective about timing so that you have the executive’s full attention for your message.

## 5. Have data but never depend on it

Executives like to *know* there are metrics to support what you say or recommend — they just don’t always want to *hear* them. Taking your C-level officers through all the evidence can try their patience. They’re expecting you to do your job and draw conclusions that spring from that research.

Always have support for your recommendation, but never expect data alone (<https://www.tlnt.com/why-data-alone-is-not-convincing/>) to make your case.

Article Continues Below

**SPONSORED CONTENT**



# 2018 Global Recruiting Trends:

The 4 ideas transforming how you hire

The way you hire is changing. They are all about killing the transaction in recruiting, making hiring more strategic, and letting recruiters and hiring managers focus on what they do best — building relationships. Learn what these trends are and how companies are preparing for them.

LEARN MORE ([HTTPS://BUSINESS.LINKEDIN.COM/TALENT-SOLUTIONS/RECRUITING-TIPS/2018-GLOBAL-RECRUITING-TRENDS?SRC=PUB-SYND&VI](https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/recruiting-tips/2018-global-recruiting-trends?src=pub-synd&vi))

## 6. Perfect the “Big Picture” with storytelling

Add the human dimension. Given your data, your research, your interviews, and your expertise on the subject, what’s the impact (<https://www.tlnt.com/its-not-the-data-but-what-you-do-with-it-that-matters/>)? What’s the story you’re telling? Tell the C-suite how this change, this policy, the budget increase, this move, or this marketing campaign will affect people — employees, customers, the general public. What’s the long-term effect or potential opportunity? Give them a visual picture.

## 7. Include next steps

Never walk away from the conversation or briefing without suggestions for next actions. It’s typically a good idea to provide these next steps on a leave-behind so the C-suite executive can delegate the action after the “go” decision.

With these seven steps to gain buy-in, you’ll dramatically increase your chances that your next briefing or conversation with C-suite decision makers gets attention — the right kind.

*This article originally appeared on the Booher Research Institute (<http://www.booherresearch.com/blog/>)blog.*






0 Comments    EREMedia

Dianna Booher

Recommend    Share

Sort by Best


 Start the discussion...

Be the first to comment.

ALSO ON EREMEDIA


A Look at the #MeToo Movement’s Impact In the US, Brazil and the UK

1 comment • 14 days ago

 **Joe Chappell** — Thank you for this important article. It is clear #MeToo has had a significant impact well beyond the realm of Hollywood. It is so important it is a broader conversation and


Use a Mentor to Find Your Next Sourcing Job

3 comments • 19 days ago

 **derdiver** — Beyond honored and humbled by this article as we all are. This is what a community of tribe is about. My arms will be forever be open to help those who want to learn


The Top 10 Reasons Why Social Media Background Checks Are a Dumb Idea

1 comment • 6 days ago

 **Jerry Broitzman** — This is excellent advice. The risk of assessing a person based on social media reviews is far greater than any potential benefits.

Why Look Outside When You Already Have Great People?

1 comment • 2 days ago

 **Emma-Jane Shaw** — A great article! Measuring levels of employee experience can have significant impacts on your competitive advantage and drive bottom line results,

ERE ([HTTPS://WWW.ERE.NET](https://www.ere.net))

TLNT ([HTTPS://WWW.TLNT.COM](https://www.tlnt.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.TLNT.COM](https://www.tlnt.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.TLNT.COM](https://www.tlnt.com))SOURCECON

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))ABOUT ERE MEDIA

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/ABOUT/](https://www.eremedia.com/about/))

CONTACT ([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/CONTACT/](https://www.eremedia.com/contact/))

PRIVACY POLICY

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/PRIVACY-POLICY/](https://www.eremedia.com/privacy-policy/))

EDITORIAL ETHICS

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/EDITORIAL-ETHICS/](https://www.eremedia.com/editorial-ethics/))

([HTTPS://WWW.SOURCECON.COM](https://www.sourcecon.com))

ADVERTISE

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/ADVERTISE/](https://www.eremedia.com/advertise/))

TERMS OF SERVICE

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/TERMS-OF-SERVICE/](https://www.eremedia.com/terms-of-service/))

CODE OF CONDUCT

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/CODE-OF-CONDUCT/](https://www.eremedia.com/code-of-conduct/))

ERE FOUNDATION

([HTTPS://WWW.EREMEDIA.COM/FOUNDATION/](https://www.eremedia.com/foundation/))