**Promoting Your Vision**

Tip Sheet #3 from *Doing the Right Things Right* by Laura Stack

Clear communication is important in *all* directions, upward and laterally as well as downward. You'll have to learn to ar­gue effectively and productively with others at or above your responsibility level—because no matter how good-natured people are, if you bring any two together, they'll eventually find something to disagree about.

Here's how you can argue your point productively, so ev­eryone can move quickly through the dispute phase and get back to work.

1. **Get All Your Ducks in a Row.** Prepare your argu­ments and have your facts straight. Run your thoughts by neutral people and ask them to shoot holes in your argument. You may find your position fails when other factors are brought up, or your view simply has less merit than someone else's. If this proves to be the case, admit your mind has been changed and bow out gracefully.
2. **Disagree Early, Clearly, and Politely.** Remain open to others' points, but make your position clear. Be simple, straightforward, and specific about your concerns. If a newly mandated process won't work, explain why, and back up your argument. Once you make others aware of the problem, they can update their requirements to match real­ity. Don't dispute an argument in general terms; always use specific examples to refute it.
3. **Consider the Opposing Argument.** Others in a dispute may have several good points, which you can integrate into your decision-making pro­cess before hammering out a compromise. If you don't understand their reasoning, have them explain it to you. They may have an explanation that, when presented logically, will help you understand their position more fully, so you can give it your wholehearted support.
4. **Keep the Lines of Communication Open.** You can't work something out if you won't talk to one another. Jump on the phone or meet face-to-face instead of sending a volley of email. Present your arguments, listen to the other side, and then decide what to do and how to clear a produc­tive pathway to your goals.

**Supporting the Decision**

If you've made your argument, but the decision goes against you anyway, grab an oar and start rowing. Leaders can disagree behind closed doors, but when they emerge, they must present a united front. Whether they agreed or not, ev­eryone must accept ownership of a decision in which they participated.

Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, CPAE, aka The Productivity Pro®, gives speeches and seminars on sales and leadership productivity. For over 25 years, she’s worked with Fortune 1000 clients to reduce inefficiencies, execute more quickly, improve output, and increase profitability. Laura is the author of seven books, including *Doing the Right Things Right: How the Effective Executive Spends Time*. See [www.3TLeadership.com](http://www.3TLeadership.com).