

How to Have a Persuasive Conversation



If you're organising an event or leading an effort, it's likely you're working with a team of other people. Whether you're leading the team or just participating in it, one of the most useful skills to have is holding persuasive conversations.

These conversations are a great way to build relationships, and encourage action in your local community. To make sure every conversation is powerful and engaging, there is a simple structure you can follow called the Four C's.

The Four C's

The Four C's principle provides a framework to engage others and have persuasive conversations that lead to action.

- 1. Connect:** Let the person know who you are, why you care about this issue, and ask them why they care about it too.
- 2. Context:** Tell them more about the event or effort you're involved in, and explain how the action you are asking them to take is important. Be honest about the challenges, but also the opportunities and hopes too. Ask questions to draw out how they feel about it, and their fears and hopes too.
- 3. Commitment:** Explicitly ask the person if you can count on them to take that action with you. Be specific about the date, time, and place. For example: "Can we count on you to join us in _____?" or "Will you join me in doing _____?"
- 4. Catapult:** If someone says "Yes", give them a real job or responsibility to walk away with. For example:
 - Can you bring something to the event (i.e. food, posters, etc.)
 - Can we meet for a chat before the event?
 - Can you commit to bringing a friend with you?

Each conversation will be different and shouldn't feel overly scripted. Keep it natural and conversational; ask questions and actively listen.

Adapted from the work of Marshall Ganz, Harvard University.

Modified by the New Organizing Institute: www.communitycatalyst.org/doc.../organizing_getting-commitment.pdf

