

Red Teaming

One of the best ways to make sure your strategy, project and/or efforts are well focused and can be successful is to have your strategy/endeavor reviewed by an objective panel that sees it through the eyes of the stakeholder(s). A red team looks at the strategy/presentation exactly that way. They evaluate the strategy, presentation, efforts, projected use of proceeds, business plan, value proposition and management team as if they are being asked to accept/implement the strategy; looking for weaknesses and strengths and checking to make sure threshold questions are addressed in a way which will lead to the next level of discussions.

A red team review is arguably the most important step in the entire cycle of preparing for and delivering a presentation to stakeholders. It is an approach which will improve chances for success. The core of the process is a group of people who will evaluate your strategy and presentation for merit from the stakeholder's perspective.

Red team members read your materials as if they were evaluating you and your strategy. This means that they will not be advocates for your strategy. Quite the opposite - if your presentation/strategy has serious problems or if they don't get what you're trying to say, the reaction will more likely be, "This is not making sense as a strategy!"

That in itself is more than a lot of stakeholders will do. They are in the business of finding opportunities and making decisions - not critiquing your presentation. Many times all you will get is "Thanks - we will get back to you" But a red team goes the extra step - it is in the business of helping you improve your chances of success. In that role they play hardball; team members can be very critical, step on your toes if necessary, and pull no punches. A red team member who holds back honest and incisive criticism because of a fear of hurting someone's feelings is not helping the effort.

Red teaming can be a very unsettling experience for some - but the goal of each and every member of the team is to help improve the strategy, presentation, value proposition, business plan and chances success. Remember, to make have a success you occasionally have to break a few egos!

Here are some optimal guidelines for forming and running a red team review:

- Because of their experience, members of our red teams emulate the process and mindset of the stakeholders.
- Pick at least three people to serve on each team.
- They are knowledgeable in the company's space.
- Team members must have no prior connection with the team that is presenting.
- They must be willing and able to commit the necessary time and attention to the process.
- Insist that members are given at least two days to read the materials to be used in the presentation and do a bit of personal research.
- Team members must be committed to helping the team improve their chances success.

Benefits of a Red Team Review

An independent review procedure emulates the executive's and management's initial-review decision making. It simulates first meetings and provides a critical review the presentations. The process delivers an in-depth, interactive debriefing of a strategy/presentation. The results will provide you with guidance and direction on what must be done to improve your probability of success.

1. Red team members read and research materials and discuss them among themselves prior to your actual presentation.
2. The team then sits through your presentation - a simulated initial meeting as an executive. The focus of the evaluation is on how well you presented your strategy, business plan, and value proposition and answered the threshold questions that an executive is likely to ask.
3. Finally, the team delivers a thoroughly interactive debriefing. The focus is on specific recommendations for resolution of major issues. They also present recommendations and guidance on improvements relative to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Red-Teaming Programs

Good Red Teaming programs are designed to:

1. Help people become familiar with the process of red-teaming,
2. Take them through a simulated initial meeting with executives,
3. Provide a critical review and assistance in refocusing and refining their strategy and presentation, and
4. Support and guide them through the process of presenting to appropriate executives and managers.