

HOW TO KEEP YOUR IDEA FROM GETTING KILLED

If the change you are working on is even slightly controversial, here are some scripts to help you prepare for three common attacks when something new is proposed:

1. There is no problem

ATTACK	RESPONSE
We've never done this in the past, and things have always worked out okay.	We have all seen that those who fail to adapt eventually become extinct.
Money is the issue, not [something else you have mentioned].	Extra money rarely builds greatness.
You are exaggerating. This is a small issue for us if it is an issue at all.	It doesn't look small to certain people.
If this is a problem, then are you are telling us that we have been doing a lousy job?	No, you are a doing a very good job without the needed tools (systems, methods, laws, etc.) which in our proposal, you will have.
It's clear you have a hidden agenda and we would prefer that you take it elsewhere.	I don't think that is fair. Just look at the track record of the good folks behind this proposal!

2. There is a problem but the proposed solution isn't good

ATTACK	RESPONSE
Your proposal leaves too many questions unanswered. What about this and that and this and that...?	All new ideas raise a dozen questions that cannot be answered with certainty right now.
Your proposal doesn't go nearly far enough.	Maybe, but our idea will get us started moving in the right direction.
You can't do A without doing B first; yet you cannot do B without doing A first. So the plan won't work.	Actually, you can do a little bit of A which allows a little bit of B, etc.
Your plan reminds me of a bad thing (insert something people consider really bad).	Look, you know it isn't like that. A more realistic comparison might be (something not as extreme).
You are abandoning our traditional values.	This plan is essential to uphold our values.
Surely you don't think a few simple tricks will solve everything?	No, it's the combination of your good work and some new things that, together, can make a great advance.
If this is such a great idea, why hasn't it been done already?	There really is a first time for everything and we do have a unique opportunity. Or: don't you think we could be innovators?

2. There is a problem but the proposed solution isn't good (continued)

ATTACK	RESPONSE
Your plan says X and Y, but they are incompatible. You can't have both!	Actually, we didn't say X or Y though it may have sounded that way. We said A and B which are not incompatible.
Look at this problem you've clearly missed! You can't deny the significance of this issue.	You are right, we haven't explored it. But each potential problem we've found so far has been solved.
It can't be good there are so many different concerns!	Actually, having these questions and concerns is good because it shows we are engaged and an engaged group both makes better decisions and implements them more successfully.
We tried that before and it didn't work.	That was then. Conditions inevitably change (and what we propose probably isn't exactly what was tried before).

3. It won't work here

ATTACK	RESPONSE
Too many of our people will never understand the idea and, inevitably, will not help us make it happen.	Not a problem. We will make the effort to convince them. It is worth the effort to do so.
Good idea but it is the wrong time. We need to wait until the other things are finished (or this other thing is started or the situation changes in a special way).	The best time is almost always when you have people excited and committed to make something happen. And that appears to be now.
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Good idea but it is the wrong time. We need to wait until the other things are finished (or this other thing is started or the situation changes in a special way).	The best time is almost always when you have people excited and committed to make something happen. And that appears to be now.
The plan may be fine but we cannot do it without new sources of money.	Actually, most important changes are achieved without new sources of money.
It will be impossible to get unanimous agreement with this plan.	You are absolutely right. That's almost never possible, and that's OK.
We don't really have the skills or credentials to pull this off!	We have much of what we need and we can get the rest.