

Ask Mike: Telecom Q&A

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Q: *Dear Mike:* I'm a member of a problem solving technical team at work. When we brainstorm, my ideas are always rejected. What can I do to get the team to accept my ideas?

A: It's easy to feel discouraged when our thoughts, ideas, and opinions are not recognized or validated by others. However, in a team environment, we have to think of more than ourselves.

A team functions as a single entity. It should be a team effort to look at all ideas, accept one, or more commonly, combine several ideas to create the single best solution. The final solution should be the collective effort of the team members and presented to the company leadership as a team solution.

I recommend the following five steps for you:

- Gather as much information as practical about the problem before your team meeting.
- Review the information and formulate at least two workable ideas to solve the problem.
- During your team meeting, listen to the ideas of others, listen to how they present their ideas, and listen to yourself when you present your idea.
- Speak only when you have a relevant and targeted comment. Present your idea succinctly by getting to the point within 30 seconds, if possible. Anticipate and be prepared for follow-up questions from your team members.
- Always remember you are part of a team seeking a team solution.

A final word of advice for every member of any team: be knowledgeable and prepared, arrive to meetings on time, think collectively, and keep a positive attitude.

- Mike