SELLING THE C-SUITE

Strategies to Get Projects Done and Increase Your Influence

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FACILITIIES CHAMP BY DAY





CITY COUNCILMAN BY NIGHT AND MORE!

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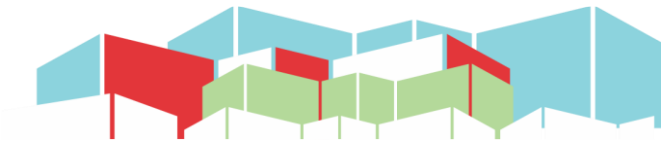
Learning Objectives

1. Translate technical needs into executive priorities
2. Build a compelling business case for action
3. Tailor the message to different executive stakeholders
4. Increase influence before you need a major approval
5. Present options that make it easier for leadership to say yes



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The Problem Isn't Always the Project

You know the project needs to happen.

You have the reports, history, estimates — maybe even buckets catching water.

But technically sound projects still get delayed, reduced, or rejected.

Why? Because great projects don't sell themselves.



The ability to translate operational needs into executive priorities determines what gets funded.

1. Stop Selling the Project

Facilities sees: 25-year-old chiller • compressor failures • obsolete controls • deferred maintenance • $450K replacement

The C-Suite may see: “Facilities wants another $450,000.”

Your job is not to make executives become facility experts.

Your job is to make the consequence of the decision clear.



Translate the technical issue into something that matters to the organization.

The Translation

Instead of: “The chiller is beyond its expected useful life.”

Try: “We're spending about $45K annually maintaining equipment we know we'll replace. A peak-season failure could close portions of the building for weeks and force an emergency replacement at premium pricing.”



Same project. Completely different conversation.

2. The Six Languages of the C-Suite

MONEY — cost today, cost tomorrow, lifecycle impact

RISK — what can go wrong and organizational exposure

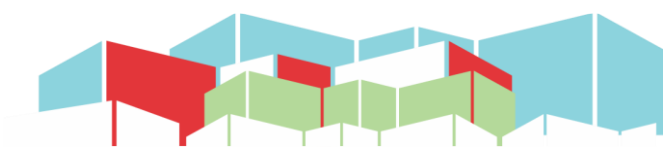
OPERATIONS — downtime, continuity, mission delivery

PEOPLE — employees, customers, residents, visitors

REPUTATION — what happens when failure becomes visible

STRATEGY — how the project supports long-term goals

The strongest projects speak more than one language.





3. Put a Price on Doing Nothing



What happens if we do it now?

What happens if we wait one year?

What happens if we wait five years?

What happens if it fails tomorrow?

Quantify emergency procurement, overtime, rentals, downtime, maintenance, energy, safety and reputational exposure.

Inaction is a decision — and it has a price.

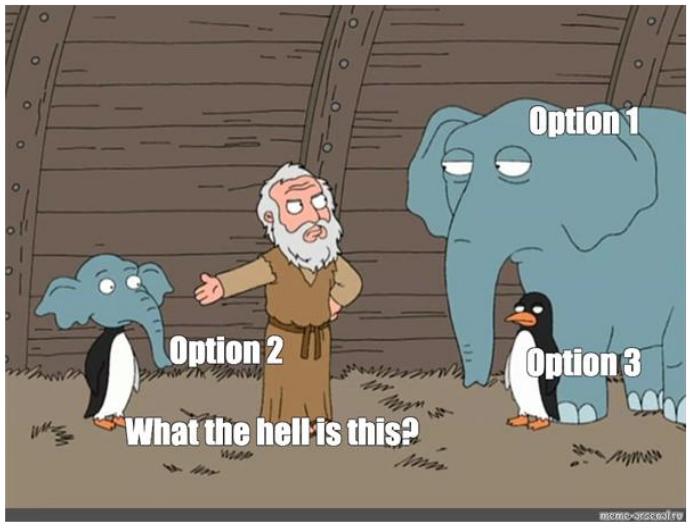
4. Don't Bring One Solution

OPTION A — Maintain: lower immediate cost • short extension • higher risk

OPTION B — Replace: capital investment • long useful life • lower risk

OPTION C — Modernize: larger investment • efficiency/controls improvements • potential operating savings

Then say: “Facilities recommends Option B because…”



You're no longer asking for money. You're helping leadership make a decision.

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5. Master the 30-Second Executive Pitch

PROBLEM → IMPACT → OPTIONS → RECOMMENDATION

“Our primary boiler is approaching end of life and has had three major failures in two heating seasons. We're spending about $30K annually on repairs. We evaluated maintenance, replacement and modernization. I recommend replacement this summer to eliminate our largest operational risk and avoid emergency winter pricing.”

Then stop talking.



6. Know Who Is in the Room

CFO — ROI • lifecycle cost • budget • predictability

CEO / City Manager — risk • service delivery • reputation • strategy

HR — employee experience • recruitment • retention

IT — integration • cybersecurity • continuity

Operations — downtime • reliability • productivity

Don't get distracted out there with all those other audiences.



The project hasn't changed. The story has.

8. No Surprises

Use facility condition assessments

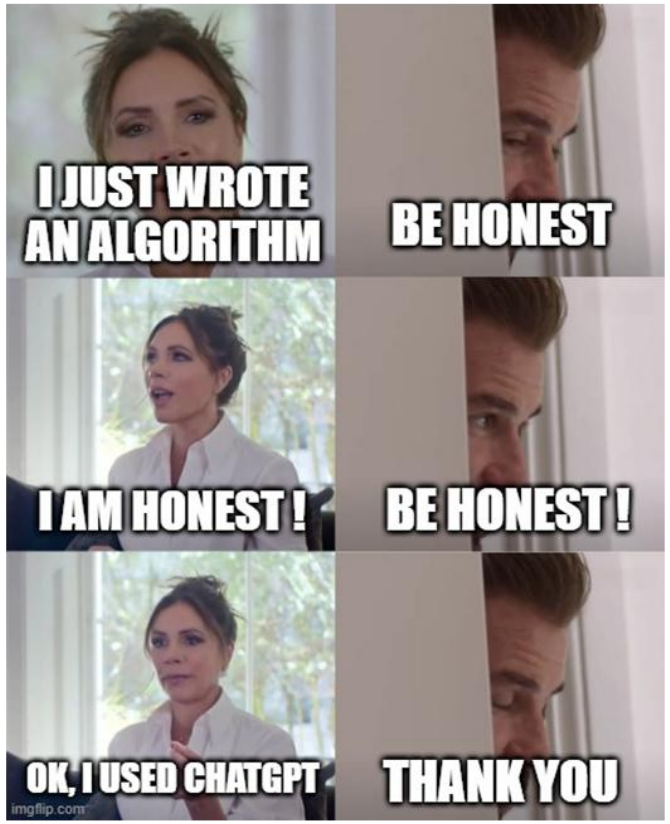
Build multi-year capital improvement plans

Maintain lifecycle forecasts

Brief leadership before budget season

Communicate emerging risks early

Make major projects familiar before asking for approval



The approval meeting should confirm the decision — not introduce the problem.

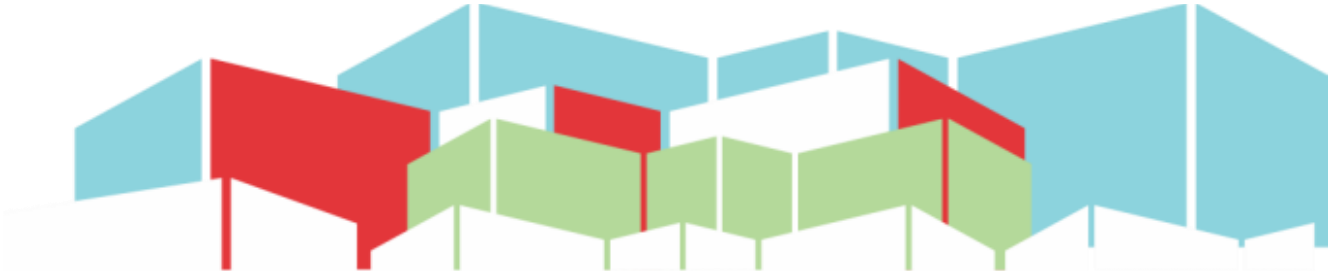
Interactive Exercise: Sell Me This Project

SCENARIO: A 27-year-old roof requires a $1.2M replacement. It isn't leaking badly today, and leadership wants to defer it three years.

In five minutes, develop: the problem • organizational impact • risk of waiting • options • recommendation • 30-second pitch

Then we'll test which arguments sound executive-ready — and which sound like facilities people talking to facilities people.





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