

A PROVEN PROCESS, TOOLS, AND
TECHNIQUES TO BUILD *MORE* INFLUENCE.

EARNING THE RIGHT TO

BE HEARD

SELL YOUR IDEAS

BUILD YOUR INFLUENCE

GROW YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

PHILLIP VAN HOOSER

AUTHOR OF *WE NEED TO TALK*

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BE

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PHILLIP VAN HOOSER

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of the late Jerry Brenda.

Jerry's unfailing encouragement informed, inspired, and directed my thinking, work, and career for more than 40 years.

I am better because of the ideas, influence, and opportunities Jerry provided me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments might seem relatively unimportant to most readers, but not to this author. This book would have remained uninspired, unwritten, unedited, unpublished, and undelivered had each of the following people not played a significant role in moving it forward.

I begin with Art Malek and the late Jerry Brenda. I've never met two finer examples of molders of young talent. Art was my first plant manager and Jerry my first manager. Both taught me many things at a young age, including the value of taking a good idea and helping others understand its possibilities.

My friend and fellow speaker/author Sam Silverstein generously introduced me to David Wildasin, publisher of Sound Wisdom. In turn, Dave expanded my Sound Wisdom network to include editor and director of content strategy, Dr. Jennifer Janechek; Eileen Rockwell, cover and graphic designer; and Christina Lynch, office manager. This book is a FAR better version of itself due directly to Jen's involvement. This book's cover design is representative of Eileen's trained eye and focused efforts. This book is in your hands due to Christina's administrative and logistical

skills. Of course, David made it all possible by inviting me to be a part of the Sound Wisdom team. To all these wonderful folks, I'm grateful.

Throughout the writing process, my Van Hooser Associates, Inc., team had my back, freeing me up to do whatever needed to be done. Alyson Van Hooser, my daughter-in-law and business partner, is a fine speaker, writer, and businesswoman. Beyond that, her appreciation for the value of the *Earning the Right to Be Heard* process and possibilities is well known. I appreciate her consistently urging me to write this book for those whom it can help.

Finally, Susan Van Hooser, my wife and business partner for 36 years. Beautiful and intelligent, she's also skillful, savvy, strategic, organized, and exceptionally hardworking. We've done this all before and will probably do it again. But I can't imagine us doing it without one another.

So there you have it. Critically important people who have come together in order for you to have access to the lessons this book contains. It's our pleasure to provide these *Earning the Right to Be Heard* opportunities to you.

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INTRODUCTION

I'm so glad you've chosen to invest your time, energy, and resources into this book and its possibilities. Believe me, there are real possibilities that await in the pages to come. Opportunities to learn more about a proven process for identifying, qualifying, quantifying, and introducing your ideas to those who can approve and support them. That's a big deal.

I've invested more than 25 years into developing, applying, and fine-tuning the *Earning the Right to Be Heard* process. It has proven itself to be exceptionally beneficial to me personally time and time again.

Years ago, I began teaching the process to interested organizations and individuals via professional workshops. I have taught the *Earning the Right to Be Heard* process at least 100 times. The results are always the same.

Organizations thank me for sharing a simple, yet effective means of structuring idea and project communication. Individuals thank me for removing the mystique and introducing a practical methodology for selling their ideas to decision-makers.

EARNING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

Therefore, the ultimate goal of this book is to transform—to change the structure, character, and appearance of—the way you approach idea preparation and presentation for the better. From that transformation can be expected to come expanded personal influence and increased opportunities.

You can do this. We can do this. Let's do this together.

SECTION 1:

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT

CHAPTER 1

SELLERS AND BUYERS

Questions to Begin

Have you ever believed in something passionately?

Was it something you were convinced would be of significant benefit to others?

Was it something needing the approval of a decision-maker to become reality?

If so, you know that accomplishing your objective requires much more than just smooth talking and masterful “sales” tactics. Persuasion is about earning the right to be heard—in the moment and in the future—and it requires planning and practice. Regardless of whether you are “selling” an idea, a product, or a service, from this point forward, I will refer to that “something” generally as an “idea” or “initiative,” for all proposals have, at their heart, a concept. The person presenting that initiative or idea to a

decision-maker becomes the “idea seller.” The decision-maker, therefore, becomes the “buyer.”

The heart of the conversation to follow is about convincing real-world, dyed-in-the-wool, bona fide professional decision-makers (buyers) to listen intently to you (the seller) and your idea. If successful in earning the decision-maker’s attention, the next objective is to have your idea approved via your fine-tuned “pitch.” As will be reiterated throughout this book, the stakes of this proposal extend beyond the final “yes” or “no” you receive from the decision-maker. In the balance is also the amount of influence you will yield and opportunities you will be given in the future.

Maybe you have experience in such undertakings. It’s certainly possible that in the past, you’ve pitched ideas to bankers, business associates, or bosses. Whomever it was and whatever your intended purpose, that individual wielded ultimate power—the power to approve the idea/initiative, defer it, or cause it to come to an unceremonious halt.

So what were the results?

Did the experience play out in a positive, collegial manner? Did the decision-maker afford you the level of professional attention you desired? Did the decision-maker listen carefully to your idea? Did your “pitch” receive solid approval and full support? Did the experience leave you feeling as if you and your idea were appreciated, your influence expanding, and your opportunities growing?

Or did your experience transpire much differently?

In a failed attempt to gain decision-making support for an idea or initiative, did the meeting devolve into an unpleasant, discordant scene? Was the decision-maker inattentive, disconnected, possibly discourteous? Were you peppered with seemingly random questions for which you had no ready answer? Did your “sales presentation” end (fizzle, really) inconclusively, with no clear determination regarding “next

steps”? Did you leave the meeting discouraged, frustrated, possibly disillusioned?

Whatever your past results, good or bad, you’re doing what you should be doing right now. You’re reading this book. In so doing, you’re sure to discover a valuable process. A process designed specifically to take the guesswork out of idea presentation. A process designed to garner decision-making attention and invite action. A process designed to build your influence and grow your opportunities. A process referred to as *Earning the Right to Be Heard*.

Roles and Responsibilities

For any business transaction to be successfully and expeditiously completed, two foundational roles must coexist and function in reasonable harmony. Sellers (of products or ideas) must know, accept, and fulfill their unique responsibilities, while buyers must do the same.

The roles and responsibilities of each party in any transaction are admittedly unique and far too frequently oblivious to the other. Not understanding or accepting the role of the other—whether seller or buyer—can produce unnecessary challenges to the transactional process at hand. When this happens, interactions become more confused, convoluted, and occasionally contentious. As bad as that sounds, the damage and frustration don’t stop there. Whatever frustrations and negative impressions might be created or experienced during the transaction may haunt both transaction participants indefinitely. Challenges experienced today tend to linger long in the minds of those who experienced and worked through them.

Conversely, the better each transactional participant (seller and buyer) understands the other's motives and objectives, the greater the chance for a successful and mutually satisfying outcome. In other words, the best sellers and buyers among us don't focus solely on what they are selling or buying. The very best invest at least as much time, energy, and effort into understanding whom they're selling to or buying from, as well as what that person wants, needs, and values most from the transaction.

Expanding Your Influence

Every idea seller likes answers—after all, the ultimate goal is a favorable decision—but questions are the key to professional growth and the expansion of one's influence. It's the questions we ask ourselves before we pitch our idea, the questions we ask others as we conduct initial research on our proposal, and the questions we field from decision-makers that strengthen our ability to “sell” an idea or initiative and improve our standing over time.

I've always been the inquisitive type. As a child, I was driven by curiosity to ask my parents, grandparents, and various family members frequent questions. While my impromptu inquiries served me well early in life, I quickly learned in the professional world that there was a crucial methodology for asking and answering questions in a way that yielded positive results.

As a human resources supervisor, I spent several years of my career wandering in and out of individual offices and meetings, break rooms and board rooms, conference rooms and cafeterias—wherever team members worked and congregated. It was my responsibility to walk and talk, to look and listen, and above all to pay attention to what was going

on throughout the organization. In so doing, I made note of various activities, often wondering why certain activities weren't being managed differently—better.

Why don't decision-makers know or act on this? I often wondered to myself. So I asked.

In my professional position, I enjoyed generally unrestricted access to various levels of decision-makers. Early on, not knowing any better, I was guilty of catching individual decision-makers off guard with some of my unexpected questions. My questions were never intended to be “gotcha” moments, designed to intentionally embarrass the one being questioned. Rather, they were always intended to help identify new ideas and initiatives that could help make things better.

By approaching (a.k.a. blindsiding) various busy decision-makers with unexpected questions, I discovered that their reactions became predictable. The decision-maker, having not anticipated the incoming barrage, would quickly regroup and ask a series of their own questions. Their initial questions led to other questions.

Initially, with absolutely no evidence to support my knee-jerk assumption, I chose to believe the decision-maker's retaliatory questions were nothing more than intentional diversions—smokescreens, if you will, intended to derail my purpose and redirect my path.

But I was wrong. My intention in asking the questions was honorable; thus, the decision-maker's reactive questions frustrated me. I admit that. Excessive emotion occasionally clouded my thinking. I admit that, too. Nevertheless, I was still wrong. I eventually came to realize that decision-makers' intentions were honorable, as well.

My experiences brought me face to face with an important, albeit harsh, reality. I learned that professional decision-makers approach decision-making differently than most of the rest of us. Theirs is not a

EARNING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

random, haphazard activity. For decision-makers to make good, defensible decisions, they must have clear-cut answers to specific questions.

Over time, I came to realize that if I helped provide decision-makers with information to aid their decision-making cause, the conversations that followed were more pleasant, the results more predictable, and my input and influence more appreciated. It can work that way for you, too.

Many hours have since been invested in reflecting on those early “Q&A” experiences, their outcomes, and the value of the lessons embedded in them. Careful consideration has revealed a foundational, sequential process that can be thought of as follows:

QUESTIONS PROPEL LEARNING;

LEARNING FUELS ADVANCEMENT;

ADVANCEMENT BUILDS INFLUENCE;

INFLUENCE GROWS OPPORTUNITIES; AND

OPPORTUNITIES INCREASE QUESTIONS.

The Question Continuum



Questions

Sell Ideas
Build Influence
Grow Opportunities

This book will help you formulate and process questions in a way that builds your influence and increases your opportunities. As you read it, keep “The Question Continuum” (pictured above) in your mind, recognizing that the key to your short-term and long-term success is your willingness to anticipate questions and approach them as a valuable learning tool, rather than treating them like inconvenient or unnecessary obstacles.

Establishing the Premise

How others view our ability (or inability) to share information and ideas defines us—positively or negatively—in a very real and lasting way. In the workplace, professional decision-makers tend to remember us for what we do and how well we do it. Therefore, unnecessary communication breakdowns can have a lasting effect on your reputation, your relationships, and your influence.

Most professionals appreciate individuals who can get right to the heart of a subject quickly and directly. The more important the subject, the more important it is to deal with it directly and purposefully. If something needs to be said, done, or acted upon, why delay? The best communicators and most effective decision-makers know to get right to it.

This book falls into that category. Its subject is both important and challenging. It is a book written for those who genuinely desire to be high performers. It’s a book that offers a practical perspective on what it really takes to build personal and professional influence with decision-makers at all levels.

Those who read and apply the strategies contained in the following pages are sure to discover a proven method for selling ideas and

themselves more effectively. Included are practical tools, techniques, and processes necessary to continuously expand one's professional influence and impact.

Finally, once learned and applied, these practical lessons can be expected to yield previously unknown benefits and opportunities, which invariably reveal themselves through the act of *Earning the Right to Be Heard*.

It all begins by understanding and accepting the essential premise on which this book is based.

To better understand this foundational premise, consider four key words alongside their respective working definitions.

- **SIGNIFICANT:** important enough to be worthy of attention
- **VALUE:** the importance, worth, or usefulness of something
- **SUCCESSFUL:** achieving an aim or purpose
- **SELLING:** convincing someone of the merits of something

Individuals should expect personal recognition for the good work they do only if/when their contributions move some prized organizational initiative forward. Decision-makers are ultimately charged with making such “go/no go” determinations.

If one can demonstrate to decision-makers that an idea or initiative is **SIGNIFICANT** because it is “*important enough to be worthy of attention*,” that idea or initiative can be expected to receive further consideration and scrutiny.

“Before significant value can be realized in our lives and work, successful ‘selling’ activities must take place.”

It's important to remember, the **VALUE** of any initiative is ultimately determined by organizational decision-makers, NOT those individuals introducing or advocating for the initiative. Just because we claim something is important does not make it so. Having an initiative's "*importance, worth, or usefulness*" highlighted and acknowledged is a significant accomplishment—and a necessary step. But remember, the determination of value will always be in accordance with the organization's and decision-maker's standards of measurement, not necessarily your own. For this reason, it's critical to discover what those "value measurements" are in advance of any sales activity.

SUCCESSFUL identification of the merits associated with any significant initiative is critical. But wise influencers never overlook or ignore future challenges that might be experienced along the way as well. A fair and balanced presentation of both strengths and weaknesses works to clarify the initiative's actual value in "*achieving an aim or purpose.*" Preemptive identification of possible concerns, weighed alongside trumpeted benefits, ultimately helps both the decision-maker and the person championing the initiative develop that required level of trust with one another.

Finally, in order to successfully accomplish the critical act of **SELLING** your initiative to decision-makers, the fine art of "*convincing someone of the merits of something*" is universally required. Getting a decision-maker to believe what you believe, then to embrace your suggestion, is far from being an easy task. But it's also not impossible. Highlighting (selling) an initiative's benefits, for example, is generally a far more convincing approach than attempting to sell on price alone.

Being able to skillfully combine these essential elements—*successfully selling significant value*—enhances one's chances of being acknowledged, being believed, and being influential.

Selling Yourself First

For a lot of people, the very idea of having to sell something is incredibly unpleasant. Even seasoned professionals have been known to expend tremendous amounts of energy disavowing themselves of almost all sales responsibilities. That's unfortunate, because in actuality we're all sellers, though most of us will rarely (if ever) be required to sell tangible products or services directly to others.

Nevertheless, we're still sellers, and the most significant, life-altering sales we make ultimately require the selling of ourselves. Never underestimate the importance of that sale. Selling yourself is a big deal. Business interactions, large or small, many or few, regularly revolve around how well or how poorly we sell ourselves first.

But it's important to note, selling yourself is not about talking a good game or playacting. Selling yourself requires (but is not limited to) the ability to sell successfully your personal values, strategic vision, emotional control, professionalism, and overall trustworthiness to others.

Yes, it's important for us to be continuously aware that we're always selling ourselves. Equally important is knowing who might be interested in buying what we're selling—and why.

Sellers Are Great, Buyers Are Better

Consider this oversimplified foundational statement: “for a seller to sell, a buyer must buy.”

EARNING THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

In this context of sellers and buyers, for the rest of your professional career you can reasonably expect to be a seller often, a buyer only occasionally. The reason is practical.

Regardless of your position, title, or seniority, your role as a seller emerges every time you wish to influence others with your ideas, initiatives, concepts, suggestions, or perspectives. As a seller, you attempt to effectively influence others to decide and act in a manner that ultimately favors your intent.

But remember, to be a successful seller, a decision-maker must buy. Despite the depth of your personal convictions, your preferred initiatives must first be bought by a decision-maker before they can be approved, supported, and acted upon. Rarely will you individually possess the authority (or resources) to make major buying decisions alone. Decision-makers/buyers not only make initial decisions—they usually are responsible for directing organizational resources as well.

Yes, the concept of this book is important and simple, but don't be fooled. It's never easy to master the task of selling yourself and your ideas. Think about it. If selling ideas to higher-level decision-makers was an easy task, virtually everyone would be secure in that process, right? But you and I know that most aren't secure. Insecurity causes too many otherwise capable professionals to gripe too much, worry too much, and in the end, accept far too little. Insecure individuals are quick to rationalize that things are the way they are because they've "always been that way and there's nothing I can do to change that." Those may be considered the final words of a defeated professional. I hope they are never heard from your lips.

This book was written to help otherwise capable, highly motivated team members who wish to make a discernible difference by way of their personal influence. When finished working through the pages that

follow, you'll realize it's all here—a complete, step-by-step guide detailing a process not only for selling your ideas and initiatives more effectively to decision-makers, but also, and just as importantly, for selling yourself more consistently and confidently along the way.

A Concise Review

Questions propel learning; learning fuels advancement; advancement builds influence; influence grows opportunities; and opportunities increase questions.

“Before *significant value* can be realized in our lives and work, *successful ‘selling’* activities must take place.”

The *VALUE* of any initiative is ultimately determined by organizational decision-makers, NOT by those individuals introducing or advocating for the initiative.

Selling yourself requires (but is not limited to) the ability to successfully sell your personal values, strategic vision, emotional control, professionalism, and general trustworthiness.

Regardless of your position, title, or seniority, your role as a seller emerges every time you wish to influence others with your ideas, initiatives, concepts, suggestions, or perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

TANGIBLE PRODUCTS VS. INTANGIBLE IDEAS

Teeing It Up

In chapter 1, the overarching goal defining the process of *Earning the Right to Be Heard* was identified. Also introduced was a broad concept regarding “sellers” and “buyers” of ideas. In this chapter and those to follow, we’ll further explore the seller/buyer dynamic, intentionally narrowing our focus with each succeeding chapter until the desired objective of *Earning the Right to Be Heard* has been fully accomplished.

Tangible Products

Here's a question to consider: Which is easier to sell—an intangible idea or a tangible product? It's a legitimate question with no clear-cut correct answer. Of course, some will argue the benefits or challenges of one over the other. After all, we all have preferences. Personal preferences are generally rooted in some unique combination of training, experiences, and personality types. But whether tangible or intangible, what should never be argued is the value of developing systematic processes for selling either—or both.

Like most people, my early professional training and experiences were foundational. My first post-college job introduced me to the previously unknown world of manufacturing. It was different than anything I had experienced at the time. I was enthralled. I marveled at the literally thousands of uniquely designed processes functioning all around me—each process designed to develop, build, and sell tangible products. The scope, magnitude, and sophistication of the processes I encountered extended well beyond my imagination. There were lessons to be learned at every turn.

One of the earliest of those lessons was that virtually nothing of significant value happened by chance. Every *tangible* (“perceptible by touch”) *product* (“an article manufactured for sale”) was the result of meticulous planning and conscientious follow-through. I learned the production processes around me were engineered to be logical, rational, and systematic. Each step of every process was somehow intended to support the further production, distribution, and sale of these tangible products.

I came to realize that every product represented months, sometimes years, of intricate planning and decision-making. Since the product was tangible, both the manufacturer/seller and buyer/user could reasonably evaluate its substance and quality at multiple points throughout the process.

Formal Processes Are Never Haphazard

There's another important thing I learned during my manufacturing years as a manager-to-be-in-training: formal processes support more than just tangible product creation; the intangible activities of planning and decision-making also require and benefit from systematic processes.

I came to realize that literally thousands of production processes went into the creation of every manufactured product. But each process was the tangible result of tens of thousands of independent, often intangible, decisions. These independent decisions themselves were made by countless anonymous decision-makers up and down the line.

It goes to reason that each of these anonymous decision-makers had themselves been methodically and systematically trained to make decisions in some predetermined manner. I know. That's what I was being trained to do. Once trained, each newly minted decision-maker was assigned organizational responsibility for ensuring various processes were followed so as to avoid, eliminate, or mitigate potential issues.

Of course, in the end, perfection is a conceptual myth. Not every decision is a good decision. We must remember that decisions are made by people, and people are fallible. It's also a fact that some decision-makers are simply more capable, more attentive, and more committed to their assigned duties and tasks than are others.

But the best, most consistently successful decisions always shared one sometimes not-so-obvious characteristic: they were anything but haphazard. Successful decisions were—and are—carefully made by conscientious decision-makers who are well-schooled and highly practiced in sound decision-making *processes*.

Please understand these last four paragraphs are not simple rhetoric and therefore are best not rushed through. In fact, I encourage you to reread them, this time searching for embedded *Earning the Right to Be Heard* “clues.”

These clues provide a better understanding of why and how successful independent business owners and decision-makers make their best decisions. Clues as to why your best ideas, suggestions, and initiatives might have been rejected in the past. Most importantly, clues to prepare you to be better positioned to *Earn the Right to Be Heard* from those who will make decisions regarding your future ideas and initiatives.

Remember, the foundational objective of every independent decision-maker responsible for any significant organizational activity is to leave as little to chance as possible. Not only do professional decision-makers want to eliminate errors, but they also want to eliminate the future *possibility* of errors. The concept of “fixing something before it breaks” is rooted in sound decision-making logic and rationale, paramount to both building (and selling) tangible products and intangible ideas/initiatives.

In a practical sense, this is what solid decision-makers do: First, they strategize and plan. Second, they go about the process of managing those strategies and plans by utilizing a logical, rational, systematic mindset. This book is intended to teach you to do the same.

Too Busy to Think

In a very real sense, a lot of dedicated, exceptionally hardworking business professionals—sellers and buyers alike—sacrifice their precious ability to be more influential by allowing themselves to become

too busy to think. For such individuals, the thought of spending time in deep, focused, uninterrupted thought and planning is tantamount to some sort of guilty, selfish pleasure. Many admit to being besieged with an overpowering urge to “do *something*.” If caught “sitting, thinking, and planning,” they fear others might adjudge them to be “stalling, loafing, and procrastinating.”

But the opposite is true for the most successful and influential sellers and buyers. They have learned the value of careful, thoughtful preparation. For example, accomplished sellers of ideas intentionally pause long enough to carefully think through the idea or initiative they wish to promote. In doing so, they take the time necessary to consider the decision-maker’s position and perspective. They intentionally explore the most creative ways to deliver their idea to the decision-maker for the greatest impact. They always have a process in place to follow—and they stick with it.

As for the decision-maker, he/she also benefits from time to think. When an idea seller approaches them, the most effective decision-makers don’t blow them off or jump to conclusions “in the interest of time.” They realize that they are generally well-served to pause, listen, then think carefully about the idea being offered. There are always questions to be asked. There are always answers to be considered. When sellers and buyers of ideas take the time to really engage with one another and the information being exchanged, good things have a way of happening.

In the end, the last thing either sellers or buyers of ideas should want to see happen is an idea being delivered, considered, or acted upon under duress due to inadequate time set aside or invested in its preparation or deliberation. Decisions made and actions taken under such circumstances are bound to be reactive and shortsighted. In these scenarios, it’s obvious that little independent thought or strategic planning went into the decisions from either perspective. Both sellers and buyers who

respond in such a way are more likely to lose influence with each other than to gain it.

Intangible Ideas

Let's revisit once more the degree of difficulty regarding selling tangible products versus intangible ideas. As stated earlier, one is not necessarily more difficult than the other. The degree of difficulty is determined by the requisite levels of training, experience, and of course, personal preference. For me, personally, I tend to believe it's harder to sell an intangible idea than a tangible product.

With a tangible product, you see what you have. You can lift it, move it, twist it, throw it, or even junk it if you wish. With the right process, minute-by-minute determinations can be made as to whether each new action undertaken has produced the desired result.

But an intangible idea is different. It's akin to a vapor. An intangible idea may represent a wisp of thought that can't be physically touched or captured. Even under ideal circumstances, intangible ideas can be exceptionally difficult to explain or understand, especially when first envisioned or introduced. That's one reason too many decision-makers initially reject and discard intangible ideas, though the idea might be presented by trusted, valued sellers.

For a seller to secure appropriate attention and consideration from a busy decision-maker, intangible ideas **MUST** be accompanied and supported by tangible, logical, rational criteria, plans, and processes. When one person doesn't have (or make) time to think about how something might work—another must!

Furthermore, these criteria and processes **MUST** align seamlessly with the decision-maker's own accepted decision-making processes and procedures. Otherwise, it's far too easy for even a well-meaning decision-maker to cast new intangible ideas aside with little thought or further consideration.

One More Look

WAIT! Don't miss that point!

Consider the critically important previous two paragraphs one more time before moving on. They read:

“For a seller to secure appropriate attention and consideration from a busy decision-maker, intangible ideas **MUST be accompanied and supported by tangible, logical, rational criteria, plans, and processes. When one person doesn't have time to think about how something might work—another must!**

Furthermore, these criteria and processes **MUST align seamlessly with the manager's own accepted decision-making processes and procedures. Otherwise, it's far too easy for even a good, well-meaning decision-maker to cast new, intangible ideas off without the immediate benefit of serious thought or further consideration.”**

Here's the good news: Once you recognize and understand what a decision-maker wants and needs, the process becomes fairly easy. Once the right process is put into action, significant advances in individual

influence can occur—and quickly. By presenting intangible ideas in ways that busy decision-makers are trained to think and prepared to act, significant strides—even breakthroughs—in the *Earning the Right to Be Heard* process can be made.

Of course, that's what I'm here for! To help you do just that.

A Concise Review

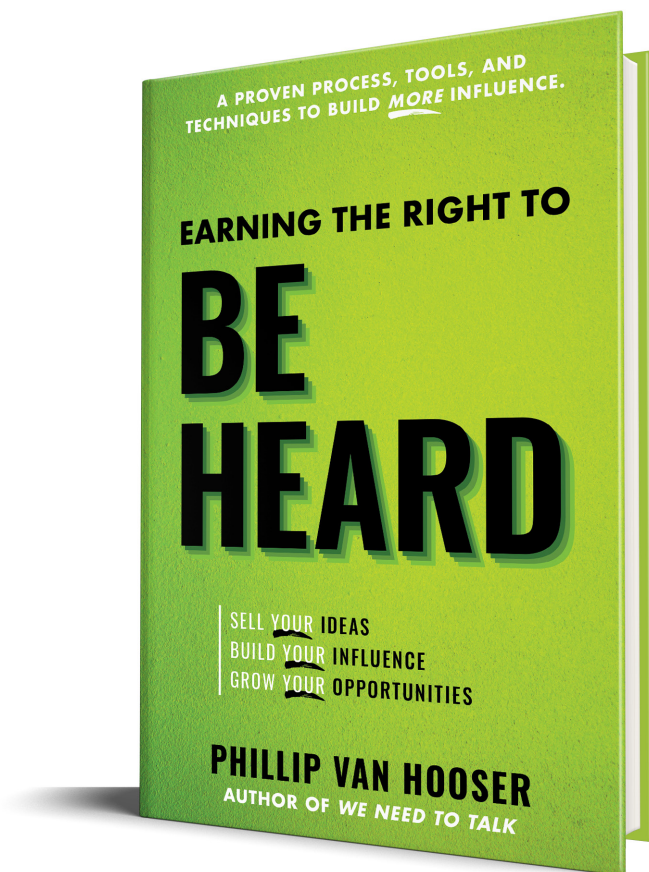
Processes for selling a tangible product versus an intangible idea are fundamentally different, and intangible ideas are arguably harder to sell to decision-makers.

The overarching objective of every overseer of any serious organizational activity is to leave as little to chance in his/her decision-making as possible.

Many skilled decision-makers are apt to reject and discard intangible ideas, even from trusted, valued team members, unless those ideas are accompanied and supported by tangible, logical, and rational criteria and processes.

Understanding what business professionals and decision-makers need and want in order to make effective decisions is a crucial first step in preparing any individual for *Earning the Right to Be Heard*—now and in the future.

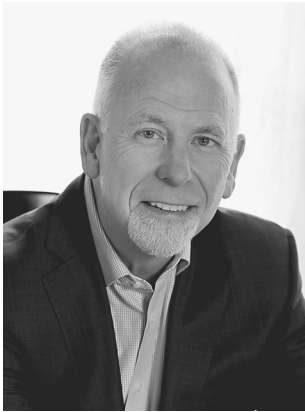
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



For 30-plus years, top US companies and organizations have trusted **Phillip Van Hooser, MBA, CSP, CPAE**, to show business professionals how to execute responsibilities while authentically connecting and engaging with people. As a result, thousands of people in hundreds of organizations have uncovered the real meaning of engaged leadership from the relatable, relevant illustrations and commonsense practices Phil uses. And in the process, they've discovered an arsenal of skills enabling them to achieve even greater personal and organizational results! A Hall of Fame keynote speaker, Phil is an expert on communication and leadership and the author of multiple business books, including *We Need to Talk: Building Trust When Communicating Gets Critical*, and *Willie's Way: Six Secrets for Wooing, Wowing, and Winning Customers and Their Loyalty*.

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