

### **Competition: Create Instant Involvement**

Most humans are very competitive. When you package something as a competition, most people will want to be involved. Certainly some personality types shy away from competition, but most people are naturally *competitive* and some people are naturally *cooperative*. Master Persuaders must be able to see how the use of competition works within the group they are dealing with. As you introduce competition into your presentation, you can create rivalry between different entities. Maybe you are using a competition where each individual is competing against himself or perhaps you create competition between the individual members of the group. Maybe you are pitting the group against another group or perhaps you are trying to get them to compete against the status quo.

All of these approaches will create involvement, but the most effective way may be to get the whole group working together against a common enemy. When you can create a unity of competition against an enemy, you will see more energy, teamwork, and motivation toward the goal. When the forces are divided and the competition is against each other, you create instant involvement. The fastest way to set up this type of competition within a group is to either create an external threat or to simply set your group against another group.

A group of researchers wanted to test the effectiveness of competition as a motivator at a summer camp for boys. As you might imagine, it was pretty easy to create an atmosphere of competition. In fact, simply separating the boys into two cabins created sentiments of "we versus they." The competitive feelings between the two groups increased as increasingly competitive activities were introduced. For example, as they involved the boys in cabin-against-cabin treasure hunts, tugs-of-war, and other athletic team competitions, name-calling and scuffles grew more common. Finally, the researchers sought to see if they could use the competitiveness to create cooperation toward something mutually productive and beneficial. The researchers set conditions so that if the boys didn't work together, they were all at a disadvantage and, conversely, if the boys did work together, all had the advantage. For example, the truck going into town for food was stuck. It required all the boys helping and pushing to get it on the road again. When the boys were told there was a great movie available to rent but no money to rent it, the boys pooled their resources and enjoyed the movie together.