

The Art of Persuasion

When a mid-size manufacturing company announced a new “voluntary” pension plan, all except one plant worker signed up for it.



Under the plan, the employees would have to contribute a little bit of their own money, and the company would pay the rest. But there was one problem: The plan required 100 percent employee participation. Because one plant worker would not come on board, the entire plan was in danger of failing.

The worker's boss and his fellow workers all pleaded with him, trying to get him to change his mind; they tried explaining that the new plan was better than the old one. But because he really didn't understand the new plan and didn't want to contribute his own money, the worker kept refusing to sign the new agreement.

Finally, the CEO of the company called the plant worker into his office.

“John,” said the CEO, “here's a copy of the pension plan, and here's a pen. I want you to sign the papers now, and if you don't, you're fired.”

John signed the papers immediately.

Afterward, the CEO asked his worker: “John, would you mind telling me why you didn't sign the papers earlier?”

John answered, “Nobody explained it to me so clearly before.”

Sometimes, we must define our goals and requirements of performance to an associate in the “clearest” of terms.

– Beecher Hunter