



How to get people say yes; sales course 101

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The Research

Do your homework, know your customers:

- Who are the local board members? What are their interests? What don't they like? How do they relate to the other board members?
- Who are the local board staff? The staff know how things work and keep everything running (Bobby Shen suggests connecting with the Local Board's Strategic Broker).

Read and understand your local board plan.

- This means a lot to local board members. They have spent a lot of time making the local board plan.
- Demonstrate how your idea aligns with the local board plan.
- The local board plan is written every three years. They will consult the community while writing it. Engage with this consultation process to have your ideas and values included.

Learn the rules: understand the system.

- Learn the rules for public meetings (known as public forums) and presentations to the board (known as deputations). [More information on these here.](#)
- Understand the rules of nonprofits.
- Find out how the system works. Look online to find funding application opening and closing dates, and rules for who and what can be funded.
- Find out who owns the land for events or infrastructure (cycle paths). Try to understand the landowner, how they work, and how to communicate with them. For instance, in terms of infrastructure, Auckland Transport manages the local roads, while Waka Kōtahi usually manages arterials, motorways and highway corridors.

Find a champion for your cause in the organisation.

- This could be a local board member or a staff member.
- Build and maintain your relationship with that person.

The Plan

- **Develop the Elevator Pitch.** This is your idea explained clearly in the time it takes you to get to the 3rd floor in an elevator. It will be a ten to fifteen second long summary. It should be concise, inspiring, and get their attention.
- **Engage with your local board members and staff.** Show up to meetings. Say hello when you see them at community events. Invite them to any events you run. Become a familiar face for them.
- **Tell the board members your idea informally.** This gives them an opportunity to tell you their actual thoughts. Richard Barter says that if you have a strong relationship with someone they will start to raise objections when you tell them your idea. When they do, you need to be able to respond to their objections with reasonable answers and work to solve any problems. Then you can ask them ““Is there any reason why you should not agree to this going ahead right now?” If you have developed a good relationship, they will keep raising objections. As long as you can come up with reasonable answers eventually they will run out of objections. The door will be open for the big yes you have been waiting for!
- **Present your idea formally to the whole board as a group.** Giving a formal, prearranged presentation to the board is called a deputation. You will have already run the idea past the board members individually so you will have an understanding of who will be likely to support it, and will have worked through some of the problems members raised. You will be more likely to be supported by the board, and more likely to be successful.
- **Follow through to get repeat support.** Make sure to follow through with the project. Report on your progress to the local board. If the arrangement was for funding, report back to the funders by the set deadline. Richard Barter suggests keeping the receipts and writing on them what project they were for, and which grant the money came from.
- **Continue to build and maintain relationships.** Keep showing up at the local board meetings. Say hello to the local board members and staff when you see them at events. Check in with your champion. Become a familiar face for them.
- **Keep coming up with new ideas!** The local board would love to hear them!