



Preparing for Conversations

One skill which assists you to create success is to prepare for conversations. It is a good idea to understand what you would like to accomplish before speaking with an individual or group.

The benefits of preparing ahead of time include;

- Clarity about essential talking points and outcomes
- Highly-refined questions
- Deeper understanding about their goals
- Ideas about possible next steps

Here are a few ideas to assist you to prepare for conversations which are essential in your work.

1. Research topics which are of interest and benefit the other person or group.
2. Make a list of questions which assist you to understand the goals of the person or group.
3. Use open-ended questions whenever possible. These are questions which cannot be answered by 'yes' or 'no'. A good example of an open-ended question is;

Can you say more about that?

You will understand more about the goals and projects of the person or group and possible next steps by using open-ended questions.

4. Create talking points for the conversation. Share these ahead of time or at the beginning of the conversation. Ask for additional topics they would like to share with you.
5. Know ahead of time or at the first part of the conversation the amount of time you have to speak together. This will assist you to know how much detail to share and how in depth your questions should be.

Checklist For Preparing For Conversations

Here is a checklist based upon the ideas above which assists you to prepare for successful conversations.

1. Create a purpose for the conversation.
2. Develop possible outcomes for you and the person or group.
3. Research topics which are helpful to them and the conversation.
4. Create a list of talking points.
5. Share the talking points and ask for additional topics they would like to include in the conversation.
6. Develop open-ended questions.
7. Know the amount of time you have for the conversation. Have extra questions ready should the conversation extend or you would like you have a second conversation together.

Use this checklist and any additional items which assist you to achieve successful results in your essential conversations at work.

Taking time to prepare for conversations assists you to create new levels of excellence in your work. New possibilities come from well-prepared conversations. The results may surpass your anticipated outcomes and create greater success for your team and company.

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