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3 Comments to Avoid when the Company President Attends Your Meeting by [Jimmie Flores](#)

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Most of us get a little nervous when we know the company president will attend one of our meetings, especially if we are tasked with an agenda item. For the most part, we want to avoid saying anything stupid. While we should be concerned about what we say, we can't take a programmed approach where we fail to address the core issues.

When speaking to individuals high on the totem pole, we must be ourselves. Of course, that's assuming we have a professional flare about us. The leaders of our organizations want to know that the strategy or vision is being implemented through solid operational plans. They understand how a big idea is broken down into action-oriented tasks. It's our job to communicate how that work is taking place.

Remember to focus on the customer. The products or services you sell are secondary. We must first be clear regarding customer expectations, and other variables that affect how the customer uses what we sell. As a seller of mobile phones, for example, we want to know the "hot buttons" that lead to a sale. Is it the device itself? Are the customers more interested in the coverage area? By understanding the customer, we have a clearer idea of what the company president truly wants to learn during the meeting.

Here are a few comments you want to avoid when a company leader is attending your meeting:

#1: "We have no process in place around here."

The fact is that you might have zero processes; however, we must avoid the "blame game." If a process is nonexistent, talk about how you will create one. In other words, a leader wants to hear how you will solve the problem, and not how you will use the current problem to affect how work gets done.

#2: "In some cases, we don't have time to train our salespeople on the new products."

This one will cause you a few problems. Every leader understands the importance of training. When employees have the knowledge and skills to do their work, performance improves, and this creates momentum for the organization. By saying that training is sometimes ignored, we are pointing the finger at a manager, who is the person responsible for knowledge sharing.

This training conversation should occur before the meeting. In the meeting itself, we spend time discussing how our new training program ensures that everyone is prepared to do their respective work.

#3: "I've done this, and I've done that" and so on!

Here recently, I attended a meeting where one employee had an informal conversation with the CEO after the gathering. She talked endlessly about her "radical" changes, and how they contributed to the bottom line. To be fair, her work was important, and had made a difference. However, she had at least five people on her team who also worked nonstop to make it a success. We must avoid the urge to take full credit. When you do, you will alienate your team members, and next year's "informal conversation" with the CEO will be far from cozy.

Relish the opportunity to speak before the CEO. When you do, keep a professional attitude at all times. Make sure you are focused on issues that affect the bottom line. The company president is a big thinker, and that person is mostly interested in the value we provide to the end customer.

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