

Knowledge is Power

Francis Bacon once said, "Knowledge itself is power." Knowledge power is based on proficiency in a certain subject, procedure, or situation. Remember that you are the expert. People can be persuaded if they think you have more knowledge or expertise than they do. For example, lawyers, mechanics, and doctors possess knowledge power. People rely on these professionals' opinions, believe what they say, and trust implicitly what they do because of the extent of schooling or experience they have. We accept the arguments and data of people we assume have knowledge, whether it's real or perceived. In addition to coming from formal education and training, knowledge power also comes from life experience and innate intelligence and aptitude.

Great persuaders use three different types of knowledge power: informational, resource, and expertise:

1. *Informational power.* When you know something others need to know, you hold power over them. Informational power is exercised when someone needs, wants, or desires the information, facts, or data you possess. As Aristotle Onassis said, "The secret of business is to know something that no one else knows."
2. *Resource power.* If you have access to key persons, commodities, goods, or services that are valued by others, you hold some power over them. As the saying goes, "It's not what you know; it's who you know." Are you perceived as having the right affiliations? What connections do you have?
3. *Expertise power.* When you have special skill sets, expertise, or knowledge that others believe is relevant to their needs *and* which exceeds their own, they will do what you say or listen to your opinions. Why are you the expert?

You have to keep yourself aware of and on top of new industry improvements, changes, and updates, so that you always possess cutting-edge information. You will very

quickly lose your persuasive power if your audience detects that they have a more sound or current knowledge base than you do.

Check yourself against the following list to be sure you're up on all that you could be in your field. Do you have:

- Product knowledge?
- Competition facts?
- Industry information?
- Important affiliations?
- Access to useful information?
- Economic forecasts?
- Specific expertise?
- Awareness of your audience's needs and wants?

The bottom line is that the persuader who has done the research and has the most knowledge is the one who comes out ahead. Always try to stay ahead of the pack.