

**FROM THE BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF
MAXIMUM INFLUENCE...**

PERFECT PERSUASION

**UNLOCK THE SECRETS TO THE
SCIENCE OF PERSUASION**

Manual

KURT W. MORTENSEN

© Kurt W. Mortensen

Persuasion Institute

3214 North University Ave #613

Provo UT 84604

(801) 434-4022

Table of Contents

10 Common Mistakes Old School Persuaders Make	3
Success is an Open Book Test	26
How to Motivate Others Every Time	37
5 C's of Trust: How to Build, Gain and Maintain Trust	53
Story Selling: The Power Tool of Persuaders	67
Influence: Five Characteristics of Highly Influential People	84
Transformational, Long-Term, Permanent, Lasting Change	96
How Power Increases Persuasion and Influence	114
How to Increase Persuasion with Humor	136
Present with Passion, Compassion and Purpose	150
Secrets of Successful Negotiators	174
101 Ways to Inspire, Motivate and Energize Your Team	200
Perfect The Art of Closing	228
Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) Strategies	251
Marketing and Advertising Designs	268

10 Common Mistakes Old School Persuaders Make

Have you ever had someone try to persuade you with those old, outdated, offensive tactics? You know the ones I'm talking about. At some point in your life, before you were even close to purchasing a product, I am sure that you were asked something like: "Do you want it in green or black?" I am sure you've previously heard: "If I could show you how to become financially independent, you'd be interested, wouldn't you?" This type of persuasion backs you into a corner so that you don't even want to answer the question. You wonder, *Does this person really think I'm that stupid?* As a result, you don't buy from these people. You don't even like these people. In fact, you will never do business with these types of people again.

Do these old-school persuasive tactics still work? Sure they do. The law of averages ensures they will never completely disappear. Even a blind pig can find food. Eventually, old school persuaders can find someone who will bend to any outdated persuasive technique. Great persuaders are not smarter than ineffective persuaders; they just have the right tools at their disposal. You've heard the adage "If you are a hammer, everyone is a nail." The challenge is, when it comes to effective persuasion, you can't treat everyone exactly the same. You have to customize your sales presentation to every customer.

With this manual, I want to arm you with a new set of tools that will help you do just that because one tool will not properly fit all your prospects. In other words, you can't use the old-school tactics to force every prospect into the same mold. The more tools you have to work with, the more successful you will become. Research has shown that most persuaders use three to four persuasive techniques. Even the highest producers still only use seven to eight persuasive techniques. Did you know, however, that there are over 100 persuasive techniques, tools and strategies from which you can furnish your toolbox? If you look at persuasion like it's a piano, most persuaders are playing "Chopsticks" when they could be playing Mozart. Why haven't many persuaders caught up with the times? Why are so many of them still using the old tools that would best be put to rest? Are you one of these old-school persuaders?

If you are, there is hope. First, you must understand that persuasion and influence have changed over the past twenty years. Your consumer, your prospect and your customer have changed. Today, they are bombarded with over five thousand persuasive messages a day. Your prospect is more educated and more skeptical than ever before. Think about it. When you are approached by a sales rep or called by a telemarketer, you automatically put up a huge wall as a barrier against their sales tactics. Before anything has even been communicated, you are already resisting their persuasive strategies. Your prospects are bound to do the same when they feel caught or misled by your tactics. In other words, if you try to employ those old-style tactics, you will lose prospects, which in turn will result in lost sales. What good is a sales tool that works only part of the time? Imagine if the brakes on your car only worked some of the time.

Let me ask you a question: Have you ever had a prospect with whom you were working who you knew needed your product or service, *wanted* your product or service, could afford your product or service yet still didn't buy from you? What happened? The odds were stacked in your favor; it was a perfect fit for both parties. The problem is we live in a fast-paced world in which we don't even have time to think. So, your prospect came in and everything was perfect but still s/he didn't buy. Instead, s/he said, "I need to think about it." We don't have time to actually do so, yet when backed against a wall, our knee-jerk reaction is to think about it. Do you want to know why your prospects aren't buying from you?

The Persuasion Pitfall

Understanding your audience is key. That is, you must also know what laws of persuasion you are going to use on them before you even begin your sales strategy. There are times and situations where certain persuasive laws or techniques are not appropriate. Remember that you can't treat every person or every audience the same way. In fact, if you take persuasion too far, you will run into what I call the "persuasion pitfall." People are persuaded and influenced until they feel cheated, misled or taken advantage of. Once

that happens, they will never reveal their true feelings to you, and they will never do business with you.

In sales and marketing, we have a tendency to push the envelope a little too hard when trying to persuade others. This persuasive situation could be a personal one-on-one encounter with a friend or a shopping excursion at a furniture store. Persuaders who do not possess the ability to read others or who do not have the necessary skills to effectively persuade typically fall victim to the persuasion pitfall. That is they take persuasion a little too far, using extreme pressure in an attempt to sell you a product you don't need or want. In the same way, when you use persuasion, influence or power the wrong way, people will lose all trust in you and never want to be persuaded by you again.

“Over-persuading” is always going to set off silent alarm bells in the mind of your prospect. These alarms will send feelings of uneasiness and negativity toward you personally, your store or your product coursing through your prospect's psyche. The challenge with this pitfall is that 99 percent of the people in the world will say nothing to you to alert you to the fact that they are feeling over-persuaded or offended. Rather, they will walk away and simply never go into your store again; they will never again want to associate with you or your product. In the event that you are a friend or family member, they will never trust or listen to your point of view again.

This pitfall is a silent killer because most persuaders don't even realize the mistake was ever committed. Unbeknownst to you, however, the duped person will never come back to your store and will probably tell others not to go back, too. As a result, you'll lose not just one customer but potentially dozens. You have probably had this happen to you many times at a car dealership, in retail stores or over the phone. When it comes to effective persuasion, you have to have a sixth sense and know how hard you can push your prospects without forever alienating them.

We all hate to feel manipulated or pressured. We have all been burned or taken advantage of. As a result, when we see signs of such behavior, we run in the opposite direction.

Many uneducated persuaders can be offensive, condescending, obnoxious and insulting. Before making a purchasing decision, some people will need to have space, some will have to talk to a spouse and still others will have to come back later. You have to sense and predict by knowledge, experience and nonverbal cues how many tools of persuasion you can use on a particular prospect without running up against this hidden persuasion pitfall. In other words, you have to sense the prospect's limits to avoid the persuasion pitfall.

1. My clients/customers trust me.

Wrong. We have conducted studies at The Persuasion Institute and have found that most people do *not* trust you. The persuader may think and feel that s/he has developed trust, but when we talk to the customers/prospects, there is no trust on their end. Here's the deal when it comes to trust: Forty years ago, people were more trusting. Back then, the attitude was: "I trust you. Give me a reason not to." Now, it is the opposite; it's: "I don't trust you. Give me a reason to trust you." So, in the past, you were starting from a foundation of trust and respect; now you're starting well below zero.

On average, depending on your occupation, over 80 percent of the time you are unable to develop trust with your customers/prospects. Ouch! Even if they like you, if they don't trust you, there will be no deal. The ability to gain and keep trust is a vital factor in influencing others. Research has shown, time and time again, that trust is always a contributing factor in the ability to influence others. When a person trusts you, that trust alone can cause her/him to accept your message. On the flip side, if people don't trust you, all the evidence, reasoning, facts or figures in the world won't get them to budge.

Trust can be an ambiguous concept, but certain things are quite clear: You can't get others to trust you unless you first trust yourself. Your message will not be convincing to others unless it's convincing to you. Whenever someone tries to influence us, we ask ourselves, "Can I trust this person? Do I believe him? Is she really concerned about me?" We are less likely to be influenced by someone if we sense that s/he is driven solely by

self-interest. Never assume that people trust you. Always show the world you are someone to be trusted, no matter what the underlying circumstances might be.

2. I need more closing skills.

Sure, it's nice to have a few closing skills in your persuasion toolbox, but shouldn't you spend more time opening up your prospect before you even think about closing a deal with her/him? In fact, great persuaders don't even have to use closing techniques. That's because their consumer is ready to purchase before the end of the conversation is even reached. The only time you really need a closing skill is when you have blown it by not following the proper persuasion process. You need to be able to connect with your prospect, to be sincere and empathic and to show you have her/his best interest in mind. When dealing with a new prospect, you should spend more time on connecting, building rapport, uncovering needs and wants, positioning your product or service and answering questions.

Persuading a customer/prospect occurs throughout the entire persuasion process, not just at the end of the sales presentation. Studies show that how you open a sale is much more important than how you close it. Research shows that hard closes not only offend but that, over time, they have also lost their effectiveness. Hard closes work less than five percent of the time. Of those that did work, over half of the persuaded prospects later had buyer's remorse and wanted to return the product.

It is said that the first and most lasting impression is made in about the first four minutes of interaction. If you want to seal the deal, be sure you demonstrate confidence within those first four minutes because the cement dries fast! Nothing can replace a bad first impression, even if you try to make it up later. Fixing a first impression is like fixing a wrecked car. Even after exhaustive time, effort and expense, you still know it was wrecked, and because you're scrutinizing it so closely, you're more apt to detect anything else that might be wrong with it.

We have all had the experience of meeting someone with whom, after just a few seconds of being in her/his presence, we have felt an instant connection or bond. This is connectivity. Conversely, we have probably all met someone whom we instantly did not like and whom we did not want to be around. This instinctive disassociation is caused by a lack of connectivity and it usually takes only a few seconds to become apparent. The theory of connectivity states that the more we feel connected to, part of, liked by or attracted to someone, the more persuasive s/he becomes. When you create an instant bond or connection, people feel comfortable around you. They will often feel like they have known you for a long time and that they can easily relate to you. When we feel connected to someone, we feel comfortable, and as a result, a sense of trust evolves.

When someone feels love or unconditional acceptance, s/he will be open to your influence. To be this open, s/he has to know that you empathize with her/his situation.

The word empathy has both Latin and Greek roots. The two parts of the word mean “to see through” and “the eye of the other.” Seeing through the eye of another creates long-term influence. When people know that you can see what they see, feel what they feel and hurt the way they hurt, they will be willing to be influenced by you. The world is full of people who are trying to make us do things for their own reasons. All we need to do is pause and understand with whom we are dealing, what they are thinking and why they are thinking such things. Once we understand these principles, we have empathy and the door of influence swings wide open.

3. Objections are good.

There is a big difference between a genuine question of concern and an “I’m done with you” objection. Is it a sign of interest or resistance? That is the key question. When your prospect presents every objection in the book, such outright resistance should be a red flag to you. In other words, you are probably going down the wrong road by not properly reading your prospect. What this person is really saying is: “Go away. I have heard enough. I don’t see where or how this can help me.”

Did you really uncover your prospect's wants and needs, or are you merely vomiting a memorized list of features and benefits? Many persuaders vomit information. Here is the issue: Your prospects will buy for their reasons and for only their reasons. They don't care about why you like the product or how much you know about the product. Hence, you need to find out the one or two reasons why they want to buy your product or service. Once you've uncovered their purchasing criteria, you then tell them how your product or service will benefit them. When you list features and benefits, two things can happen. It can suck the energy out of the persuasion process and it can actually give your prospects reasons not to buy that they otherwise wouldn't have even imagined. Find the one or two most appealing benefits, the ones your prospects are really going to care about, and use them as leverage to help your prospects purchase. *Then*, and only then, you can fill in the blanks with your product or service's other features and benefits. Here is the key to effective persuasion: Before they buy or have made the decision to purchase, your prospects are looking for reasons *not* to buy. After the mental decision to buy has been made, they are then looking for reasons why they are making a good purchase.

Great persuaders will always have fewer objections to handle than old-style persuaders will. If you really understand your prospect, you "pre-solve" before the objection has even been raised. "Pre-solving" of objections can be effectively accomplished by using a technique called inoculation. Do you inoculate your prospects?

The term "inoculation" comes from the medical field: Injecting a weak dose of a virus into a patient inoculates or prevents the patient from actually getting the disease. The body's immune system fights off this weak form of the disease and then is prepared when the full disease attacks. Likewise, when you are presenting to an audience who has an opposing viewpoint to yours standing in the wing, you have to "inoculate" them with a weakened form of the other side's argument. For example, if you know someone is going to attack your viewpoint, you prepare your audience in advance for that attack. The idea is to address the issues that your opponent will bring up and then directly refute them.

The important point to understand is that the inoculation must be a weak form of the “virus.” If you inoculated a human body with the strong strain of a disease, s/he could become sick or even die. Hence, the dose must be weak enough to prepare the body for the stronger virus but not so strong that it overpowers the body. Likewise in persuasion, you don’t want to give strong doses. You don’t want to give your prospects all of the other side of the persuasive message’s ammunition. On the other hand, if you don’t prepare your audience for what they are about to hear, the sting of your opponent’s words, logic or testimony might be too much for them to handle and they could switch sides. As a result, you might lose some prospects you otherwise might have gained.

In our day-to-day life, we are surrounded by countless examples of inoculation, many of which are used in the courtroom. The defense attorney stands up and says, “The prosecution will call my client mean, evil, a terrible husband and a poor member of society, but this is not true, as I will show you over the next couple of weeks...” So, when the prosecution then stands up and states anything close to what the defense attorney has claimed they will, the jury is prepared, thinking the prosecution is acting exactly the way the defense said they would. This inoculation strategy equips the jurors with a way to ignore, or even discount, the prosecutor’s arguments.

Society needs to understand the importance of inoculation in regards to smoking, drugs, teenage pregnancy and others issues. Street gangs also use this inoculation tool to their advantage. When they are trying to recruit members to join their gang, they inoculate potential gang members by telling them their parents, teachers and cops will encourage them not to join. They will tell them all the reasons their opponents will give, fueling them with ammunition for the impending attack. This preparation enables the potential gang member to handle the oncoming assault from parents, teachers and others.

We know our children will come in contact with forces that do not advocate the views and beliefs we wish to instill in our kids. Who should be the first contact with your children—you or the drug dealer? When you inoculate people, they can mentally prepare arguments supporting their stance. This reinforcement prevents them from switching

teams. The more prepared they are, the more they'll hold fast to their attitudes and beliefs. So too, the more deeply this reinforcement is ingrained, the more difficult it will become for your prospects to be swayed.

4. I am an outgoing people person, so I am a natural persuader.

Of course, there are the stereotypical persuaders who are friendly, outgoing and sometimes loud. Research reveals, however, that some of the best persuaders are actually introverts. How can you persuade if you are always talking? Great persuaders will listen more than they will talk. In fact, great persuaders use their listening and questioning skills to get prospects/customers to persuade themselves. Which approach do you think will have better long-term results: *you* persuading them, or you helping them to persuade *themselves*? It's much better if your prospects feel like they have made the decision themselves, without any outside pressure.

Fortune 500 companies commonly require listening training, even though many employees think it's a waste of time. The truth is, poor listening skills account for the majority of people's communication problems. Many years ago, Dale Carnegie asserted that listening is one of the most crucial human relations skills that could possibly be developed. Listening is how we find out people's preferences, desires, wants and needs. Of all the skills one could master, listening is probably the one that will pay you back the most. After all, it is only by effective listening that we learn to customize our message to our prospects. Good listening is not just looking at someone and nodding your head in agreement. You have to make sure the other person knows you understand what s/he is saying. The more the other person feels understood and cared about, the greater your ability to persuade and influence will become.

Of all the tools in your persuasion toolbox, questioning is probably the one that is most often used by Master Persuaders. Questions create immediate involvement with your prospect; they guide the conversation, clarify concerns and objections, reveal beliefs, attitudes and values, help you find out what your prospect needs and show your sincerity toward your prospect. The bottom line is, questioning is a very diverse and useful tool.

We are taught to answer a question when it is posed to us. We have become so conditioned, in fact, that we automatically think of a response when asked a question. Even if we don't verbalize the answer, we think about it in our mind. Most people want to be cooperative; we don't want to be considered rude by ignoring a question when it is asked of us. As a result, a question stimulates our thinking response.

When attempting to persuade others, make sure you are careful in how you pose your questions. The structure of your questions dictates how your listener will answer them. A good rule of thumb is to start with the easiest questions first. You want to draw your audience into the conversation and help them feel relaxed and comfortable. People are encouraged by answers they know are right. Begin the conversation by starting with a general topic instead of a specific subject. You need to get the wheels in your prospects' minds rolling before you ask them to answer the more specific questions.

The best questions draw a person into the conversation and out of being unreceptive. It is to your advantage to ask questions that will get your prospects to open up. For example, use questions that start with:

What do you think about...?

Have you ever thought about...?

How do you feel about...?

When did you start...?

Where did you find...?

5. Focusing on price rather than building value

Many persuaders tend to focus on price rather than building value. When you are finished with your persuasive presentation, your prospects should think: *That's it? That's inexpensive! What a great value!* Even if they can't afford it, they should be able to see the value in what you are offering. Discussing price arouses fear in many persuaders. As a result, it's often where the sale begins to sink. Three things happen when you bring

price into the persuasion process too early: 1) Prospects know it is a great way to get rid of you; 2) They can postpone making a decision; and 3) It is a knee-jerk reaction. You have not built the value of your product or service and hence, losing a prospect becomes probable. We often feel like lost sales come down to price. However, it's not the price issue! It's that your prospects don't see your product or service's true value. Think about it. If price were always the issue, we would all be driving Yugos, drinking Kool-Aid, staying at Motel 6s, shopping at thrift stores and eating at McDonald's.

If you do hear the price objection too frequently, try asking, "Compared to what?" When you do, your prospects will usually give you a blank stare because there is nothing to compare it to. It is your job to help them compare your product or service to a Rolls Royce, not a used economy car. It's all about human perception. The human mind has to find a benchmark of comparison to make judgments, especially when we are talking about unfamiliar situations. In making comparisons, people draw upon their knowledge and past experience. By showing your prospects contrasting products or services, you are creating comparisons for them. The mind can't process everything at once, so it develops shortcuts to assist it in making decisions. Instead of making a completely internal judgment, we look for boundaries, patterns and polar opposites. We mentally rank things in our mind from best to worst, first to last or highest to lowest. Do you want your prospects to compare your business to the second-hand thrift store or to a shop on Rodeo Drive? The great thing about this persuasive technique is that you get to decide where you want your prospects to start their comparison benchmark.

When using this technique, keep in mind the powerful differences that exist between positive and negative information. For years, psychologists have asserted that people automatically and subconsciously have extremely high expectations for good over bad. Because of this consistent tendency, negative information, when it comes, always seems to be given considerable weight because it stands in such jarring contrast to what was expected. For example, have you ever had a salesperson get you all excited about some incredible product you were about to purchase? You were totally thrilled with all the things this product was going to do for you and then BAM! The salesperson hit you with

the ghastly price. Suddenly that hefty price tag—just one negative detail—outweighed all of the item’s twenty other terrific features. Here is a classic example of negative information taking precedence over all the positive information. In fact, this one negative detail soon totally consumed your thoughts. You drove home only able to think about how that precious item was going to cost you an arm and a leg.

6. I’m OK.

This is a common thread we find at The Persuasion Institute. When it comes to becoming a Master Persuader, the psychological characteristics make all the difference in the world. You can’t read a book, go to a seminar and then fix everything in one day. Success is a process that will only happen over time. I have never met a high producer who does not work at it on a daily basis. Many persuaders make the mistake of adopting self-serving attitudes like, “I’m OK; I don’t have a problem with that; I don’t need to work on that,” etc. If you ever find yourself saying those kinds of things, you are worse off than you thought. Recognize that the only way to build your future is to first build yourself.

Your psyche is the mental aspect of the persuasive game. It’s a critical skill for all successful salespeople, but it works equally well in all fields. You will not be able to achieve your goals until you believe you can achieve them. All the best influential techniques and tools in the world will not help you until you first believe in yourself. Unfortunately, no matter how lofty our self-opinions might start out, most people we know tend to bring us down. When you tell these people about your dreams and reveal to them the things you want to accomplish in life, they can be very discouraging. Do you know people like that? When you have the right mindset, however, you know where you’re going and what you want to accomplish. Then anything that people say is not going to matter; they won’t be able to crush your dreams no matter how hard they try. The right psyche involves knowing what you want and having a plan to get it. When your psyche is in its proper place, you will always follow your heart.

Why are some people super-successful while others dwell in mediocrity? Ask almost anyone out there, and they will tell you that they want more out of life. They want to be

better and to accomplish those long-buried and forgotten goals. So, why do so many of us fall short of achieving our dreams? It's a basic human fact that we all want success. We all want to be happy. We all want to be self-disciplined and to have others' respect. We want to achieve great things, to accomplish great feats, to be the best at what we do. And we want it all now. We know many of the things we *should* be doing to be happier, more physically fit and more financially secure. We know we should set our goals, manage our time, spend more time with family, exercise, eat right, work hard, sleep more and have a positive mental attitude. So, why aren't we doing these things? After all, the desire is there, right? Why then do these things sometimes seem impossible? The good news is, if you really want success, you can have it. Success is an open-book test that you can pass with flying colors if you know where to look for the right answers.

Sometimes we find ourselves surrounded by people who seem to work the same number of hours we do, or even *less*, and yet still get better results. Drives you crazy, doesn't it? The key thing to realize is that working *harder* is not necessarily the same thing as working *smarter*. How do you work smarter? You need to have the right tools; that's how. Consider any professional who uses tools for a living. Having the right tool at your disposal makes getting the job done easier. Suppose you had to cut down a tree, but you had to do it with a pocket knife. *Eventually* the job would get done. What if you had an ax or a chainsaw instead? Then the same job would get done better and faster—two factors we would all appreciate more of, whatever our jobs may be.

Sometimes, when using a new tool for the first time, we need some special training on how to operate it properly. Once we're armed with the basics, we then need practice. Finally, only after repeated practice will we be equipped with seasoned experience. Acquiring the right persuasion skills can be compared to the training and exercising required to get your body in tip-top shape when you haven't engaged in an exercise routine in years, or ever in your life. There may be some pain and discomfort in the beginning stages, but if you keep at it, it starts to feel good. You are being stretched and pulled out of your comfort zone, but in the end, the discomfort is definitely worth it.

7. The facts and studies show...

We can present all the facts, figures, studies and statistics in the world, but doing so will not always convince your prospect/client. All decisions are comprised of part emotion and part logic. The skill lies in knowing what parts to use. The right blend depends on the situation and your prospect's personality. The bottom line is, we make decisions with our subconscious mind and come up with the reasons *why* we made them later.

In the past, we did not know how our consumers thought, what persuaded them to buy or what prompted them to take action. Most people engaged in sales and marketing were just shooting in the dark. We hoped or guessed what we were doing was working. Sure, it worked some of the time, but I would hope you were not happy with that hit-or-miss success rate. Dr. Damasio of Harvard University has said that more may have been learned about the human brain and mind in the last decade than during psychology and neuroscience's entire previous history. Persuasion and influence are both art forms and sciences.

We are intrigued by reason, but we are moved by emotion. We use logic to justify our actions to others and to ourselves. Take note that emotion will always win out over logic and that imagination will always win out over reality. Think about talking to children in regards to their fear of the dark or to someone with respect to their phobia of snakes. You know it is useless to use logic to persuade them that their thoughts and actions don't make sense. Despite your best efforts, they still remain convinced that a problem exists. In his book *Triggers*, Joseph Sugarman estimates that 95 percent of the reasoning behind a consumer's purchase is associated with a subconscious decision. In other words, most buying is done for reasons a person hasn't even fully formulated.

There are two paths to persuasion: the conscious and the subconscious. Both paths can persuade others to embrace your way of thinking, but each path uses a very different means of processing information. On the conscious path, both you and your audience make an active or conscious attempt to understand, define and process an argument. A person who is interested in your persuasive attempts will be highly motivated to listen.

As such, s/he will also be able to consciously evaluate your message by carefully weighing the pros and cons of the evidence you present.

On the subconscious path, the listener spends little or no time processing the information with which s/he is presented. This approach results in those automatic triggers we previously talked about. These knee-jerk reactions happen when you follow your intuition or use a mental shortcut. In other words, your mind reaches a decision without doing any logical processing. These subconscious decisions are largely driven by instinct and emotion. Individuals who spend lots of time on the subconscious path do so because they lack the time, motivation, desire or ability to really listen to your message. They're not really involved in the subject at hand. As a result, they use their instinct or emotions instead of their intellect. Passive processing and automatic triggers rule their decision-making.

The key lies in knowing when to use each method. Successful application of all the principles I've outlined thus far requires that you become skilled at quickly identifying which persuasion paths will be the most effective in a given situation. In persuasion, your message has to focus on emotions, all the while maintaining a balance between logic and feelings. Logic and emotion are the two elements that, when properly blended, make for perfect persuasion. While we can be persuaded by logic or emotion alone, the overall effect will be short-term and unbalanced. A Master Persuader will create a proper balance between logic and emotion to harness the perfect persuasive message.

8. I'm great at warming up my prospect—I can small talk with anyone.

At times, this can be a great skill, one that can win us friends. However, we live in a different society today than we did just decades ago. Now, time is of the essence. Because your prospects are so pressed for time, you have to be prepared to get right to the point. Nowadays, most people don't appreciate useless dribble drabble. Here is what the research is telling us.... The majority of prospects do not appreciate unsolicited small talk, and many find it offensive. People buy from others who understand their wants and needs.

When it comes to effective persuasion, the skill of communication can be a great asset or a great liability. You need to read your prospects and understand when small talk is appropriate. For many, personal chatter is appropriate only after the relationship has been established and they know you care and are sincere. If you don't know your prospect well, you could be going down the wrong road by asking about her/his family and personal interests before s/he knows who you are and what you represent. With some of your prospects, you can mix business with chitchat after you get to the main point. You have heard it all before with telemarketers.... The first thing they say is, "Hi, how are you this evening?" Meanwhile, you are thinking, *What do you care?* Or, *You don't really mean it.* It's important to keep in mind that if the prospect wants to engage in small talk, s/he will initiate it. The best rule of advice then is to follow her/his lead.

Many persuaders don't know how to maintain rapport throughout the entire persuasive situation. They may be good at the opening pitch, but they lose control sealing the deal. You see people in sales break the ice, build rapport for the first five minutes and then launch headlong into their presentation. All of a sudden, they get serious and their demeanor changes. When this happens, what is the prospect supposed to think? The person s/he had been talking to for the past five minutes has now completely morphed into someone else. Which one is the real person? The two were getting along, having fun and then all of a sudden, without warning, the salesperson became serious and dove into a sales pitch. This breaks the rapport that has been built and seems incongruent to the prospect. You both know why you are there and what the ultimate goal will be, so continue to build rapport and a long-term relationship.

The call to action is the most important part of your influential presentation. This is the point where your audience understands exactly what you want them to do. It is where you define yourself as a persuader instead of a presenter. The conclusion you draw should not come as a shock to your audience. Throughout your presentation, you should gently lead your prospects to the same conclusion you are going to present in the end. Along the way,

prompt them so they end up wanting what you are going to propose anyway. You should feel their permission to sell.

In other words, you should prepare your audience for your conclusion before you even start in on the rest of the presentation. Your entire presentation should be built around your call to action. As you make your preparation, ensure that your conclusion is explicit and that the audience is not left on their own to make sense of your message. You need to tell them what to believe; in other words, you draw the conclusion for them. Make the call to action easy for them to follow and simple for them to do. By your presentation's conclusion, no doubt should remain in your prospects' minds about exactly what you want them to do. When planning and preparing your call to action, remember that it should not be long and painful. Be short, be brief and get to the point.

9. Persistence is the key.

Persistence is an incredible quality to possess. In fact, persistence is the number one reason why people are successful in life. It's also the driving force that determines why certain people are wealthy and others are not. Nine times out of ten, wealthy individuals' success is not due to financial backing or education. Rather, they most often owe their achievements to persistence. There's an old sales adage that says: "Some will; some won't. So what? Who's next?" I want to focus on smart persistence.

If you get lots of nos in your persuasive endeavors, you might be wasting your own and your prospects' time. A fine line exists between smart persistence and being a pain in the butt. You need to be able to sense when and where the best time to contact your prospects is, how to make contact with them and whether you should continue contacting them. When you are properly influencing your prospects, they will let you know that they appreciate your correspondence. You can be persistent in trying to break down the brick wall with your head, but there is a time and a place for good, smart and patient persistence. Don't make the process a badge of honor by counting up your rejections. Sure, rejection is part of being a persuader, but let's just keep assessment of it down to a

manageable level. We know we can't persuade all the people all the time. Hence, we should also know when to walk away from a prospect and find another one to expend our efforts on. I could be in NYC, handing out \$100 bills to pedestrians, and many individuals I approached would not take those bills. They would not have the time or inclination to think about it.... No matter how sweet the deal, they would assume there has to be a catch.

Working harder is useless if your prospect doesn't see a need for your product or service. First, find your ability to read what your prospect needs then determine the best way to be persistent. Is s/he a qualified buyer? Persuaders contact prospects almost every day and wonder why their calls aren't returned. The persuader may feel that s/he has a great potential buyer who is interested and with whom it is just a matter of time before the deal is closed. The persuader just senses that the sell is inevitable. Funny thing is, it isn't. When a prospect we thought was a sure thing lets us down, we contact her/him to get the truth. Often, this is what we find out: S/he had no intentions of ever buying; s/he is sick of all the hard sell messages; or s/he did not have a need, want, interest or even the money to buy. Unfortunately, our faithful persistent persuader did not take no for an answer and lost the sale. Again, persistence is a great trait, but the smart aspect must be added to it if you are to succeed.

Another important point to remember is that when you are contacting your prospect for a second or third time, the emotion has left the building. Hence, you need to revisit why s/he was interested in the first place. Maybe your prospect was going to think about it but hasn't had the time to do so. Maybe s/he hasn't even found time to look at your beautiful literature yet. You have to recapture your prospect's interest and needs when you make the second, third for fourth contact. If s/he is no longer hot for your product or service, you have to restart the fire. If you do leave a message, make sure you give the recipient a great and legitimate reason to call you back. Do you have more information than you had the last time you spoke? Has there been a product enhancement or has the pricing changed? Get your prospect involved as much as possible.

If you are dealing with a stubborn person who absolutely will not change her/his mind about anything, don't panic. There are reasons why this person is closed-minded and always saying "no" to everything. S/he might not have a clear idea about what you are proposing, s/he may have been hurt in the past, s/he may be afraid of being judged, or s/he may feel like her/his ideas are not being appreciated. Don't take it personally; these types of situations will happen from time to time.

10. I'll figure it out on my own.

This phrase has cost me millions of dollars. It was a great day indeed when I realized that all the problems and obstacles I was encountering in life, or in persuasion, had already been solved or figured out by someone else. That means these people have already unearthed answers to my dilemmas! Poverty thinking is: "I will figure it out on my own and take three years of time and countless money in an attempt to reinvent the wheel." The big challenge is that we cannot coach ourselves. We can't see all our strengths and weakness. In other words, we're blind to what we need to improve upon and work on. All great players have mentors and coaches. Look around you. Who can you talk to, who can you take to lunch, who can be your coach? We know that reading the book is a great start and will teach you great things, but if it is true excellence you're going for, you need one-on-one coaching as well. If you learned how to play basketball solely from reading a book, you would never achieve greatness on the court. The greatest growth in my life has come as a result of mentoring and coaching with the best.

Trust me when I say that you don't have the time or resources to wait to figure things out on your own. It amazes me how many persuaders go down this solitary road. Persuasion is not rocket science, but you do need to learn how to master your craft. In the past, we were able to get along in life by slowly learning what we needed to know, but times have changed. The train is now picking up speed. We used to be able to horse around, miss the train and then run to catch up with it if we were late. But the world is increasing at such a rapid rate that the competition you are now facing will no longer allow you to figure things out on your own. You can invest in yourself right now by finding the best mentor

to teach you the skills you need to succeed, or you can stay on the long road to little income, few skills and the inability to persuade.

If you wanted to rebuild the engine in your car, to learn how to fly or to rewire your house, would you just try to figure it out on your own? Would you read the best book on learning how to fly and then just hop in a plane and learn along the way? NO, of course you wouldn't! Then don't treat your career or your ability to persuade in the same illogical way. I remember going to a stock market seminar that dealt with learning how to trade. It was going to cost me over \$10,000 to attend additional training, so I declined. I got burned when I decided that I'd just figure the market out on my own and lost three times that amount in the market. The students attending the class, on the other hand, invested upfront, learned the proper skills and became great traders. I lost out by not allowing the experts to teach me the right skills. The answers are there, closer than you think, if you are willing to open yourself up to them. You would be surprised by how much other people can actually help you succeed.

Pay the price to become a professional in your field. Don't settle for mediocrity; become the best you can be at what you do. Who is the best in basketball? Right—Michael Jordan. He knew he could not become the best without daily practice of the sport's fundamental skills and acquirement of new skills. He also knew that he could not excel without a team, and especially without a coach. True excellence in any pursuit, persuasion included, comes from knowledge, continuing education and consistent practice.

Final Note

Learning how to persuade and influence others will make the difference between *hoping* for a better income and *having* a better income. It is the missing puzzle piece that will crack the success code. Proper persuasive skills will dramatically increase your income, improve your relationships, help you get what you want when you want and win you friends for life. Ask yourself how much money and income you have lost to date because of your inability to persuade and influence others. Think about it. Sure, you've seen some

success, but think of the countless other times you couldn't seal the deal. Has there ever been a time when you did not get your point across? Was there ever a time when you were unable to convince someone to do something? Have you reached your full potential? Are you able to motivate yourself and others to achieve more and to accomplish your goals? What about your relationships?

Think about it.... When was the last time you didn't get what you wanted when you know you should have gotten it? What went wrong? Did it frustrate you?

Do you persuade for a living (and everyone does)? Do you realize how much your success, your relationships and your income depend on your ability to persuade, motivate and influence others?

Are You Tired of...

- Not closing sales?
- Employees not listening to you?
- Being told no?
- Losing negotiations?
- Not getting your way?
- Paying too much for property?
- Paying too much for anything?

There is a solution: Magnetic Persuasion.

Magnetic Persuasion is literally the difference between knowing what you want and getting it...anytime, anyplace, from anybody. You can use Magnetic Persuasion to create unimaginable wealth, to transform your career and to strengthen your relationships. Magnetic Persuasion is the first and only resource to combine scientific research with documented studies into one comprehensive catalog of proven persuasive, influential and motivational techniques.

With Magnetic Persuasion, you'll learn how to:

- ❑ Read people instantly;
- ❑ Make people instinctively like and trust you;
- ❑ Understand the four secret motivators;
- ❑ Apply the twelve laws of persuasion;
- ❑ Put the sixteen most powerful words to use;
- ❑ Discover persuasion techniques known only by the top 1 percent of persuaders;
and
- ❑ Influence anyone to give you anything, anywhere, anytime!

Wouldn't you like to be the one to get that coveted promotion, close that elusive deal or simply buy that new house or car—for a great price? Whatever it is you want in life, the information contained in this manual can make it happen. Magnetic Persuasion means that others will be drawn to you, just as metal filings are drawn to a powerful magnet. Financial, social and personal success will materialize before your very eyes. Doors that were previously closed to you will swing wide open, and the world of opportunity will beat a path to your door.

The life-changing skills and techniques of Magnetic Persuasion are based on timeless, proven principles. They have been developed from countless hours of persuasion research and exhaustive studies into human nature. And now, for the first time, they are being unveiled to you. Most of us use the same worn-out persuasion techniques over and over again, achieving only temporary, limited or even undesired results. That's like having a whole toolbox full of tools and always reaching for the hammer.

Napoleon Hill said, "Persuasion is the magic ingredient that will help you to forge ahead in your profession or business—and to achieve happy and lasting personal relationships." As we all know, persuasion is the skill of the ultra-prosperous. It is how people gain power and influence. It is how people create staggering wealth and how businesses thrive. It is how properties are purchased and how Websites sell millions of dollars worth of product.

Understanding the theories of persuasion, motivation and influence will put you in life's driver's seat. Why? Because everything you want, or ever will want, from life comes from persuasion and influence. Did you know that less than 1 percent of the world's population understands and can actually apply the 12 Laws of Persuasion? As I reveal the secrets and science of persuasion to you, you will be able to persuade and influence others with complete accuracy. You will gain instant influence over others and you will inspire them to take action. All the while, you will be getting exactly what you want from life. You will win people over to your way of thinking and you will empower yourself with an unshakable confidence.

Success Is an Open Book Test:

Secrets, Strategies and Shortcuts to Reaching Exponential Success

Why are some people super-successful, while others dwell in mediocrity? Ask almost anyone out there, and I bet they'll say they want more out of life. They want to be better, to accomplish more or to pursue those buried and forgotten goals. So, why do so many of us fall short of achieving our dreams? We all want success. We all want to be happy. We all want to be self-disciplined and fulfill our wildest dreams. In fact, we don't just want success; we want *massive* success. We want to accomplish great feats and to be the best at what we do. And we want it all now. We know many of the things we should be doing to be happier, to be more physically fit and to be more financially secure. We know we should set our goals, manage our time, spend more time with our families, exercise, eat right, work hard, sleep more and have a positive mental attitude.

So, why aren't we doing these things? The desire is there, right? Does it ever seem beyond your reach? The good news is that if you really want success, you can have it. Success is an open book test in which the answers are right in front of you if you know where to look for them. Everyone has enormous potential. You were designed for greatness. There is something you are predestined to accomplish. Let's start on your success today. Don't procrastinate any longer. When you take a look at your life, know that there are no do-overs, reset buttons or mulligans. This is it, so it's time to make it happen. No longer will you stick your big toe in the pool of success; it's time to jump in.

We all deserve and desire to be happy, to be truly successful and to have an enjoyable life. We were put on this Earth to be happy. Rather than fretting over the future, you need to enjoy life's journey and know what it takes to achieve success and happiness. Things will not change with hope and desire alone, although they are great starting points. You also need to take action. You need to have a plan in mind and take control of your life. We all have to find that winning edge that will propel us to the top and help us achieve the things we know we are capable of accomplishing. In this chapter, we are going to take your dreams and desires and turn them into reality.

Remember the open book tests in school and how we could look up the answers? The answers were there, right in front of us; we just had to be willing to go to the source to find the answer. Metaphorically speaking, all of the amazingly successful people in the world are constantly leaving behind clues or answers—like an open book—that can help *anyone* become extremely successful. I refer to the polished mastery of these combined skills as the “Exponential Factor.” When you have the Exponential Factor, your potential for success skyrockets to unlimited heights. As the name suggests, your possibilities for success and greatness become exponential.

Life is a fantastic game. We can spend our time either training and winning or waiting in the bleachers of life, watching and wishing we were on the field doing the things we really know we can and want to do. You are in charge of your life. How you live is your decision and yours alone. You can make excuses and rationalize all day why you are not on the field, but until you decide you want to be in the game, that you want to enjoy the victories as well as suffer the bruises and defeats, you will not be happy or reach the success you know you deserve or are capable of achieving.

Why We STILL Aren’t Motivated: The Problems and Pitfalls

There are many quick fixes that create excitement and motivation, ones that work for a few days or even months, but eventually after that initial euphoric feeling wears off, we are back to square one. We are back to wanting and wishing, but with no results. Why, after all the flashy seminars and conferences and CDs, are we still only temporarily motivated? Why have we still not arrived at the destination we call success? What is taking us so long? Motivation and personal development is a billion-dollar industry, and it only continues to grow each year. Thousands of books and lectures exist on the topics of success and personal development. They’re all telling us what we want to hear, but where are the lasting *long-term* results? Why, after so much invested time, is it always back to our warm comfort zone?

I have often wondered why, even in the midst of best intentions, excitement declines and persistence deteriorates. Even the endeavors that are most meaningful to us seem to get lost in the distance when we are confronted by life's daily setbacks, hassles and frustrations. All too often, the path to success, at times so clearly defined, begins to get blurry again. But lack of long-term success goes much deeper than daily setbacks, hassles and frustrations. Take time to examine where all the detours come from: the self-doubt, the self-sabotage, the nagging, the negative inner voice and the inability to stick to the things you know you should be doing. Sometimes, our lack of persistence stems from the fact that the required behavior is not part of our customary pattern. Other times, it's because we're not doing it for the right reasons or in the right way. Sometimes, it's because we're trying to treat the surface problem or behavior rather than the underlying issue it stems from. That is, we're treating the symptoms instead of the disease. It is like trying to get off a car stuck on cruise control.

Whatever the reasons may be, you can't keep waiting around Are you waiting for a terrible experience to make you change your ways? Are you hoping for a miracle, the lottery or Publisher's Clearinghouse to change your life? I want to show you how to get started now. This is not just another motivational attempt. These concepts will change your life, will supercharge your success and will bring you happiness. Now it is time to give yourself permission to win.

You Are the Master of Your Destiny

We all want a guarantee in life. We want to see the results before we go out on a limb. As natural as this tendency may be, it's not how life or success works. We have to pay the price, face the test and win the game. But, if we maintain vision and courage along the journey, we also receive the biggest and best rewards life has to offer. In spite of all our planning and preparation, unexpected challenges are certain to arise. The bumps in the road are unavoidable, but you'll never get to your destination if you aren't willing to drive over them. The difference between catastrophe and triumph lies in whether or not you're buckled up, prepared and willing to weather the storm. If you're

ready, those bumps will become stepping-stones. Even though you had to endure some discomfort along the way, you'll ultimately end up on higher and better ground.

Sometimes we find ourselves surrounded by people who seem to work the same amount we do, or even *less*, and they still get better results. Drives you crazy, doesn't it? The key thing to realize is that working *harder* is not necessarily the same thing as working *smarter*. How do you work smarter? You need to have the right tools at your disposal. Consider any professional who uses tools for a living. Having the right tool available makes the job easier. Suppose you had to cut down a tree, but you had to do it with a pocket knife. *Eventually* the job would get done, but what if you had an axe or a chainsaw instead? The same job would get done better and faster—two factors we would all appreciate more of in whatever our jobs may be. Sometimes, when using a new tool for the first time, we need some special training. Then we need practice. Finally, repeated practice will lead to seasoned experience. Acquiring the Exponential Factor can be compared to training and exercising to get your body in shape when you haven't followed an exercise routine in years, or ever in your life. There may be some pain and discomfort in the beginning stages, but if you keep at it, it starts to feel good. You are being stretched and pulled out of your comfort zone, but in the end, it's definitely worth it.

My early mentor Jim Rohn taught me two important lessons. The first thing he said was: "Do you want to spend a day at the beach or own a piece of the beach?" Sure, this next step toward exponential success will take some energy and effort. Will it be worth it? No question about it. You have to do things you don't want to do to be able **not** to do the things you don't want to do. In other words, if you pay the price now, you can do whatever you want in the future. The second thing Jim said was: "For things to change, *you* must change, and for things to get better, *you* must get better. To change your life, your income, your relationships, *you* need to change you. We find the biggest challenge to our success in our mindset. Ironic how this is the very thing most people work on last. I'll admit I was in the same boat. I would go to the seminars, read the books and listen to the tapes. I would listen to successful people talk about vision, goal setting, mental programming and attitude and say, "Yeah, yeah, whatever, just give me the tools."

Hello—those things are the most important tools. When I finally realized that if every millionaire I listened to and every success book I read talked about these important principles, I better do them. When I realized this important truth, my life and my income changed. Then in a flash, it came to me. The universe will not reward you physically until you believe in it mentally. It is the mindset that matters and which is the biggest obstacle to your success and happiness.

You understand now how all this changing and growing is a process. But how much change is necessary? How much growth is required? The answer is: as much as possible. Have you ever noticed how every life form on Earth except human beings seems to strive to reach its maximum potential? How tall will a tree grow? It will grow as tall as it possibly can in its given environment. Part of the problem in our tendency to underachieve, ironically, is that we, as human beings, actually possess the ability to make choices. Some of us will choose to excel; others of us will be content with the status quo. Sure, *desire* is innate, but *action* is not. Jonathon Winters once said, “If your ship doesn’t come in, swim out to it.” Are you swimming, treading water or watching from the shore?

People want improved circumstances without an improved self. They want victory without paying the price. The problem is, one really can’t happen without the other. Any improvements that have not generated from an improved self are, at best, superficial and short-lived. If you want to change your future, you have to change yourself. Have you ever reflected on the fact that there are countless numbers of people who could have been phenomenal as leaders of the most powerful countries in the world, or who could have been brilliant leaders of the world’s greatest businesses, or who could have invented technologies that might have forever altered the course of humankind? They could have, but they didn’t. Someone else did. Thomas Edison wisely pointed out, “If we all did the things we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.” Why not be the one who stretches to reach your greatest potential?

The Exponential Success Roadmap

Part of your discovery will be making this self-mastery journey a natural process. It will still be challenging, but you need to expand your comfort zone. The journey to success starts with belief, proven principles and a burning desire to change. A lot of it will boil down to how your mind is programmed and whether you have given yourself permission to win. Let's revisit the good old days of sitting in math class. Take the mathematical operation $4 + 4$, for example. The answer is 8, right? What if we keep the same numbers, however, but change the operation—say, 4×4 . The answer is 16—the same two numbers with a different operator yield twice the results. Now think about 4 to the fourth power, or 256. Again, same numbers but the resulting figure is *exponentially* greater than the one we started with. This is what I mean when I talk about the Exponential Factor. Using the same raw material—*you*—we can create massive success just by thinking about and approaching things differently. By changing your outlook and the way you operate, you can exact profound change.

Andre Maurois imparted the now-famous anecdote: “If you create an act, you create a habit. If you create a habit, you create a character. If you create a character, you create a destiny.” Small things usually do make the biggest differences. That's just working *smarter*, not *harder*.

We know that it is not about working twice as hard. For example, Olympic champion Peter Vidmar used to always be the last gymnast to leave the gym. Surrounded by many very gifted athletes, he felt that he didn't have the natural talent that some of his competitors did. He knew that he couldn't practice or work out twice as hard as they did. Hour for hour, he gave it just as much as they did. He made one minor adjustment, however, and it paid off with big dividends. He always just added on another fifteen minutes or so to each workout after everyone else had left the gym. When he went on to win a gold medal over those he felt were more innately gifted, he attributed the extra fifteen-minute workouts as being a key to his success.

With the steps and formulas outlined in this manual, I'll show you how you can have the Exponential Factor. The result will be exponential success with no limits. Some people are satisfied with minor successes throughout their lives. Adding to their lives a little at a time is good enough. Others want to multiply the joy they have and the goals they want to accomplish. Then there are those who demand the most from life and want to achieve success exponentially. Just remember, it starts with how you look at it. It's the same basic building blocks, but exponential success just has a better plan and execution.

The Process (Not the Quick Fix)

Acquiring the Exponential Factor will not happen overnight. Compare it to some common events we encounter in our lives. We put on weight over the years, but then we want to lose it overnight. We spend years getting deeper and deeper into debt, but we want to become financially independent overnight. We decide we want to run that marathon—when it's only a month away. We want to ace that exam, but we only allow ourselves an hour to cram all the material. We start thinking about retirement when it looms only five years out on the horizon. There are many examples of things we want to attain in the shortest amount of time possible and with the least effort possible, but it rarely happens that way. Exponential success is a process and not a quick fix. Progress comes in steps and the foundation first has to be laid.

I mentioned earlier that we want to make this a natural process. What do I mean by that, especially since new skills and new habits will initially feel *unnatural*? When you write a term paper, you research what the experts have said about the subject, you organize your data, you determine what is best going to support your thesis, and then through that process, you arrive at your own conclusion. As you observe, study and apply the skills and strategies used by successful people, you will learn to sift and sort, essentially “cutting and pasting” together your own roadmap that will lead you to the top.

You are unique, your perception of success is unique and what you want to accomplish on your way to achieving that success is unique. You are destined for greatness. Your mission in life is to find and tap into that greatness. That's why you need

to customize a success plan according to your needs, talents, drive, personality, abilities, strengths and weaknesses. You can't live "exponentially" by following someone else's predetermined formula. Whose definition of success are you pursuing? Someone else's roadmap might help you make progress in some areas and you may achieve some degree of success along the way, but the greatest successes and happiness will always escape you if you are throwing your heart and soul into fulfilling someone else's definition of success.

There Are Four Types of People

Take a look at those around you and reflect on those who have influenced your life the most. What are they doing to your dreams, your esteem and your potential? They are either being destructive or constructive to your future plans. There are four types of people in this world: the Living Dead, the Dreamers, the Achievers and the Exponentially Successful. We have all met the Living Dead. They tend to suck the energy right out of us. They have given up on life and figure that if they can't be happy, you shouldn't be either. They will often do everything in their power to impede you from achieving your goals. They love to burst your dreams and remind you of all the inherent impossibilities, your past mistakes and why you can't achieve what you are aiming for. They point fingers and seek to pull you down because they see you getting closer and closer to what they wish they had themselves. Many don't tear down your dreams consciously, and they may not even realize why they feel the need to do so. Even in the face of the most intense criticism, you need to have the courage to do the things you know you need to do.

Then there are the Dreamers. Dreamers are full of great ideas. They make many noble attempts at success, but their zeal fizzles before they've solidified that success. They have a plethora of projects perpetually hanging in the midway zone. They tend to say "if only..." and "someday..." and "when such-and-such..." These people go through life stuck in first gear. They're moving, they're plugging along, but it sure is hard on the engine. They turn up the radio so the thrill of the vision drowns out the groan of the struggling machine.

The Achievers have reached a moderate level of success. They are accomplished, they are skillful, but they have not yet forged into the fire. They've climbed the ladder and found a pleasant view, so they've stopped short of the thrilling vistas only a few rungs away. They've found a comfortable spot, so why risk toppling to the bottom now? They're satisfied with the success and accomplishments they've already gained. Living on past success is easy to do. They think, *Why rock the boat?* It's nice to take a breather, but then that breather often grows more and more into their way of life. Let's just settle for mediocrity, they decide. They refuse to think that there is more to learn. They have made it in their own minds and can't see themselves going to the next level.

The Exponentially Successful are doing what they love. They enjoy life and others enjoy being around them. Life is exciting and they love all that life entails—the challenges and the joys alike. The Exponentially Successful constantly strive to improve themselves. They learn from their mistakes and from the experiences of others. They read, they learn, they risk, and all along the way, they grow, no matter the situation. They are self-confident and well-balanced. They have a passion for life. They know who they are, why they are here and where they are going. These are the people who make massive success look easy. Exponential success is where I want to take you. Now is the time; this is your year.

Take a look around you. Are the people in your life pulling you up or pulling you down? Are they constructive toward your future plans or destructive toward your goals, dreams and aspirations? An important trait exponentially successful people possess is their ability to follow their hearts. It does not matter what other people say or do. They know they are on the right track in pursuit of their dreams. Think what would have happened if Abraham Lincoln had listened to his critics, if Thomas Edison had taken to heart everyone who said his inventions were impossible. What if Bill Gates (while going to Harvard) listened to his counselors and stayed in school? What if Mark Victor Hansen and Jack Canfield listened to the over 100 publishers that turned them down for *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and hadn't gone on to sell over 100 million copies? I could list volumes

of similar stories. Ask anyone you know who is successful and I guarantee you will hear a similar story.

The Mental Game

As I said earlier, it is important to learn and take clues from others who have gone before you and experienced what you hope to experience. But make sure your study and observation of such individuals is only *part* of the full plate of information you're trying to absorb. Then step back and view the big picture. It's easy to get swept up in one person's energy and enthusiasm, so you have to be careful that you don't get too excited and follow them mindlessly. Even if duplication of a few successful people's patterns yields good results, doing so is not going to be the same as if you had drawn the best advice from as many sources as possible and cultivated a personalized success pattern of your own. The more tools in your tool belt, the more equipped you will be to propel yourself higher and higher. Only then will you allow yourself to continuously maximize your present success potential while simultaneously expanding your boundaries to ever-greater heights. When you unearth this pattern, your passion will kick in like never before and you will begin to recognize the taste of true greatness.

If you aren't sure whether or not you have chosen the right direction in your own life, don't panic. We're going to work through that together. As you read this manual, you will become more and more able to determine your focus, your passion and your direction. There are things in this life you are here to accomplish. Everyone has great ideas, goals, un-started business concepts, dreams and unwritten books inside of them. You have to realize that your mind, skills and talents are not limited natural resources. They are not like a computer hard drive or RAM with limited storage potential. They will never run out and are only wasted if you don't use them. If you don't fulfill the mission you're here to fulfill, somebody else will have to do it for you. Don't be denied of your dreams and what you are supposed to accomplish. Remember that you are responsible for fulfilling your dreams. No one else will perform them the way you could have, and no one else's accomplishment of them will give you the joy and satisfaction that could have

been yours. Until you hold yourself totally responsible, you don't own your dreams—you are only renting them.

Burning Desire: The First Step Toward Exponential Success

When you learn to channel your energy and emotions into a burning desire, you are laying the foundation for exponential success. Desire is the first step toward ultimate achievement. Your desire will be so great that even subconsciously you will be giving every ounce that is in you toward accomplishing what you were meant to achieve. There will always be those who scoff and scorn you, calling your dreams “impractical” or “irresponsible,” but in all actuality, it is embracing what's closest to your heart that will unleash within you your greatest energy and imagination. And just like striking oil, you will experience a surge of greater productivity than you have ever had in your life. It is desire that will allow you to transform mediocre abilities into mind-boggling success that is maximized to heights above and beyond what you ever thought possible.

Another word for desire is conviction. I like this word because it suggests an emotion that is even deeper within, even more driving. Soul-filled conviction has the power to pull you through every possible challenge and give you the strength to scale the highest peaks. So how do you find this conviction and tap into it? As you hone the skills in this manual and use them diligently in your daily life, your conviction will rise within you and become ever clearer. Right at this very moment, you have within you a power plant burning with potential energy. You have the potential to light a whole city, but you are only burning one bulb or lighting one house. The potential is there, and now is the time to tap into it.

Just as a space shuttle expends the most fuel in creating the momentum to leave the atmosphere and soar into orbit, kicking off a new plan towards exponential success also demands the greatest amount of energy and effort up front. Once the shuttle is in orbit, it expends less energy. Similarly, once you've acquired the Exponential Factor, exponential success will naturally follow and success will be yours.

Motivation is Persuasion: How to Motivate Others Every Time

“Winning isn’t everything, but wanting to win is.” Vince Lombardi

Motivation is a call to action. It inspires change, movement and focus. It is what makes the world turn. The Art of Motivation is a must for Master Persuaders. How do you motivate in such a way that you prompt people to take the actions you want them to take? How can you plant the seeds of motivational encouragement in your prospects? As a persuader, I have found that one of the keys to success lies in motivating yourself and others. We have all had days when we did not feel like doing the things we knew we needed to do. Similarly, it is useless to persuade others to your point of view if you can’t get them to take action.

I have given success psychology and persuasion boot camps all over the world and I’ve met wonderful people at each one. People frequently come up to me afterward and tell me enthusiastically how they’re ready to take action and make positive changes in their lives. They often seem so fired up that you could light a match with their energy. After talking to them, I feel convinced that nothing will stand in their way. But then an interesting thing happens. When I follow up with them a few weeks later, nothing has really changed for many of them. Their motivation initially seemed high, but just a brief passage of time often finds them totally unmotivated again. Several of these occasions have made me begin to wonder why it is such a natural tendency to lack the motivation to actually do the things we really want to do, even after we’ve made strong commitments to do them. I then naturally began to wonder how one would take want and turn it into action. That is, how could one become a Master Persuader who could motivate people who are naturally inclined to resist it to take action?

If you were to ask a random group of people off the street if they want to be financially independent, if they want to lose weight or if they want to have better relationships, most everyone would say yes. While we all desire these things, what are we doing about

getting them? We know what we want, but what are we doing to actively turn those wants into achievements? When encouraged, most of us start to generate sparks, but we just can't seem to get the fire started. We want to make proactive changes in our lives, but we can't motivate ourselves enough to actually do anything about it. Why? Because change involves work and energy. What's more, most of us don't understand the science of motivation. We live in a world where we want everything *now*. We want a quick fix. We want instant gratification and quick results. Not only do we want instant gratification, but we also want it with minimal effort. Through extensive research, study and observation, I have found the secret to motivating others and ourselves. I'm about to share that elusive secret with you.

Gentle Motivation vs. Brutal Force—The First Step to Motivating Others

The first place to start mastering motivation is within yourself. If you can't motivate yourself, how are you going to motivate others? As this chapter unfolds, you will learn ways to motivate those people you are trying to persuade, but first you will learn how to apply these motivational skills to yourself. Before you begin, figure out what motivates you. You must first understand your own motives and desires before you can be motivated by someone else.

How to Persuade the Lazy Person—Fulfilling Needs and Wants

Motivation is based on the finding and fulfilling of unmet needs and wants. We all have universal human needs and wants that require fulfillment in the same way. Of course, we all have different needs and wants as well. Two of the major keys to motivation are knowing what a person's needs and wants are and figuring out how to fulfill them.

Motivate the Unmotivated—Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Many of us are familiar with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. A renowned researcher and psychologist, Maslow proposed a "hierarchy of needs" that demonstrates the human needs we are most motivated to satisfy. The base of the motivational order begins with the fundamentals of life. These fundamental, life-sustaining needs must be

met before the higher needs can be targeted. When lower needs are not met, the higher needs become less urgent or persuaded.

- Self-actualization needs:** realizing one's own talents, gifts and potential
- Ego needs:** respect, status and recognition
- Social needs:** affection, companionship and inclusion
- Safety needs:** protection from physical harm
- Physiological needs:** food, sleep and safety¹

As the more basic needs are fulfilled, they lose their motivating power. We then have to work up the hierarchy and target needs in other areas. For example, if running water is something we take for granted, then a glass of tap water is unlikely to spur us on to action. Conversely, if we can't meet this month's rent, then we most likely are not thinking too much about fulfilling our self-actualization needs. As Sigmund Freud said, "A man with a toothache cannot be in love." To motivate effectively, be sure you address your prospect's lowest unmet need in the hierarchy and then offer opportunities for those needs to be met.

The Desperation Cycle: Why Does Motivation Fail?

Many think motivation is useless because it doesn't ensure long-lasting results. This thought tendency can be seen in what I call the Desperation Cycle. The Desperation Cycle shows how human nature influences us to take the easiest path instead of the best one. In persuasion, we need to pull people out of the Desperation Cycle and into permanent, long-term motivation. We all know we are creatures of habit. We are like water following the path of least resistance. As creatures of habit, we dwell in our comfort zones, places where we don't have to think or expend much energy in analyzing our surroundings. In these zones, we become complacent, comfortable and resistant to change. We live by habit and routine in our comfort zones. We don't stretch or strive for excellence. We consider change only when the pain of our current situation becomes too intense to ignore. Fear of the unknown and fear of making mistakes are also reasons why

¹ Maslow, Abraham. *Motivation and Personality*. Addison-Wesley Publishers. 1976.

we stay in our comfort zone. We love our comfort zone because it is a safe place where we can reduce our mistakes and keep our failures to a minimum. Mark Twain said, “A cat that steps on a hot stove once will never step on a hot stove again but neither will it step on a cold one.” The comfort zone is safe and warm, but it keeps us paralyzed and unmotivated to venture out of it.

In the Desperation Cycle, we first feel safe in our comfort zone. Then, fear even begins to creep into our complacency. Only then do we realize that we haven’t accomplished any of the things we need to do. Suddenly, we fear what we are becoming and where we are going. As we contemplate our destination, we panic and work frantically to save ourselves. This frantic rehabilitation lasts just long enough for us to see exactly how steep the hill is going to be or how long the marathon really is. Then the excitement dies. We numb ourselves to these stark realizations and find ourselves lulled back into our comfort zone.

Let’s say you have a high school reunion coming up, but for the past decade, you’ve been enjoying some of life’s finer foods. Over the years, your pants have become a little tighter and tighter. You don’t want to go your reunion in this fat stage. You then begin to fear what it’s going to be like to show up at your reunion looking this way. Panic hits and you vow that you will lose weight before the looming event arrives. To that end, you starve yourself. You even start to exercise. The pounds come off and you go to your reunion, a slimmer and more confident individual. Then the cycle comes full circle. You get home and think it’d be nice to continue shedding the pounds, but you realize it’s harder than you thought. You begin to enjoy the finer things in life again, just a little bit at first then more and more as time goes by. The weight then returns and you start the vicious cycle all over again.

How to Persuade the Lazy Person—Inspiration vs. Desperation

Reinforcement Theory suggests that people are motivated to avoid pain and to seek pleasure. Bradac, Bowers and Courtright asserted that the same notion holds true when people are being persuaded. If a person agrees with a particular position, s/he will find it

inspiring and will likely evaluate the source positively. Contrarily, if a person disagrees with a particular position, s/he will find it offensive and will typically evaluate the source negatively.²

Basically, there are only two things that motivate us in life: inspiration and desperation. We either move toward that which inspires us, or we move away from that which fills us with despair or discomfort. The majority of the world's population uses desperation as a motivator. Desperation is like a cattle prod forcing you to move forward and take action. I can motivate anyone in the world with desperation. The problem is that motivation that is spurred by desperation does not last.

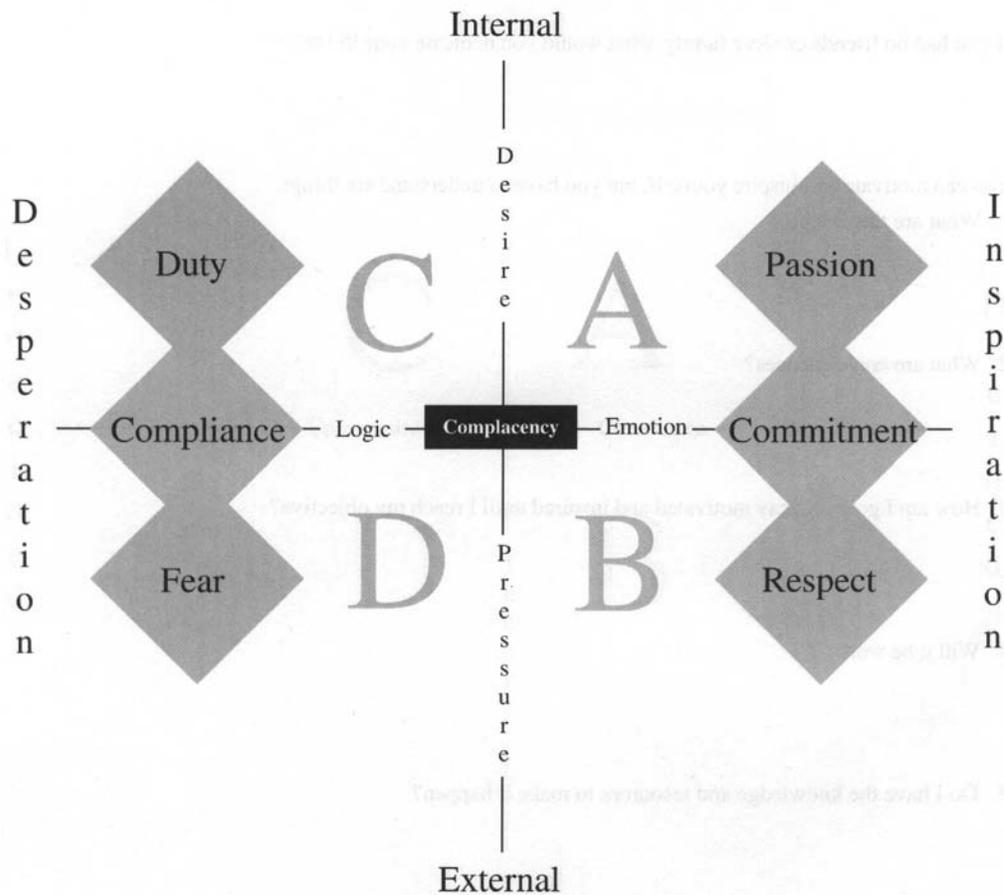
Do you know any lazy teenagers? If you do, I promise you that I can motivate them—guaranteed. I'll take them for a boat ride, and while I am in the middle of the lake, I'll throw them overboard and hold their heads under the water. What will I see, besides bubbles? Instant motivation, that's what. They'll fight and struggle until they get that breath of air they so desperately need. Once they can breathe easily, however, they'll go right back to being lazy. When desperation is the motivator, people are in an "away from" mentality. This temporary motivation won't last, and it won't reappear until threat or fear becomes prominent again. Desperation is rooted in logic. True, there are emotions that are associated with desperation, but logic wins over your emotions. People are often so preoccupied with what they're trying to escape that they don't know where they're heading. As a result, they are always in a panicky, "have to" mode.

If you want motivation to last, you need to rely on inspiration. Inspiration is rooted in our emotions. With inspiration, your emotions triumph over logic. The positive results that come from using inspiration as a motivator are obvious. Inspired people tend to be proactive, driven personality types. In other words, they don't need a carrot dangling in front of them to get something accomplished. They are happier and enjoy greater fulfillment in life than those who are desperation-driven. If you just check the help-

² Bradac, J. J., Bowers, J. W. & Courtright, J. A. (1980). Lexical variations in intensity, immediacy, and diversity: An axiomatic theory and causal model. In R. N. St Clair and H. Giles (Eds.). *The social and psychological contexts of language* (pp. 193-223). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

wanted section of your newspaper, these types of inspired people are always in demand. To be most effective, inspiration needs to be internalized. Motivation becomes long-term when your goals tap into your inner drive and emotion. The key to finding success lies in being emotionally motivated with a purpose. Take a look at the following Quadrants of Motivation for further proof.

Motivation Quadrant



© 2002 Exponential Solutions

Let's take a closer look at the Motivation Quadrant. Doing so will open your eyes so you can really understand how motivation works, not only in your own life but also in the lives of those around you. Understand that there are different levels of motivation and many different ways to motivate. Notice that motivation does not exist in the middle of

the motivational grid. This center point of the quadrant represents our comfort zone, where we experience complacency. Now the million-dollar question becomes, how do you get someone to move outside the middle of the quadrant? Let's start from the short-term, most common form of motivation: quadrant D, where we find external desperation. Anyone can motivate or be motivated when they are in this area of the grid. Let's take your present job for example. Let's say you hate your job. You don't want to go to work and you only do so because you feel like you have to. This external desperation tells you that if you don't go to work that you will lose your job, that you'll have no income, that you'll lose your home, etc. This area of the quadrant is where most people reside. That is, they do things at the last minute because they are forced to or have to.

The next area of the Motivation Quadrant lies between internal and external desperation and is known as compliance. Again, when you are in this quadrant, you aren't internally motivated; you're only going through the emotions because you have to. Moving further up the quadrant, the next area, quadrant C, we discover internal desperation. Again, you don't want to go to work, but the internal desperation you feel convinces you that this is what needs to be done, that this is what you are supposed to do. In other words, you feel a duty or an obligation to go to work. You might feel obligated to show up at work because of a particular project you are working on. You might also feel a sense of duty toward your manager or co-workers to be there and to help out with the workload. You still go, even though you don't want to be there. Your logic wins over your emotions. Watch, and you'll find that the people who use desperation to motivate themselves are invariably unhappy. You will never be a true master of your destiny nor will you ever achieve the success you want until you emerge on the other side of the Motivation Quadrant.

Next up is quadrant B: external inspiration. You feel moved by outside sources that inspire you to do what you need to do. Remember, inspiration is rooted in your emotions. Once you tap into your emotions, you will be able to propel yourself and others toward long-term, permanent motivation. When your logical mind says you can't do it, your emotional mind takes over. In this area of the Motivation Quadrant, you do things out of respect or love. That is, you go to work to provide the best for your family. You apply

yourself to your job because you want to send your children to the best schools or you wish to buy a new home for your family. You are motivated to go to work by the external things around you. Between internal and external inspiration lies commitment. That is, you go to work because you feel you have made a commitment to be there, and you are driven to keep that commitment.

The best type of motivation is found in quadrant A of the Motivation Quadrant. This internal inspiration is what we call passion. You have likely met people who have tapped into their passions. Because they are so passionate about their lives, they don't need an alarm clock to wake up in the morning. During your presentation, if you can get others to tap into their passions or internal inspirations, then you will bring about pure long-term motivation in them. Using the previous job example, when you are passionate about your career, you are excited to go to work. Rather than seeing your job as a chore, you are doing what you love to do. You are changing the world and serving people around you. What's more, you are dedicated with the passion to share your message, product or service with the world.

How to Implement Motivation

In a persuasive setting, you can use every quadrant of the Motivation Quadrant to your advantage. The four different areas of the grid can be used to tap into the emotions that most motivate people. Some people can only be motivated in the short-term, so you have to use desperation with them. When you tap into a prospect's passion, you have uncovered somebody who will fulfill your long-term call to action and who will willingly do what you ask her to do. She will be excited about your message and will comply with your requests. Passion is the greatest motivator. When you are inspired internally to become the best in your field, you are operating from quadrant A. You love what you do and the resulting emotional drive and desire accompany your passion as you persuade and influence others. Your passion also becomes contagious. Being motivated by passion and inspiration not only augments your own happiness but it also increases your ability to persuade and influence others.

Let's take a closer look at how all of this relates together. Those of you who have been in school can relate to one external motivation: grades. In education, grades are the primary motivational vehicle. Teachers and administrators assume that the opportunity to get good grades will motivate students to excel in their coursework. However, studies have shown, over and over again, that such outside controls are unlikely to inspire genuine intuition, creativity, deep concentration or passion. Not only will the students lack these attributes, but they will also likely find the grading process unpleasant. One of these studies had groups of college students spend about three hours learning complex neurophysiology material. Half the students were told that they would be tested and graded after their study session. The other half were told that they were going to put the material they had learned to use by teaching it to others. After the three study hours were up, the students were surveyed. It turns out that those who believed they were learning so they could help teach others were more internally motivated than those who believed they would be tested.

To be successful in persuasion, we must identify toward which motivational quadrant the person being persuaded gravitates. Do they spend more time using desperation as a motivator or do they prefer to use inspiration as a motivator? To be an effective persuader, you must be flexible and use different Motivation Quadrant methods in your presentations. As a motivator, you need to use all four quadrant areas in your presentations. We must remember that at certain times and on certain days, we will be motivated by different motivational quadrants. For example, most people aren't inspired to go to the dentist. It is important to understand that when your prospect is in inspiration mode, you should never use desperation to motivate her/him. Resorting to this tactic will backfire and produce the opposite results from those you intended. When your prospect is in desperation mode, on the other hand, you can use a combination of inspiration and desperation to motivate her/him.

When in doubt, you can study people's actions or words to find out toward which motivational quadrant they gravitate. For example, expressions such as "When I get there...", "When I find a solution...", "When I accomplish..." or "I am going to

achieve...” indicate inspiration. Contrarily, phrases like “I have to get out of here...,” “I want to avoid...,” “I need to escape...” or “I have to get away from...” indicate desperation.

Motivational Formula: Find the Switch and Turn People On

When determining how to eliminate or overcome obstacles that stand in the way of one’s taking action, you must analyze the Motivation Equation and learn how it applies to that particular person. The equation looks like this:

$$\frac{(\text{Want} \times \text{Reward}) + \text{Tools}}{\text{Difficulty} - \text{Timeframe}} = \text{Degree of Motivation}$$

How do you “salt” the motivational quadrants? Look at the first element of the Motivation Equation: want. This concept is easy to understand. In order to successfully tap into your prospects’ motivation, one of the first things you have to understand is what they want. “Want” also includes what they need, what their goals are, what they are trying to accomplish, what turns their crank, where they want to go, etc.

The second part of the equation is reward. In other words, is it worth it to your prospects to take action? What is their reward for doing so? What are they going to get from such action? What’s in it for them? Is it something they can fully understand the value of? Can they feel it, touch it, taste it—crave it?

The third part of the equation involves tools. Do your prospects have the necessary tools to perform the task you are asking of them? Do they have the competence to get the task done right? Do they have the knowledge or intelligence to put your call to action into motion? Do they have the necessary resources, for example, transportation, finances, relationships or self-confidence, to accomplish the task?

Now we move to the bottom half of the equation, where things get a little tricky. How difficult is the task you are asking of your prospects going to be to perform? Or, more importantly, how hard do your prospects perceive it to be? Will it be perceived by them as more difficult than it's worth? Can they see themselves performing this task you are asking them to do? Is it worth their effort?

The last part of the equation deals with timeframe. Can your prospects fulfill your request in the period of time you are asking them to do it? Will a long timeframe cause them to lose focus and discover more obstacles so as not to have to complete the task you are asking of them? Do they feel that your deadline provides them with enough time to complete your request? Do they have the drive to stay on task until it is completed?

With this equation in your persuasion toolbox, you can analyze your prospects. If you can understand each aspect of the equation in regards to your prospects' motivational level, you can customize your proposition so they will be motivated to take action.

Find the Motivator that Creates Hunger: Passion

Martin Luther King said, "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." In order to successfully motivate someone—or, to get her/him to internalize the motivation—you have to create a deep hunger or thirst. It has been said that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. That's true, but let it be known that you can give that horse salt, thereby creating such a thirst that the horse must have water. As a master motivator, you are giving salt to your prospects. That is, you are striving to create such a thirst in your prospects that they can't wait to act.

On your persuasive journey, you will find that people tend to get motivated for the short term, that they lose steam and that they then fall back into the rut they were trying to pull themselves out of in the first place. As a persuader and motivator, you have to understand what pulls people away from action into inaction. What causes them to lose excitement, vision and energy? When you notice that your prospects are losing their motivation, these are the common reasons why they are doing so:

- *They have not yet found their passion.* – They are going through life using desperation as a motivator, or they haven't yet found anything that really inspires them.
- *They have a poor attitude.* – They are run down with a negative attitude. Their expectations and beliefs are not congruent with their goals.
- *Their intent is diminishing.* – They have previously been on the right track but they've now lost their drive. They have forgotten the real reasons why they were motivated in the first place.
- *They are indifferent.* – They just don't care anymore. They have lost the ability to express concern or to make a difference in their own life or in the lives of others.
- *They have become creatures of habit.* – They have not replaced their previous bad habits and have fallen back into old ones.
- *They lack persistence.* – They have given up too easily and have gotten stalled at the first obstacle.
- *They have no sense of urgency.* – They have set no timeframe for achievement. The pain of not changing doesn't hurt badly enough that they've got to act now.
- *They have succumbed to peer pressure.* – The people around them are more motivating than you are. They have not found the support they need to resist against the peers whose esteem they value.
- *They lack vision.* – They have sacrificed long-term success for short-term pleasure.
- *They lack knowledge.* – They don't know how to make the necessary changes in their lives or they are not doing so correctly.
- *They lack confidence.* – Confidence comes only after action, knowledge and success have been achieved.
- *They have no game plan.* – They are overwhelmed or waiting for everything to fall into order. They have no action plan.
- *They simply don't want to do it.* – They don't want to pay the price. Their goal is only a dream and nothing more. They are using external desperation as their motivator, or they are living their lives the way others want them to.

Guaranteed Motivation—Finding the Internal Motivation

As you prepare to tap into your audience's inspirations, ask yourself or your prospects the following questions. Once you tap into this amazing source of motivation, you can create your call to action. These questions will work for you on a personal level or they can be adapted to suit your audience. I have purposely kept these questions in the second person so you will understand what it takes to tap into your own passion and inspiration.

1. What do you love to do?
2. What would you do with your life if you could do anything?
3. What inspires you?
4. What do you want to achieve in this life?
5. If you had all the money in the world, what would you do with your life?

As a master motivator, you want others to not only take action, but you also want them to make changes in their lives. To facilitate motivation and change, you must know and understand the answer to each of these questions. You can only facilitate change in your audience after you have answered these questions about them:

1. What knowledge and information do your prospects need to take action?
2. Are they more motivated by inspiration, desperation or a combination of the two?
3. What is the cost of staying the same, or what will happen if they don't change?
4. What are the benefits your prospects will receive when they make the change you are asking of them?
5. Do they feel capable and competent enough to make that change?

You can't change a habit unless you replace it with another one. The same is true of motivation. You can't change how someone is motivated unless you replace the undesirable motivation with a desirable one. Hence, you have to understand whether your prospect's motivation is a positive one or a destructive one

Once inspiration is identified, you must build on that inspiration until you create an intense hunger in your prospects. This means that you get them to take responsibility for their own lives. You get them to set new goals or to review their existing goals as well as their reasons for setting them. Another way to stoke the motivational fires is to find somebody who shares your same passion.

Additional Motivational Theories

Since Maslow introduced the concept of needs, countless motivational theories have been brought to light. One of these theorists, Avid McClelland, proposed that as we go through life we learn three things that motivate us: achievement, affiliation and power.³ Another of these theorists, John C. Mowen, used the three “Rs” of motivation: reward, recognition and reinforcement.⁴ Bob Stone suggested that people respond either to “gain something they do not have or to avoid losing something they now possess.”⁵ He created this list of basic human wants to explain his theory:

The desire to gain

- To make money
- To save time
- To avoid effort
- To achieve comfort
- To have health
- To be popular
- To experience pleasure
- To be clean
- To be praised
- To be in style
- To gratify curiosity
- To satisfy an appetite
- To have beautiful possessions

The desire to avoid loss

- To avoid criticism
- To avoid loss of possessions
- To avoid physical pain
- To avoid loss of reputation
- To avoid loss of money
- To avoid trouble

³ McClelland, David. *Human Motivation*. Cambridge University Press. 1987.

⁴ Mowen, John C. *Consumer Behavior*. Macmillan Publishing Company. 1993.

⁵ Stone, Bob. *Successful Direct Marketing Methods*. NTC Business Books. 1994, p.379.

To be an individual

To emulate others

To take advantage of opportunities

In his book *The Hidden Persuaders*, Vance Packard identifies eight hidden needs that motivate people into action:

1. The need for emotional security: We live in uncertain times. Terrorism lurks around every corner, the happenings on Wall Street are shaky, we are surrounded by illness and disease, etc. We need safety, comfort and stability in our lives.
2. The need to feel self-worth: Much of today's society is cold, competitive and uncaring. We want to experience a place in the world where we know we've made a difference.
3. The need for ego-gratification: We want recognition and praise. We all want to feel important.
4. The need for creativity: We feel more satisfaction and fulfillment when we can work creatively through hobbies, sports and other forms of recreation.
5. The need for love foci: Life is richer when we have someone to share our love with, for example friends, children, grandchildren, a spouse or pets.
6. The need for control: We need to feel a sense that we have some control or power over our environment, our surroundings and/or our conditions.
7. The need to belong: We want to feel that we are an integral part of the world and that we are important to the people we love, respect or admire.
8. The need for immortality: We fear dying or being forgotten. We buy life insurance because we want to leave something behind when we're gone.⁶

The Underlying Key

Motivation starts with vision. In other words, people need to believe that they will succeed in what you are motivating them to do. No one likes to lose. For that matter, no one wants to lose. No one even wants to be associated with losers. So overcome this

⁶ Packard, Vince. *The Hidden Persuaders*. Cardinal Books. 1957.

hurdle and instill in your listener or audience a vision of winning. Thinking we can win and seeing that victory in our mind's eye stirs our internal motivation. When we help others think of past victories or we instill the vision of victory in them, we can motivate them to take action. Olympic coach Charles Garfield states that the highest performers are driven by a sense of mission.

Master Persuaders present a winning package to their prospects. When people sense victory or accomplishment, they will make sacrifices and become energized to reach their goals. Somehow or other, they will find a way to succeed and win. If they sense defeat, however, they'll exert little personal effort, they'll come up with lots of excuses, and they'll exhibit a lack of energy for the cause.

Motivation is a true art. When you understand the human nature and the role influence plays in it, you will not only be able to motivate, but you will also have earned the right to motivate and inspire others.

5 C's of Trust

How to Build, Gain and Maintain Trust

The ability to gain and keep trust is a vital factor in being able to influence others. Research has shown, time and time again, that trust is always a contributing factor in the ability to influence others. When a person trusts you, that trust alone can motivate them to accept your message. On the flip side, if people don't trust you, all the evidence, reasoning, facts or figures in the world won't get them to budge in their resistance.

Trust can be an ambiguous concept, but certain things are quite clear: 1) You can't get others to trust you unless you first trust yourself; and 2) Your message will not be convincing to others unless it's convincing to you. Whenever someone tries to influence us, in our minds we ask ourselves, "Can I trust this person? Do I believe him? Is she really concerned about me?" We are less likely to be influenced if we sense that the person who is trying to persuade us is driven solely by self-interest.

The Five C's of Trust

Character

Integrity and Honesty

Competence

Knowledge and Ability

Confidence

Conviction and Belief

Credibility

History and Experience

Congruence

Consistency and Harmony

The Five C's of Trust, as listed above, will all help you gain the trust you need to have lasting influence. Let me use a story to illustrate how these elements work in tandem. Imagine you're experiencing extreme tooth pain. You've put off going to the dentist as long as possible, but now nature's telling you your time has run out. You recently relocated, so your previous dentist is 2,000 miles away and no longer an option. You ask your new friends and neighbors about their dentists and you get the following five responses:

1. "My dentist has great character. He is one of the most honest people I know. He's not very competent, though. I heard he's famous for sticking the needle completely through your cheek."

Would you go to this dentist?

2. "My dentist is one of the top dentists in the state. He's extremely competent, but kind of a crook. He has no character. He's been caught a few times over-billing his patients and he also sometimes fills more cavities than you actually have."

Would you go to this dentist?

3. "My dentist doesn't have much confidence in his work. One time he said to me, 'I've never been very good at reading x-rays. I feel unsure about whether I should give you a root canal or just leave the tooth alone. Look at this x-ray and tell me what you think.'"

Would you go to this dentist?

4. "I'm not sure my dentist is licensed. I didn't see any degree or diplomas on his wall, and no one seems to know where he went to school. His office doesn't have

the latest equipment. He even asked me to pay cash instead of writing a check. He has no credibility in my book.”

Would you go to this dentist?

5. “My dentist is a nice guy, but he doesn’t keep his stories straight. Congruency and consistency are not his strong suits. Last year, he said I’d probably have to get a root canal on my molar the next time I came in. When I came back, I asked him about the root canal on my molar, and he said, ‘You don’t need a root canal on that tooth. Who told you that?’”

Would you go to this dentist?

I’m sure you would spend more time trying to find a dentist who met all five criteria before you’d resort to one who lacked one of the Five C’s of Trust. A deep and lasting sense of trust will not exist without all five trust characteristics being present. We know that if a person is lacking in just one of these areas, it will affect every aspect of her/his ability to build, gain and maintain trust.

Character—The First C of Trust

Character is the combination of qualities that distinguishes one person from another. Put another way, your character is who you are on the inside. Your character is comprised of the things you do when you think no one’s ever going to find out. Aristotle said, “Character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion.” People of character possess integrity, honesty, sincerity and maturity. In fact, in a Korn/Ferry and UCLA-conducted study, it was found that 71 percent of 1,300 surveyed senior executives said that integrity was the quality most needed to succeed in business.

I consider integrity to be the foundation of character. In the Bible, integrity refers to individuals whose actions match the teachings and word of God. In his best-selling book

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey talks about how integrity is crucial to one's ultimate success:

If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other—while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity or insincerity— then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust, and everything I do—even using so-called good human relations techniques—will be perceived as manipulative. It simply makes no difference how good the rhetoric is or even how good the intentions are; if there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for permanent success. Only basic goodness gives life to technique.⁷

Having integrity is like having a rock-solid dam. People know a good, solid dam will hold and will provide many benefits, such as electricity, water and recreation. If you are perceived as lacking in integrity, however, it's like having holes and leaks in your dam. When the leaks appear, everyone downstream abandons their trust in the old dam and seeks higher ground. Respect is lost and people place their trust in someone else they believe has greater integrity. We can all learn from the wisdom of the ancient Israelite, King Solomon. He is recorded as saying, "A good name is more desirable than great riches." If owning a good reputation is like owning gold, then owning integrity is like owning the mine. Abraham Lincoln gave another good analogy: "Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing."

Notice my choice of the words "perceive" and "believe" in the preceding paragraph. When attempting to build trust in others, it is wise to avoid even the appearance of anything that may be considered as immoral or a breach of integrity. It is human nature for people to cast sweeping judgments and to even spread their opinions when they don't

⁷ Covey, Stephen. *The Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. New York. Simon and Schuster. 1989.

have all the facts. If you never place yourself in a situation where one might be misled about you or your integrity, then your good, hard-earned reputation will never be compromised. D. L. Moody once stated, “If I take care of my character, my reputation will take care of itself.” Never do the type of things that would make you or your family cringe to hear or read about. Striving to maintain integrity is like having a Guardian Angel. If you pay attention to it, it will keep you on track. When faced with a moral dilemma, remember the adage of Phillips Brooks, a nineteenth-century clergyman: “Character is made in the small moments in our lives.”

Abraham Lincoln stands as a worthy role model for anyone who wants to develop character. He once said, “When I lay down the reins of this administration, I want to have one friend left. And that friend is inside myself.” This statement was a particularly poignant desire given that Lincoln was criticized so viciously while he was in office. Nevertheless, he always remained true to what he believed in his heart was right and true.

The Latin root of the word “sincerity” is *sincerus*, which means “without wax.” Pillar sculptors sometimes used wax to hide their mistakes so they could still pass their work off as unflawed. Years of weathering, however, eventually revealed their deception. As a result, a sincere person was considered to be one without wax or camouflage. Today, wax or no wax, the average person can sense falsehood, deception or insincerity in another. Be aware that there is more to being honest than just not getting caught in a lie. Author Joseph Sugarman explains, “Every time you are honest and conduct yourself with honesty, a success force will drive you toward greater success. Each time you lie, even with a little white lie, there are strong forces pushing you toward failure.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. also defined character in this way: “The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Trustworthiness increases when we are big enough to own up to our mistakes and weaknesses. People can forgive weakness, but they won’t be as quick to forgive cover-

ups. Oftentimes, if a salesperson is open about a weakness or drawback in a particular product, s/he still closes the deal. If you can present both sides of an issue, you will be considered fairer and more honest. Often, your honesty will be the characteristic that wins people over. In the end, it is better to risk rejection than to hide something your prospect will later find out on her/his own.

When it comes to marketing, honesty sells. Companies that reveal a product's weaknesses are perceived as more honest and trustworthy than those that try to cover up their product's faults. Many master marketers can even turn that weakness into a positive selling point. When we reveal a product's negatives, not only does it instill greater trust in our prospects, but it opens their minds so that the negatives are always accepted as truth. Think of the following examples:

Avis™ – We are #2 and we try harder

Listerine™ – The taste you hate twice a day

7-UP™ – The Un-cola

L'Oreal™ – Because I'm worth it

Volkswagon™ – VW will stay ugly long

Competence—The Second C of Trust

The next C in the trust quintet is competence. Competence is your knowledge and ability in a particular subject area. Competency can be real, perceived or imagined. True competence comes from lifelong learning and experience that has gradually taught you what you know. Perceived competence comes from other people who are judging you based on external factors and their personal experiences with you.

True competence is an accurate reputation that is based on your intelligence, your expertise and your knowledge. People create perceived confidence in themselves by using certain tactics, like dressing in the appropriate uniform: a white lab coat or a suit and tie. Perceived competence is tricky. Hence, you have to be careful in how you

explain your competence. If you launch into a laundry list of your accomplishments or of your education and titles, you might be perceived as a braggart. Take advantage of less direct or less self-proclaiming ways to show your prospects your competence. For example, you can hang your degrees on the wall, have someone else give a brief bio in her/his book's introduction or have someone else offer her/his recommendation.

We consider others to be competent when we see them continually learning and advancing their training and education, being successful in what they do or having a strong track record with all the people they have worked with. Ultimately, genuine competency comes down to "either you know it or you don't." Can you deliver what people are looking for? The dictionary definition of competence is "the quality of being adequately or well qualified physically and intellectually." Competence is being qualified to teach about, to persuade on or to perform in regards to your particular topic.

In influential situations, people will watch and judge you to see if you pass as competent. Two studies clearly illustrate this point. In the first study, a group of elementary school children watched a video of two boys taking a math test. The teacher walked between the boys and looked at each of their papers. To one boy she said nothing while to the other boy she said, "Don't forget to carry your tens." The children observing the videotape were told that the boys scored the same on the test. They were then asked whom they wanted as a future math partner. Most of the children chose the boy who did not receive any help from the teacher.⁸ Clearly, the simple need for assistance influences how others perceive your competence.

The second study showed that competence can increase sales. An experimenter in a mall approached unsuspecting patrons and asked them to buy raffle tickets. In the first situation, the experimenter dazzled the shoppers with his incredible calculating ability when in actuality he was using a concealed communication device. In the next situation, the experimenter showed poor calculating skills and made a fool of himself. In the third and final situation, the experimenter did not have any incredible skills. The study found

⁸ McGinty, Sarah. *Power Talk*. New York Warner Books. 2001, p.38-39.

that the shoppers bought considerably more raffle tickets from the supposed calculating genius.⁹ In other words, the situation in which the experimenter showed extreme competence increased sales.

Confidence—The Third C of Trust

When you've gained someone's trust, you've also gained her/his confidence—another key to lasting influence. Dwight D. Eisenhower once stated, "In order to be a leader, a man must have followers. And to have followers, a man must have their confidence." I love the story about how John D. Rockefeller dealt with his creditors. Whenever a creditor came knocking on John's door hoping to have his bill paid, Rockefeller would reach for his checkbook with gusto and ask, "Which would you rather have: cash or Standard Oil Stock?" He made this offer with such confidence that people almost always chose to take stock in his company.¹⁰ Aristotle also had specific criteria he believed were necessary in gaining one's full confidence. They are as follows:

- Wisdom
- Reason
- Familiarity with truth in all forms
- Knowledge of specific facts and principles within a given case
- Experience
- Expertise
- Competence¹¹

People are constantly looking for someone to help direct them in their lives and to assist them in making the right choices. Demonstrating confidence in everything you do will spur others to put their trust in you. Sometimes we may have to pretend we're more confident than we really are, hence the saying, "Fake it 'til you make it." I've seen plenty of people of only average to mediocre ability influence more effectively than others who were more naturally gifted than they were simply because they exuded higher confidence.

⁹ Rind, B. (1992). "Effects of impressions of amazement and foolishness on compliance." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1656-1665.

¹⁰ Giblin, Les. *How to Have Confidence and Power in Dealing with People*. Prentice Hall NJ. 1956, p.41.

¹¹ Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*. Penguin Books. 1991. translation H.C. Lawson-tancred.

The people we admire and look up to the most are usually the type of people who know what they want and how to get it.

People who doubt themselves and lack confidence in themselves will always struggle to effectively influence others. If you're perceived as doubtful or unconfident, your prospects will feel that way, too—about your product, about your idea or about anything else you might ever try to present to them. It is said that the most lasting impression is made within about the first four minutes of an encounter. So, be sure you demonstrate confidence in those first four minutes because the cement dries fast! Realize that nothing can replace a bad first impression, even if you try to make up for it later. Fixing a first impression is like fixing a wrecked car. Even after exhaustive time, effort and expense have been exerted, you still know it was wrecked, and you're even more apt to detect anything else that might be wrong with it.

Avoiding Too Much Confidence

It is important to know that coming across as too confident will likely have the opposite effect on your audience than you intended. That is, rather than gaining people's confidence, you'll turn them off, quite possibly alienating them for good. In fact, if you make a mistake or do something inept, people are more likely to be won over by you if you can laugh at yourself and not take yourself too seriously. Coming across as self-absorbed or egotistical will make you appear incredibly unbecoming in the eyes of your prospects. Being more sincere and natural, on the other hand, will make you appear more approachable and likable. According to Jay Conrad Levinson of Guerilla Marketing fame, confidence is the number one reason why people are persuaded to buy. When the buyer has confidence in your selling strategy, your ability to influence him increases. Confidence can also be defined as a belief and assurance in yourself.

Credibility—The Fourth C of Trust

“One can stand as the greatest orator the world has known, possess the quickest mind, employ the cleverest psychology and have mastered all the technical devices of argument, but if one is not credible one might just as well preach to the pelicans.”¹²

– Gerry Spence, trial lawyer

Daniel O’Keefe defines credibility as “judgments made by a perceiver concerning the believability of a communicator.”¹³ Edward Murrow also said, “To be persuasive, we must be believable. To be believable, we must be credible. To be credible, we must be truthful.” Credibility is in the eye of the beholder and it is a quality that is constantly changing. In fact, your credibility can shift from high to low in the same presentation with the same audience. Credibility can also alter with respect to time, presentation or somebody else’s opinion.

Three stages of credibility present themselves during any persuasive encounter:

1. Initial (Pre) – This stage of persuasion happens before you even open your mouth. How you are introduced, your reputation, the books you have written, your degrees, etc.—all of these things create initial credibility.
2. During – This stage of the persuasive process includes everything you say during your speech. This type of credibility is similar to a thermometer—it will rise and fall throughout your presentation.
3. End (Post) – This stage of persuasion is your credibility at the end of your speech. Did you win your audience over or not? Are they even more convinced than they were before you began?

To boost your credibility, find out who your audience knows and respects. See if you can get that person’s endorsement, either in person or in writing. Master Persuaders know

¹² Spence, Gerry. *How to Argue and Win Every Time*. St Martins Press. 1995, p.4.

¹³ O’Keefe, D.J. (1990). *Persuasion: Theory and Research*. Newbury Park, CA. Sage.

that it's OK to borrow the credibility of others. When you gain this type of support, your audience will consider you to be even more credible. If you are a known expert in your field, be sure to communicate that you have studied it, researched it and met with its other experts. Also, be prepared to drop the names of people your audience will recognize.

Another way to boost your credibility is to present yourself in a calm, organized and authoritative manner. Being overly emotional or flustered throws your credibility out the window. Consider the most highly successful attorneys or CEOs. No matter how rushed or pressured they are, you don't ever see them running into the room, slamming their stuff down on the table and throwing themselves into their chairs. No! They are absolutely composed at all times. That's because they must always convey an air of authority and control. Jury studies show that lawyers who appear well organized are thought of as being more thorough and better prepared than their disorganized counterparts, which of course increases their credibility.¹⁴

An important issue to consider is how involved your audience is, emotionally or otherwise, in the topic you're going to present to them. If they are highly involved, you will have a harder time gaining credibility—unless, of course, you're telling them what they want to hear! An audience with low involvement in a particular issue is more likely to defer to other sources (including you) because such deferment requires less mental strain or emotional investment than trying to figure it out for themselves.

It's generally harder to gain credibility nowadays than it ever has been in the past. Most consumers are fairly sophisticated and have grown cynical from all the exaggerated and unsubstantiated hype that is being thrown at them. People who feel that they have been burned in the past have developed thick skins to almost every persuasive message they are exposed to. In fact, according to the Pretesting Company, advertising's overall impact

¹⁴ Nelson, Noelle. *Winning, Using Lawyers' Courtroom Techniques to Get Your Way in Everyday Situations*. Prentice Hall. 1997, p.16.

in the United States has gone down from 61 percent in 1986 to 38 percent today.¹⁵ Here are ten ways in which you can increase your credibility in spite of all the skepticism:

1. Be sure your appearance is polished and professional. How do you look, dress and appear to your audience? Do you appear self-assured and in control of the situation? Do you maintain good eye contact?
2. Use highly credible sources, facts, statistics and stories to back up your claims. Cite evidence, identify sources and give source qualifications. Write and publish relevant articles or publish a book.
3. Research your audience. Be sure you explain the issue in terms that are relevant to them. Demonstrate that you have their best interest in mind.
4. Explain your background, expertise and qualifications so your audience knows why you have the credibility to speak to them on this particular subject matter. Display or promote your qualifications as a means of conferring your status and expertise.
5. Adopt a language and style that is suitable to the listener, the topic and the setting. Watch vocal fillers like um, er and ah. They detract from the message and your credibility. Use assertive language.
6. Emphasize your similarities in a way that makes them relevant to your audience. Listeners find it easier to identify with sources they perceive as similar to themselves. Use similar industries, colleges, home states, professional sports teams—anything that will strike a chord of familiarity (a technique that breeds instant rapport) in your prospects.
7. Have another highly credible individual (in the eyes of your audience) introduce you. Testimonials substantiate your expertise. Find third-party testimonials that endorse your position.
8. Be prepared, be organized and know your position. Make that great first impression. Make sure your presentation is rehearsed and polished. Educate, inspire and entertain with passion, compassion and purpose.

¹⁵ Mills, Harry. *Artful Persuasion*. Amacom New York. 2000, p.25.

9. Make sure any printed material or literature you will be handing out has been carefully proofread and presented in a neat and professional manner. Nothing detracts from your credibility more than sloppy supplemental material. Make sure all your material is appropriate and understandable.
10. Be prompt. People who are always showing up late are considered less competent, less composed and less sociable than people who arrive on time.¹⁶

Congruence—The Fifth C of Trust

Trust increases when others can see that your words match your actions. This is called congruence. Agreement and harmony in verbal and nonverbal messages increase your ability to influence. When congruence is lacking, a red flag is raised and, either consciously or subconsciously, your listener will not give you her/his full trust. It's like the clothes you wear every day. If your clothes match well, usually no one really pays attention to what you're wearing. If your clothing choices clash and are mismatched, however, they will be the only thing people notice and remember about you. Just remember that the more consistent and congruent you are in every aspect of your life, the more honest and genuine you're perceived to be. If you believe in your message, you'll practice what you preach. If you practice what you preach, you'll be more authentic, and the door of trust will then swing wide open for you. When you possess congruency, there's no need to manipulate or camouflage. Your audience trusts you categorically.

As one author put it, "People love someone who seems to believe in what he is doing, who is a man of principle. It doesn't seem to matter what the principle is, as long as he holds to it against all odds, expresses himself clearly, does not get defensive and sticks to his story."¹⁷ When they manifest, most incongruities are found in our body language. Countless studies demonstrate that when body language is incongruent or in disagreement with the message being portrayed, the body language will always be believed over the message. Hence, if you want your message to have maximum impact

¹⁶ Burgoon, J.K., Buller, D.B. & Woodhall W.G. (1989). *Nonverbal Communication: The Unspoken Dialogue*. New York. Harper and Row.

¹⁷ Aron, Roberto, Fast, Julius and Klein, Richard. *Trail Communication Skills*. 1994 Cumulative Supplement. (New York), NY. McGraw Hill, p.123.

on your audience, your body language must be congruent with and support or enhance your message.

Are you congruent with your history, your last interaction and your reputation? Are your emotions congruent with your message? What are your audience's expectations of you and your message? When your past history and your message don't match, flags of incongruities will wave in your prospects' faces. Suspicion will be roused and your prospects will start to look for things that are wrong with you or your message. This inconsistency will decrease your ability to gain influence and trust. We are natural lie detectors. When you attempt to fake congruence, you will also spend your time and energy trying to fake your message.

Never assume that people trust you. Always show the world that you are someone to be trusted, no matter what the circumstances are. You can gain and enhance trust by doing the following:

- Keep your promises.
- Be reliable.
- Under-promise and over-deliver.
- Admit your failures and weaknesses.
- Use logic with your emotion.
- Exhibit true concern for and about others.
- Never assume people completely trust you.
- Tell people only as much as they'll believe.
- Tell the truth, even if it hurts.
- Downplay any benefits to you.

Story Selling

The Power Tool of Persuaders

The Secret of Stories

Stories are powerful tools for persuaders. Stories draw your audience in and they help an audience understand and appreciate your message. We can all think of a time when we were in an audience where we were not paying attention to the speaker. We were off in our own world when, all of a sudden, we perked up and started to listen because the speaker had shifted to telling a story. If you stop and think about it, the best persuaders are the best storytellers. When we hear a story, we automatically tune in and want to know what happens next. Why do stories have this effect on us? Why are stories more engaging than facts, figures and statistics? Let's find out why.

One of my first sales jobs was in telemarketing. My office was in a typical tele-sales room with small stalls and a room full of high-energy closers. My mindset going into the job was: *How hard can this be? I can talk to people on the phone. I thought, I'm a people person and I'll have fantastic results.* In the past, I had been told time and time again that I was a people person who could talk to anyone. I was quickly served a large piece of humble pie as I tried to sell products to customers over the phone. The way this room worked was simple. The phone would ring and as you picked up your receiver, the operator would tell you a number. Each number represented a different product. We would sell real estate, weight loss products, stock market advice and other products.

One day, my phone rang and I was tired of not getting the sale. This time I was going to make it happen, I thought as I picked up the receiver. The operator told me the number and I looked it up. Weight loss was my assigned product. I was connecting well with the prospect, when I asked him about his target weight. Then there was a long pause. He finally opened up and told me about all the diets that had not worked and his frustration with his weight. I thought I was finally getting somewhere. After about ten minutes of conversation, the prospect finally asked, "What does my weight loss have to do with real estate investing?"

Sure, I could have told you that you need to know your audience before you try to persuade. I could have also told you that being in sales isn't the easiest profession. Instead, I told a story to capture your attention. By spicing it up with a little humor, I was better able to get my point across.

In this chapter, I want to talk about those key elements that make story selling so effective. When you understand what those essential story selling components are, and how to use them, you will be able to influence and touch people's hearts with the messages you powerfully convey. The first, and probably the most powerful, element of a good story is that it should engage the emotions. Facts and figures alone are much less likely to strike a chord with your audience than they are when coupled with relevant, powerful stories. When an individual's emotions are engaged, s/he will be more inclined to connect to you and your message. The more common ground you can establish, the more sense of connectivity you can create and the more attentive and receptive your prospects will be. Effective story selling is the difference between communicating and convincing, presenting and persuading, lecturing and touching their hearts.

A big part of whether or not your message is persuasive is whether or not the audience can believe in you. When you don't always have an opportunity to build rapport and trust with every individual in your audience on a one-on-one basis, stories can answer their questions about who you are, what you represent and what you want from them. If you don't answer these questions for them, they will draw their own conclusions. Why take the chance that they might conclude incorrectly? Use story selling to build rapport with your prospects. Do you want them to view you as funny, honest or down-to-earth? Identify the main points you want to get across and select your stories accordingly. Hearing your story might be as close as your prospect will ever get to a firsthand experience with you.

Meaningful stories inspire listeners to reach the same conclusion you have reached. People value their own conclusions more highly than yours, so if you can make your

story *their* story, you will be that much more persuasive. Human beings are drawn to anything that gives us “answers.” Use stories to help your audience answer some of their own questions. If you are successful in doing this, your message will grow and develop in your prospects’ minds and hearts. If they remember nothing else about your presentation, your story and its underlying message will always get played over and over again in your listeners’ minds.

Positively engaging your prospects’ emotions is one way in which story selling is especially effective when trying to make a point to an audience that might otherwise put up resistance. Stories are less prone to make others feel defensive or like you are critiquing or making demands of them. Instead of bluntly presenting your objections or differing opinions, bypass resistance and large egos by presenting your point of view in a non-threatening, even entertaining, way. Often people staunchly defend their positions not because they are so committed to those positions themselves but more often because they simply must protect both their need to be *right* and their embarrassment of being wrong. If you can avoid triggering this emotional defense mechanism, you will be amazed at how much more open your prospects are to considering your ideas.

Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I’m going to guide you through the crucial steps of effective story selling. To be a successful persuader, you must know which types of stories to use and how to implement them. In our next section, we’ll explore different types of stories and their uses.

Story Selection

In selecting a story that is appropriate for any given circumstance, there are three fundamental questions you must ask yourself. First, does the story fit your audience? How does it support and underscore your main message? Second, is it a story you love, have lived or have learned from firsthand? These are key elements if you want your story to be as compelling as possible. Third, can your story be related in a way that your audience will not only appreciate it, but also identify with it and be able to relate it?

Remember that the more you can draw your audience in to you and your message, the more you can connect and persuade them.

Depending on the message you wish to convey, your story could take on any number of different tones or moods. Review the list below and check those characteristics that would be most instrumental in making your message more compelling:

Humorous	Contemplative
Witty	Disturbing
Spiritual	Fear
Surprising	Motivational
Teamwork	Heartwarming
Charitable	Enlightened
Inspirational	Scary

After you've determined the mood that best supports your message, you should have many different *kinds* of stories to pick from. The best kind of story is a true story, one that is based on your own personal experience. If it's not your own personal story, try to have it be the story of someone you know. Outside of personal, true-life stories, there may be times when yet another kind of story is appropriate. In these cases, you will again have many different genres to pick from. Consider the following:

Folktales	Fairytales
Myths	Oral traditions

Heroic tales	Love stories
Ghost stories	Historical accounts
Bible stories	Childhood adventures

Sometimes you have a pretty good idea of the type of story you want to use, but you're not sure where to come up with a good one. Again, remembering to always draw on your own firsthand experiences as your best resources, try this list to help jog your memory:

Embarrassing moments	Proudest moments
Saddest moments	Family vacations
Growing up years	Travel (family, business, etc.)
Year by year events	Sports
Dating	Boss, workplace
Schooldays	Hobbies
Disappointments	Heroes (sports, business, family)
Photographs	Journals, diaries
Victories	Defeats
Failures	Overcoming obstacles/challenges

When drawing on experiences other than your own, you might try:

Books	Friends
Internet	Family
Movies	Observation

Once you've narrowed down the mood you wish to convey, the type of story you want to use and where you want to get it from, you then have to begin focusing on how to most effectively tell your story.

How to Tell

Most people probably don't realize that there is a technique behind effective story selling. Effective story selling is both an art and a science. In this section, I'd like to outline some of the key checkpoints for ensuring that a story is powerfully delivered. First, it is helpful to step back and take in the big picture. What exactly is your ultimate goal? Whatever your point is, you're going to have to really paint the picture for your audience. The more you can create the setting—the sights, the sounds, the smells, the feelings—the more your audience will be drawn in. Remember, you want the experience to become *their* experience—something they can readily identify with. As a persuader, you've got to take them there. As you prepare yourself, keep in mind all the ways in which you can really produce a mental and emotional imprint. You want your prospects to see your story in their minds' eyes, playing out like a movie. You want them to really take the story home, to have a place in their hearts for years to come. When you reach their hearts and involve their minds, you will be persuasive.

After stepping back to allow the big picture to sink in, you're ready to begin crafting your story. In this first phase, it is important to walk yourself through all the basic questions: Who is my audience? What do I want them to take away from this experience? No matter

how basic the questions may be, don't shortchange yourself from having a good brainstorm. You'd be amazed at the brilliant ideas that come once a chain of thoughts is set into motion—ideas that would not have come if you hadn't broken from the routine and allowed yourself a good time-out. In order to get the ball rolling, it may be helpful to consider the questions at the end of this chapter.

We've already spoken about the great importance of engaging your audience as much as possible. One of the best ways to do this is to provide them with generous details. That is, make your story as vivid as possible. In the courtroom, lawyers make their stories so rich in sensory detail that the jury literally sees, hears and feels the event. The more concrete and specific your descriptive details, the more persuasive your story selling will be. Using specific details pulls your listeners into the story and makes the story seem real to them. Here's another twist on introducing as much detail as possible: Consider the different ways in which you can capture your audience's senses. Get them to see, hear, feel and even taste and smell the elements of your story. The more involved your prospects feel, the more they will take the message home.

When you tell a story, your body and your voice become the stage, the actors, the costumes, the music and the props. For this reason, it is really important to take apart every element that contributes to the presentation as a whole and analyze it. The most obvious piece of story-selling equipment is your voice. It is the most direct and apparent mode of communication. I'd like to talk about using the *right* words, as well as *how* to use them. The right words are captivating; the wrong words are devastating. Effective words make things come to life, create energy and are more persuasive. Contrarily, ineffective words dull and alienate. Numerous studies have shown that a common trait successful men and women share is their skilled use of language. Speakers who possess greater verbal skills are seen as more credible, competent and convincing. Speakers who hesitate, use the wrong words or lack fluency have less credibility and come across as weak and ineffective. (For additional details, see the chapter on Verbal Packaging in Maximum Influence.)

As I previously mentioned, *how* we say the words we choose is just about as important as the words themselves. Our voice is a powerful instrument that can either motivate the troops or lull them to sleep. The next time you watch the news, notice how the anchors use their voices. News anchors are often trained to inflect their voices downward at the ends of sentences because doing so suggests confidence and authority. On the other hand, upward inflections tend to imply lack of confidence or doubt. One research study showed that judges communicate their bias and attitudes via their tone of voice. Juries in California were twice as likely to convict trial defendants when the judges already knew the defendants had prior convictions. In spite of the law prohibiting judges from disclosing such information, jurors still detected the judge's leanings based on her/his voice's lack of warmth, patience and tolerance.

Another thing to consider when telling a persuasive story is the pace or tempo of your speech. Pace refers to how rapidly you speak. Obviously, you don't want to sound unnatural, but research has shown that people who speak faster, louder and more fluently are perceived as more persuasive than those who do not. Stories that are delivered at a more upbeat pace are more persuasive than those that are delivered more slowly because the lively storyteller comes across as more competent and knowledgeable. You can slow down your speech occasionally for effect, but don't speak slowly on the whole. Otherwise, your presentation will seem sluggish. It is much better to keep up the energy and enthusiasm than to let it drop.

In most cultures, deeper voices, for both men and women, are generally interpreted as reflective of authority and strength. In addition, a deeper voice is stereotypically considered to be more believable and more indicative of an individual's sincerity and trustworthiness. For these reasons, listen to a recording of your own voice and determine whether or not it would benefit from being slightly lower in pitch. Even though it would require a vocal adjustment, a deeper pitch *is* something you have conscious control over. Other reasons for introducing new pitches into your speaking pattern are to prevent your voice from sounding monotone and to create interest. Remember, if you are not an engaging speaker, you will not be persuasive.

A huge thing to consider when telling a story is your voice's volume. Obviously, you're not going to be very persuasive if no one can hear you. At one time or another, you've probably experienced the aggravation of straining and struggling to hear a speaker. Before your presentation, test the room to ensure that you can be heard from all locations. Also, test to see whether you're going to need amplification. If so, be sure this equipment is available and set up prior to beginning your presentation. The converse is also true: Be sure you are not yelling or shouting at your audience. A loud voice is just as, or even more, aggravating for an audience as struggling to be able to hear.

When delivering a speech, clearly articulate every sentence, phrase and word. When your speech is clear and coherent, it conveys competence. When your diction gets sloppy, on the other hand, it suggests lack of education and laziness. Consider how lawyers, doctors, supervisors, lobbyists and the like must be articulate if they are to professionally survive. Good articulation conveys competence, experience and credibility. Another practical reason to have good diction is simply because it is so much easier to follow than poorly articulated speech. People will be more likely to be won over by your message if you are easy to understand.

Vocal fillers can destroy your presentation, hurt your credibility and annoy your audience. Most people feel that they don't have a problem with fillers, but you would be amazed when you record yourself what words you use to fill in space during a speech. Vocal fillers include the common "um," "er," "ya know" and "uh." In addition to these, some people have their own idiosyncratic way of filling in gaps between ideas. Some repeat the first two or three words of a sentence until their brain catches up and they decide what they're going to say next. Others constantly say things like "OK" and "like." Fillers will never work to your advantage and they need to be eliminated from all speech. Here we see another reason why you should record yourself and assess your vocal abilities.

Besides words, pauses also add meaning and impact to your stories. The sound of well-timed silence can be more powerful than a dozen words. Because of this technique's dramatic effect, however, it can be overdone. Don't use pausing too much. If you do, it will lose its effectiveness. Besides highlighting important points, pausing also increases comprehension. When you pause in your story, your prospects have a moment of introspection, which helps them mentally and emotionally participate in the moment. Whether it is a moment to reflect or to enjoy a good laugh, a lull allows your audience members to process your story on a deeper level.

Silence amplifies all sensory and emotional details of your story. Use pauses to create attention, emphasis and mood. It is a common mistake to not hold the pause long enough. Be sure you allow enough of a pause that the full effect will be felt. When you do this, the audience anticipates and listens closely to what you will say next. As they come to understand your pausing patterns, your audience can tell something important is about to happen. This strategy is made even more effective when you combine it with pitch strategies. Be sure that as you come to the pause, your pitch is high, thereby building suspense and giving momentum to what will follow. Inflecting your pitch downward will defeat the purpose, providing a feeling of resolution instead of suspension.

Because of the many nuances that are conveyed through the different uses of the voice, it's always a good idea to record your voice and listen to it. What does it project? Do you sound compelling? Besides the overt message, observe the subtleties such as pitch, pace, volume, tone and articulation. Effective use of vocal variety catches and holds others' attention. If you don't like how you sound, don't despair; it is a common phenomenon. Pinpoint the precise aspects of your voice you'd like to strengthen then take things one step at a time. A handy tape or digital recorder may prove to be your best coach.

The thing that speaks the most directly, other than the voice, is your body. When you speak, words comprise less than 15 percent of what your listeners "hear." Your audience also receives information from your face, your posture, your hands, your eye movements, your gestures and your overall demeanor. Used well, these elements can give your story

flow and add emphasis to it. If not used well, your body language can be very distracting and even cause you to lose credibility with your prospects. If you seem awkward or unsure of yourself, your audience will not receive your message as well.

During a presentation, use gestures very carefully. Certainly there is room for spontaneity, but as a general rule, plan your gestures out ahead of time. They have to fit the story you are telling and not seem awkward or thrown together. Don't overdo it, but do use them to keep your audience's attention, to add drama to your story and to underscore your key points. Think of your body as a prop that serves as a visual extension of the story you are telling with your voice. Above all else, your gestures must come across very naturally. Don't be robotic in your presentations. As with your voice, it's always a good idea to video record your presentation in advance or to practice it in front of a mirror.

The nice thing about telling a story to a live audience is that you can always gauge their reactions and thereby determine how your message is going over. With a story, you can tell right away if your prospects are with you or if you're losing them. This gauging enables you to instantaneously adjust and adapt your presentation as necessary. If your audience is involved in your story, you're encouraged to keep doing what you're doing. If you're losing them, however, you can make a change and re-harness their attention. How do you know when you're losing your prospects' attention? Watch their faces. Are their eyes on you? Are they taking notes? What is the expression on their faces? Usually, it's easy to tell. If you're losing them, your story might be too long-winded. In that case, cut out extraneous details. Also try changing your voice by adjusting its volume, pace or quality.

The Four Essential Phases of a Great Story

We've just talked about story-selling techniques, from its preparation to its delivery. Now let's take a step back and review the structure or framework of every great story. There are four phases that are absolutely essential to making your story cohesive, clear and easy

to follow. The first phase involves setting and characters. Your audience needs to have some sense of where and when the story is taking place. Did this story happen in the past or is it occurring in the future? What era is it supposed to take place in? Where does the action take place? On a farm, in the workplace, on a fishing trip or at a store? Immerse your audience within your story's context as much as possible so they can identify with it as much as possible. Remember, you must paint the picture for them. You need to take them into your story. With effective story selling, your audience is watching your movie in their mind. Also, take the time to not only introduce your character but also to really develop them. If your audience can't grasp who the characters are—their strengths, their faults, their dreams and what makes them unique—then they won't be able to relate to your story. When they know the story's characters, they will appreciate your story's climax when it comes. That's because they will have the necessary background information to draw from so they can connect with why the experience being conveyed would be significant to a particular character.

The second essential phase of a great story involves presenting a clear challenge or problem with which the characters must cope. Challenge generates interest and suspense. The audience is drawn in to wonder what the character is going to do about the dilemma. When presented with a challenge, it is instinctive for human beings to start guessing and projecting what they think the character will do, or better yet, what *they* themselves would do in the same situation. The more the challenge is a situation audience members can readily relate to, the more it will hit home.

Why is this story-selling component so crucial? If there is no obstacle to overcome, no vision to fulfill and no questions to be answered, then what's the point of telling the story in the first place? Conflict and tension also create energy and give momentum to the story. The more engaged your audience is, the more eager they are to hear your story's outcome. Finally, effectively setting up the story's challenge will make the solution that much more powerful. In addition to making the story itself more powerful, the audience is able to reach a greater level of appreciation for and acceptance of your point. Create

appropriate tensions when presenting the conflict so that the impact of the solution is that much more inspiring.

The third phase of an excellent story involves its climax, or turning point. The climax is the point where all the buildup has taken you. The momentum has driven you to this one peak point in the story. It is the cliffhanger! What will happen next? What is she going to do? How will he get out of this mess? By the time you arrive at your story's climax, you want your audience to be on the edge of their seats. It is important not to confuse this story-selling strategy with the preceding step, even though the two effects overlap. The climax of a story is a distinct point rather than a chain of events. It is the pivotal, make-it-or-break-it moment; it is the height to which all the momentum and action has led up to. This step in the story-selling process helps give your story form. Without it, your story will lack direction. Your audience will feel emotionally disturbed if all the activity rambles aimlessly with no climax and resulting conclusion. The climax is part of a clear path and it feeds off the story's preceding action. Its culmination, followed by its solution, gives your story great flow and energy.

Finally, your story must conclude with a resolution. If you've told an effective story, you have brought your audience through an emotional journey. They are now alert and attentive because they want to know how the characters they've identified so strongly with will fare after all they've been through. Your story's resolution is the moment where the lesson is learned. Will your audience grasp your message, the moral of your story? Did they experience what you wanted them to experience; did they feel what you wanted them to feel?

As I've outlined in the preceding paragraphs, you will impart your message most strongly if a serious issue is clearly juxtaposed with a brilliant solution. Don't skip any of these story phases. They work together synergistically to produce a story that is powerful, compelling and inspiring. Often when we hear someone speak, we remember little of the discussion, yet the stories still remain with us. For this reason, you must embed your

message, your main point, into the story. Deliver your message in a way that it will ring distinctly true and make a lasting imprint on your audience's minds.

Power Pointers for Story Selling

We have already discussed some of the essential elements to great stories: engaging emotions, powerful word usage, proper voice inflection, effective body language and clear structure. I'd now like to highlight just a few more key points besides those that have already been discussed to help make your story selling the best it can be. One of those points is the powerful use of humor. Nothing disarms and invites an audience in more than humor. We are instantly drawn to people we think are funny. We enjoy listening to humorous individuals and hearing what they have to say. Humor grabs attention, creates rapport and makes a message more memorable. It can also relieve tension, enhance relationships and motivate people. If you've got an important message to share, humor can give you a huge advantage. The actor John Cleese once said, "If I can get you to laugh with me, you like me better, which makes you more open to my ideas. And if I can persuade you to laugh at the particular point I make, by laughing at it you acknowledge its truth." Don't use humor just to get a laugh out of your prospects. In humor, there is so much potential for influence. Armed with humor, you can provide special insights or teach important principles.

Humor must be used cautiously, however. If used properly, it will help your audience to like you. If used ineffectively or inappropriately, however, it can be a big turn off. The instant you irritate or offend your audience members, it's over. Nothing you say or do from that point forward will rectify the damage done. Worse, they'll always remember you as a bad comic. Be sure that you have good material before attempting to incorporate humor into your presentations. Also, cater your comedy to your audience. What would they find funny? What are some inside experiences they share that you could draw humor from? Use humor that will evoke chuckles and lightheartedness but that is still built on truth. It is a very wise idea to test the comedic waters on friends or family to make sure your humor *works!*

Another technique that is sometime used in story selling is the instillation of fear. As manipulative as it may sound, fear definitely motivates others when it is used properly. I would strongly caution against creating a false sense of fear, however. Doing so truly *is* manipulative, and by instilling false fear you will lose your audience's long-term trust. Use fear only if the threat is real and if it is in the best interest of the audience to be forewarned. For example, doctors sometimes have to be straightforward with their patients about the impending worst-case scenario if they don't get in shape. It's scary to hear, but the patient truly needs this information to be brought to her/his attention.

As much as we may wish it to not be the case, often it is only fear that will motivate and move someone off a path to destruction. There are less dramatic, but nevertheless fear-inspired, examples: Fear incites us to buy life insurance, to floss our teeth, to buy cars with airbags, to install home security systems and to purchase guns. Hopefully, fear will not be a persuasive tool you use with great frequency, but if you feel you can effectively use it to underscore a very important message, adhere to the following guidelines:

1. You must make your audience feel the anxiety and uneasiness that come from anticipating the possible, even greater, negative emotions (pain, grief, loss, etc.) that will become imminent if the problem is not dealt with.
2. Your prospects must feel not only that the fearful event is likely to happen, but also that they could be victimized by its occurrence. In other words, they must feel vulnerable.
3. You must provide a solution to the fear you instill. Give your prospects a recommended action to resolve the fear-inducing problem.
4. Your prospects must believe that they are capable of doing what is asked of them and that doing so will work for them.

Fine-Tuning your Story Selling

The use of repetition can also be very effective when telling a story. Repetition creates familiarity with your ideas, which in turn builds positive association. Repetition also makes a message more memorable. You need to repeat your message several times so

your audience understands precisely what you are talking about and what you want them to do. This doesn't mean that you should sound like a broken record. You can repeat the message several times without saying the same thing over and over again. My motto is, when you repeat something, repackage how you say it. Each time you stress your point, use new evidence and new words.

Obviously, this technique must be used skillfully. When repetition is overused, it is likely to result in diminishing returns. You know how you feel when someone tells you that same old story for the tenth time, or when you've seen that commercial one too many times. If you've heard a story a million times before, you tune out and quit listening. Keep your point reinforcements to approximately three references—and definitely no more than five.

A common mistake among storytellers is they become too long-winded. It's as though they're telling the story just because they love to hear themselves talk. Don't let your stories get too long, or you're going to lull your audience to sleep. Even if you think you're really entertaining, too much of a good story is still draining. I have heard it said that a two-minute story gives greater impact than a ten-minute one. If you think about it, if you were actually in an audience where the speaker talked for ten whole minutes about the same thing, then those ten minutes would probably feel like an eternity. Don't belabor the point if it can be said more concisely. This doesn't mean you should abandon the idea of giving your audience important details, as we discussed earlier. Of course, you must engage your audience, but be sure you're aware of this fine line. To be an effective storyteller, it's so important to always be tuned in to audience feedback, even if it's not overt. As you gain experience, you will get better and better at gauging your audience. You will then be more readily able to discern how you're coming across to your audience. You'll also develop a good sense of pace and timing.

Hand in hand with not being too long-winded is this piece of story-selling advice: Don't bore your listeners! You may think these two concepts are the same thing, and they can be, but even a short story can be boring if it's not presented well. Respect your audience's

time and commitment to being there to hear you and be sure you've done your homework ahead of time. Deliver a presentation you know your prospects are really going to love. Your audience is paying with either their time or their money. Give them your best effort in exchange for that payment.

How else can you bore an audience? By not giving them enough detail, by indulging in self-glorification, by going off on too many tangents or by delivering an indignant soapbox lecture. It is very important that you take the time to go through some of the brainstorming questions so your stories and presentations, on the whole, have structure. If you have a clear story-selling outline, your presentations will remain uncluttered and you will avoid these dangerous detours.

When you follow my suggestions, it will not take you long before you are a very skilled story seller. With these story-selling tools under your belt, you'll have that much more of an advantage when presenting your ideas, whether to a large audience or to a single person. And there is no better feeling than to get your point across in a manner in which it is understood, appreciated and persuasive.

Influence: Five Characteristics of Highly Influential People

Influence is a key element in mastering the techniques of Magnetic Persuasion. That's because influence is the highest form of persuasion. With influence, people are spurred on to action because of your character rather than your maneuvers. Persuasion is what you do or say, but influence is who you are.

How do you gain this type of influence? How do you gain a strong enough influence over people that they will act on an idea simply because it came from you? How do you achieve a strong enough influence over people that they are still compelled to move forward even when you're not around? There are five crucial attributes one must possess in order to gain this kind of influence.

The Five Points of Influence

- Charisma
- Passion/Enthusiasm
- Optimism/Attitude
- Empathy
- Vision

Influential Presence

Presence is the ability to empower and influence others into believing in you, trusting in you and jumping on the bandwagon. You give them the energy they need to bring to pass the results you want. You help them see themselves in the future carrying out your vision. They become excited and energized by your passion and enthusiasm. They are magnetized and motivated by your charisma. What's more, they are lifted and inspired by your optimism and expectations. In essence, with influential presence on your side, you're a source of empowerment, encouragement, inspiration and permanency to your prospects.

1. Charisma

For some, charisma is a mysterious attribute. It's challenging to describe someone who exudes charisma because there's really no way to quantify the effect this kind of person seems to have on others. It seems it's a black or white issue; that is, you either have charisma or you don't. Charisma is not leadership, assertiveness or enthusiasm nor is it exactly personality either. It's its own unique characteristic. Charisma empowers others to like you, even if they don't know much about you and even when there hasn't been enough time to develop trust in you. If you have charisma, not only do people want to be around you, but whether they realize it or not, they also want to be influenced by you. Charisma gives you power over, allegiance toward and devotion with your audience, without leaving them feeling powerless. At the same time, it creates instant support. So, the question remains, are you born with charisma or is it learned? The answer is both! Some attributes are inherent, while others can be acquired.

Defining the Indefinable

The word "charisma" comes from the Greek goddess Charis. Charis's character was one of total beauty and charity. Today, the word has to do with an individual's magnetism, intensity, vivaciousness and so on. Gerry Spence has perhaps summed up the concept of charisma best:

Charisma is energy from the heart zone. If the speaker has no feeling, there is nothing to transfer. Charisma occurs when the speaker's feelings are transferred in the purest form to another. Charisma is not a diluted feeling. It is not disguised. It is a raw feeling. Charisma is the passing of our pure energy, our pure passion, to the other.¹⁸

People who are charismatic often hold us in awe. Their energy prods us, motivates us and inspires us. They fulfill our need for heroes. We feel better for having met them, seen them, listened to them and interacted with them. Why and how do charismatic people have this effect on us?

¹⁸ Spence, Gerry. *How to Argue and Win Every Time*. St Martins Press. 1995, p.155.

Jay Conger has identified four general characteristics of charismatic leaders:

1. They have a strong and clear vision, and they know how to present it so it best fits the context of their audience's needs.
2. They know how to present their vision so that the weaknesses of the present condition are apparent and the recommended changes are not only justifiable but also desired.
3. They have a history of success, expertise and vision to make educated departures from old traditions that may be less effective.
4. They possess the behavior they encourage others to have. They model the results of change themselves and thus help their audience feel motivated and empowered to do likewise.¹⁹

So, how would one go about developing charisma? The following are eight ways to do so:

1. Develop self-confidence in yourself and in your message. Don't appear nervous or out of balance. Be confident that you possess self-worth and that you know your message.
2. Show a lighter side. Find your sense of humor and happiness and have fun. Don't take life too seriously. Learn to laugh at yourself.
3. Have great presence and energy. Project a presence of the Five Cs of Trust: character, competence, confidence, credibility and congruence.

¹⁹ Conger, Jay. *The Charismatic Leader: Behind the Mystique of Exceptional*.

4. Have a definite opinion about your subject. Be knowledgeable about your subject matter and make sure that knowledge is based on a solid foundation. Develop a sense of your audience's emotion and conviction for your subject.
5. Look good. Make sure your clothing, hair, shoes and jewelry match your message's tone. Dress the part.
6. Be able to inspire and uplift others. Be sensitive to people and their needs. Develop rapport with your audience. Connect with them and become a great listener.
7. Be organized and easy to follow. Make your points connected and your structure clear.
8. Be dramatic, unique and enticing. Be interesting to be around. Make sure the things you talk about are exciting. Tell spellbinding stories.

Passion/Enthusiasm

“If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live.”

– Martin Luther King

More than anything else, passion recruits the hearts and minds of your audience members. When the audience can sense your passion and heartfelt conviction for your cause or product, they emotionally jump on board. We all love people who are excited, animated and full of passion. There is a difference between charisma and passion, however. Charisma is an attribute, while passion is a transfer of emotion.

When you have passion for something, you are excited, you have zeal, and you want to share it with the world. Driven by your passion, you can't be swayed by the opinions of others. You are excited to convert as many people to your cause as possible. When you possess passion, you have a sense of mission that drives you, that stimulates your

imagination and that motivates you to higher levels of achievement. Passion alone can be effective in swaying opinion and in getting people to support your product, service or cause.

On a personal note, people have swayed me with unmistakable passion for what they believe in. In my persuasion workshops, I have my students give a two-minute speech about their personal passion. Over the years, I have seen students get me foaming at the mouth for ice cream, cause me to be more committed to recycling and make me want to start rock climbing. Do you have passion? Try to tap into the things in your life about which you are passionate. Passion springs from a combination of belief, enthusiasm and emotion.

Enthusiasm

Emerson said, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” Enthusiasm is the great motivational force of spirit and energy that permeates all we do. It is the force that keeps motivation going until a goal is reached. Norman Vincent Peale said, “When one gets enthusiastic, the entire personality lights up. The mind becomes sharper, more intuitive; the entire life force and creative ability are enhanced. Such a person is motivated and will certainly make an impact.”

Enthusiasm falls under the umbrella of passion, but you can be enthusiastic without having passion. When you have passion, however, you are full of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is described as a strong excitement or feeling on behalf of a cause or a subject. In Greek, the word means “to be inspired by a god.” When you have enthusiasm (or a lack of it), it is contagious. Enthusiasm infects people so much that they tangibly feel your energy and excitement. Enthusiasm accounts for 51 percent of all persuasion and it electrifies everyone around you. Develop your enthusiasm by gaining information and knowledge about your product or subject. Believe in yourself and your message, tap into your emotions and learn how to express them.

The five keys to creating and enhancing enthusiasm are:

- Curiosity
- Interest
- Knowledge
- Belief
- Purpose

Optimism/Attitude

Optimism is more than a positive mental attitude. It is not constantly saying positive things to yourself and hoping they will come true. Rather, true optimism is a frame of reference that governs how you look at the world. Optimism means having expectations that, for the most part, things will eventually turn out OK. Being optimistic means that you really believe that you will be able to accomplish everything you set out to do. Influence and optimism come together when you can transfer your hope and courage for the state of the world, the product or yourself into the minds of others in such an irresistible way that they will be inclined to follow you.

Influential optimism means that you see the positive in all situations. Rather than focusing on disappointment or negative feelings, you look for ways to move forward. People want to spend time with individuals who have a positive view on life. As an optimist, you see the world as a series of exciting challenges. You inspire positive feelings about everything you stand for. This mindset is contagious and helps to empower other people to believe in themselves and in you. In other words, as an optimist, you help others see failure or setback as temporary. You have no doubt that success will happen. In contrast, a pessimist sees that temporary setback as permanent failure. Optimists know that when failure arises, they have something in their life they need to change. A pessimist, on the contrary, calls failure a weakness and never moves on. Optimism then is the ability to bounce back sooner rather than later or not at all.

Nobody wants to be around a moody, angry or pessimistic person. We all like and admire those who have a positive, optimistic outlook on life. Optimism and a positive attitude

develop magnetic influence over others. If you are an optimist, you will attract people to your cause and everyone will want to follow you. Countless studies have shown that optimists do better in school, perform better in their careers and live longer than pessimists. Pessimists, on the other hand, battle depression and give up more easily.

When you master optimism, you will have the ability to recover from any setback or failure with an easygoing nature. True optimism is a rare quality that will take time to develop. Not only does optimism help you influence others, but when you are armed with it, you also won't fall into a state of apathy or hopelessness. You have to learn to control your pessimistic voice. We all have both an optimistic and a pessimistic voice inside of us. Which one do you listen to?

An experiment was conducted that measured people's capacity to endure pain. To that end, the subjects were asked to put their bare feet into a bucket of ice water. The experimenters found that the only factor that made a difference in the subjects' reactions to the icy pain was encouragement. When you can encourage others to create an optimistic outlook of the situation, you can also influence them. The study further revealed that when someone was present to give them encouragement and support, the sufferers were able to last longer and endure more pain.²⁰

Attitude

“Success in life is 85 percent attitude 15 percent aptitude.” – Harvard Study

Attitude is a subset of optimism that is a reflection of what is happening inside a person. Our attitude reveals to the world what we expect in return. Our attitude is also one persuasive concept that is completely under our own control.

Most people don't spend time thinking about their attitudes, yet they allow their attitudes to control them throughout the day. Rather than attending to their own attitudes, they absorb the attitudes of others, soaking them up like a sponge. Reaction is their primary

²⁰ *Leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. 1989, p.36.

mode of operation. If we understand that most of our attitudes start in neutral gear and are then changed depending upon what we decide to think and feel, then we are well on our way to controlling our attitude.

Attitude is a habit that arises from our expectations—what we expect of ourselves and of others. Frustration is normally just the result of an unmet expectation or a contradiction between reality and attitude.

You can change your life and influence others with the right attitude. The expectations we create from our beliefs and from the world around us are rooted in our thoughts and experiences. When we master influence, we know that our attitude and our expectations are critical in getting others to take action. Keep in mind that whatever your attitude or expectation is will be reflected back to you by the person you are attempting to influence.

Attitude in general can greatly affect our success in life. In one study, Harvard University talked to executive recruiters to poll their opinions of success. The researchers found that 85 percent of success (including money, status and prestige) is based on attitude while only 15 percent is contingent upon ability. What's more, there was no correlation between grade level in college and lifetime earnings.²¹

Empathy

When someone feels love or unconditional acceptance, they will be open to your influence. To be this open to your influence, people have to know that you empathize with their situation.

Empathy has both Latin and Greek roots. The two parts of the word mean “to see through” and “the eye of the other.” The ability to see through the eye of another creates long-term influence. When people know that you can see what they see, feel what they feel and hurt the way they hurt, then they will be willing to be influenced by you. The whole world is full of people who are trying to make us do things for their reasons. When

²¹ Maxwell, J. & Dornan, J. *Becoming a Person of Influence*. Nashville Dornan International. 1997, p.47.

faced with a persuasive situation, all we need to do is pause to understand who we are dealing with, what they are thinking and why they are thinking such things. Once we understand these principles, we have empathized with our prospects and the influential door swings wide open.

Empathizing with and caring for others are part of having humility. When you are humble, you demonstrate that you are not driven by ego and pride, nor are you out to get the best for yourself at the expense of others.

Nothing develops or displays your character better than your desire to put others first. As our friend Zig Ziglar says, “The best way to get what you want out of life is to help others get what they want.” Empathy and genuine concern encourage communication, which is a driving force behind influential success.

If you have a hard time empathizing with others then you’re not alone. This skill is not something you learned in school or on the streets. We learn empathy by really caring about the people we help and serve. Unfortunately, modern life doesn’t give us many opportunities to serve others. So, if you want to master empathy, you must turn to those you work with and look for opportunities to serve them and their needs. When a client feels his representative really cares about him, understands him and would never sell him anything he would not need, that sales representative has a customer for life. In fact, he doesn’t even need to sell anymore. He has established such a high level of influence that all he needs to do is present the product and the deal is instantaneously done. If you need to find ways to develop empathy, ask yourself the following questions:

How would I feel if I were that person?

Why is that person feeling this way?

How can I help?

How would I feel if that happened to me?

Basically, when assessing an individual situation, be sure to always consider the universal needs of everyone: approval, attention, praise, encouragement, understanding and acceptance. When you accept the whole person unconditionally, you create empathy. You accept her/his strengths and triumphs along with her/his weaknesses, failures, doubts and fears. We can learn a lot about empathy from the ancient classic, *Tao-te Ching*, by Lao-tzu: “Evolved leaders win the trust and support of the people through their complete identification with them. The interests of people are naturally promoted because they become the interests of the leader as well.”²²

Vision

“The person who has no imagination has no wings.” – Muhammad

Vision that is shared is cohesive and bonding. A common vision pulls people together toward the same goals and objectives. Influential people have clearly defined visions that are forward-looking and filled with great excitement and anticipation. More than anything else in life, vision—whether it’s yours or somebody else’s—dictates daily decisions.

Vision is a powerful tool in helping others to see the big picture—in terms of both where today fits into the future and where they fit into your plans. When we can define and promote our vision to others, nothing can help a cause more. Your cause could be your product, your service or your idea. As a persuader, you might be telling your prospect how your product will change the way he does business and will increase his profit. As a parent, you might be teaching your child about the future and what it might hold for her if she studies hard at school and stays off drugs. As a manager, you might be helping the company’s employees see where suspending pay raises for one year will increase stock prices, thereby enabling them to have more secure jobs next year. No matter your persuasive role, turning your prospects on to your vision is a powerful technique.

²² Ibid., p. 53.

Most people don't mind buying into a vision if they know exactly where they fit into it and what they have to do to achieve it. Hence, solid visions must excite and influence others to take action. Vision gives us energy, passion and a reason for living, growing and working hard. When those around you have a sense of your mission and share your vision, you have developed followers who would be willing to sacrifice almost everything for your cause. Vision creates converts and evokes commitment and determination in others, as long as you provide the plan as well as the way and the why.

Creating a sound vision begins with focusing on our destination. You must, therefore, know where you are going. Remember the movie *Alice in Wonderland*, where Alice runs into a fork in the road and asks the Cheshire cat for advice on which one she should take? The cat asks, "Where do you want to go?" "I don't know," replies Alice. The cat then responds, "Well then, it doesn't matter." Stephen Covey said, "To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction."²³

Vision is such a powerful force because it keeps us focused on the future. Vision gives a sense of directional purpose to people, most of whom don't currently have a clearly articulated purpose or direction in their lives. All human beings yearn for direction. That's why somebody with a vision is so alluring to us. This tendency is also why so many corporations are developing vision and mission statements. When everyone participates in the process and buys into your vision, you have long-term influential capabilities.

Vision helps to eliminate fear and procrastination and creates courage and persistence. Walt Disney said, "We can reach all our dreams, we just need the courage to pursue them." When you create a vision, you must think big. Disney further elaborated, "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble,

²³ Wing, R.L. (1986). *The Tao of Power*. New York. Doubleday.

logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.”²⁴ True vision affects your audience, even when you are not around, because a contagious vision influences our thoughts and imagination twenty-four hours a day.

²⁴ Covey, Stephen. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Simon and Schuster. 1989, p.98.

Transformational, Long-Term, Permanent, Lasting Change

The Function of Change in Success

Change is constantly happening all around us, whether we like it or not. Change is the key to our success and to our financial future. Often in our own lives, however, change is something we fiercely resist. Why is this resistance so often the case? We can only become who we want to become through change. What we do or do not experience financially, spiritually or physically is dependent on whether or not we are willing to make changes. In spite of knowing this, we still often wallow in our comfort zone. Even when achievement sits on our doorstep, we're still too comfortable to make an adjustment. The irony is that if you want *anything* to change in your life, the only place to begin is with yourself. You are the only one who can exert complete control over and alter your destiny. Most people wish for things to change, but instead of doing anything to make that change happen, they sit back hoping and waiting for luck to knock on their door. Well the fact is, reality will eventually rear its ugly head and show you that life doesn't work that way. Waiting for the lottery, waiting for that long-lost inheritance or waiting for that big raise will not produce the results you want. The very first place to look for transformation is within. Sure, you may legitimately have cause to point some fingers, but doing so will only delay your success and happiness. When you take ownership of yourself, your life and your income, you are on your way to harnessing success.

I learned early in my life that if things needed to change, it was up to me to change them. I have had the great pleasure of working with Jim Rohn, who inspired me to new levels of success and happiness. As one of America's greatest speakers, I consider him one of my early mentors. When I first met Mr. Rohn, I was sitting at a dinner table with ten other people. I grabbed a seat near him and just wanted to listen to his words of wisdom and conversation. When a lull in the conversation arose, I was caught off guard when Mr. Rohn asked me about my goals, dreams and aspirations. In response, I began to talk about many of the roadblocks I had experienced in my pursuit of success. I listed all the reasons why I wasn't able to achieve my goals and dreams. I let him know who was to blame and

insisted none of it was my fault. I thought I had made a pretty good case and then the hammer dropped. Jim looked at me and said, “Kurt, for things to change, you must change, and for things to get better, you must get better.” That brief moment in time changed my life forever. It was then that I realized that everything I wanted in life is on the other side of change, not the other side of excuse. I also realized that no matter the excuse (good or bad), it would not produce results.

If you want to make the same kind of transformation in your life, the first thing you have to do is take an honest look at yourself and where you are. You can't make changes if you won't acknowledge what needs to be changed. Where are you starting? What is your current situation? If you could change one thing in your life, what would it be? It is only from honestly assessing where point A is that you can develop a well-defined, well-planned route to point B. Then the next obvious thing to determine is where or at what point B *is located*. In other words, what exactly are you aiming for? What do you want? Now is not the time to be timid. Don't shortchange yourself because you want to be “careful” or “reasonable” or you don't want to “rock the boat.” Shoot for the stars! You'll define the path to get there, but first you have to know what exactly you're even trying to reach. In other words, you must begin with the end result and then work your way backward. You have to know exactly where you want to go and what you need to change to get there. Sometimes, people are actually afraid of being “too” successful. To be brilliant or amazing might actually be a scary proposition. As success comes into sight, you might feel a lot of responsibility weighing down on you. So, how successful should you be? How healthy should you be? How wealthy should you be? How strong should your relationships be? Consider the following powerful quote from Nelson Mandela:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our Light, not our Darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the World. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure

around you. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. – 1994
Inaugural Speech

We are unique creatures. In spite of the seeds of greatness that lie within us, we seem to program ourselves to do the least amount possible to get by. That is, we often do only what is necessary to survive. I see this tendency with my students at the local university all the time. Their mentality is: What is the least amount of work I can do to pass this class? They are paying top dollar to get their education yet rarely do you see a student take advantage of all the learning that is at her/his disposal. We see symptoms of the same mental laziness, lack of progress and resistance to change in the workplace, too: What is the least amount of work I can do to get a paycheck and not get fired? When we are in this lazy mindset, we can't find happiness, and as a result, our souls start to rust.

The challenge is that we often don't see the consequences of our behavior fast enough. Time ticks by, and by the time we're even aware of how off course we've gotten, years have flown by. We live in a society where we want the quick fix, the easy way out. Unfortunately, however, that is not how life works. If it takes someone five years to gain twenty pounds, why does someone else think he can completely lose it in a couple weeks? Another example is fast food. We know it's not good for us, and yet hey, nothing bad happened today after I had that super-size order of fries. The consequences of the unhealthy food will take time to manifest, but in the meantime, the instant gratification of a fast and delicious meal *now* overpowers concerns about the future that, in the moment, seem immaterial. Imagine if every time you ate at a fast food restaurant the consequences were immediate. You took a bite and felt a bulge near your midsection. If that were the case, it wouldn't take long before you changed your ways.

There are thousands of habits and patterns in our lives that fit the instant gratification scenario. Another example is debt. So what do we do when we're constantly confronted with such difficult choices: immediate pleasure versus future gain? What do we do about it? You would be very wise to make a habit as soon as possible of analyzing your life on at least a weekly basis. Determine what you want to change *now*, not after years of

reinforcing the wrong habits. The saying goes, “Old habits die hard” and it’s really true. Stop destructive cycles now before the strands that bind you become impenetrable rope. Without *changing your action*, your wishes and hopes will only be whims that never go anywhere. It’s time for you dreams to start to bear fruit!

So, are you ready to welcome change into your life? Good! Remember, as Albert Einstein said, “You can’t solve a problem with the same mind that created it.” Once you have *recognized* the need to change and have *embraced* the opportunity to change, then you will need to start organizing your plan of action. Think backward. What is the big picture? What are the major phases within that big picture? What are the steps within each phase that will move you from one point to the next?

It is worth pointing out here that you must be careful not to let the opinions of others dissuade you. I’m sure you’ve experienced this before—you’ve gotten yourself all excited and pumped up, you tell someone you really care about all your great plans and they barely listen or care. Or worse, they start pointing out all the reasons why your plan isn’t going to work or why it’s a bad idea. Crash! You can’t remember the last time you felt so deflated. I’ll admit that it is hard to stay focused and persistent when people spit on your dreams. Fear of failure, fear of what others will think—these are totally normal feelings. But you can’t let them debilitate you. Napoleon Hill said, “The fear of criticism robs man of his initiative, destroys his power of imagination, limits his individuality and takes away his self-reliance.” You are destined for greatness. Follow your heart not the useless criticism and discouragement of those who have forgotten how to live and dream.

So many people assume that if they don’t try, then they can’t fail. If they don’t try, no one will criticize them either. The tragedy of this mindset is that they will fail by virtue of never having even attempted to succeed. George Shinn once said, “Growth means change and change involves risks, stepping from the known to the unknown.” I have always loved the phrase “jump and the net will appear.” Consider the fact that most of the fears we face in life are not life-and-death matters. And yet, we are so gripped by our fears that it’s almost as though they were life-and-death matters.

The next time you feel yourself paralyzed by fear, stop and honestly assess your feelings. What is the worst thing that could really happen? Are the possible setbacks really life-or-death situations, or are they just opportunities to learn and grow, even if they are sometimes unpleasant or painful? Reflect on the fact that almost all successful people have their stories about where they came from and what they had to go through to achieve success. What's more, it's rarely a rosy picture. It might also be worth asking yourself what the worst thing is that could happen if you do *nothing*. Chances are the consequences might be more severe in the case of inaction versus action. Either way, there is a price to be paid. Do you want regrets or do you want results? We say no to some things because we are saying yes to other things. You just need to be sure you know what hangs in the balance either way. Sometimes it is the realization of the imminent, stark reality hitting us in the face that provides the momentum for change. Whatever the motivator is, just don't let fear stop you from forging ahead.

As you ready yourself for positive changes ahead, watch how you talk to yourself. In other words, there is to be no more talking down to yourself like: "Well, I blew it again. Surprise, surprise." Negative self-talk is a dead giveaway for an attitude tune-up. Thoughts and attitudes are where change begins. Don't take this advice lightly because your thoughts have the power to control your destiny. When you feel or think there is no hope, you are right. Understand that your thoughts control your emotions and that your emotions control your actions. What you concentrate on will happen. If your thoughts always focus on rejection and failure, you will see a self-fulfilling prophecy in your life. Change your thoughts, change your focus and you will change the future.

Draw on strength and support from family and friends who *will* support you. Fortify yourself so that you're immersed in an environment where success can grow from success. When you surround yourself with people, places and things that inspire you, you'll feel encouraged. Sometimes we think that all this "change your attitude" stuff is great, but it doesn't just click like the snap of your fingers. It's true; unfortunately, our progress and results are rarely instantaneous. It can take a lot of effort to muster the

mental and emotional fortitude that is necessary to forge ahead when the support seems so distant. This concept underscores my point even more: If you're having trouble mustering the inspiration for change yourself, surround yourself with the people and things that will give you the springboard you need. Moreover, remind yourself that even under the best circumstances, progress comes in spurts. There's no sense in waiting for everything to be just right before rolling up your sleeves because it's just never going to happen. Let's face it, fate isn't going to just catapult you to the top without any scrapes or bruises. Sometimes, it will be a matter of taking three steps forward and one step back. Other times, you'll go through a phase of feeling like you're not taking any steps forward, and then you will suddenly leap ahead by ten or twenty steps or more. Don't fight the natural growth curve you're going to experience.

Change versus Alteration

Although the words bear similar meanings, "change" and "alteration" are not synonymous. Change is driven from within and governed by the right intentions. Alteration is based on external factors—what others will think, what will impress someone, what will enable you to "keep up" or maybe even just what will appease someone so s/he'll leave you alone. The trouble with all of these examples is that they are most likely to cause greater insecurity, which in turn breeds low self-esteem. When you're feeling low, you're not as likely to feel invigorated and ready to take on your weaknesses, and a downward cycle results. You've got to forget about any influences that lead you to look to others for approval. If you don't, your happiness and success will always hang on the whims of others, and this reliance will only lead to a very frail emotional existence. You'll never get ahead because you'll always be fretting over and worrying about keeping everyone else happy. You must concentrate on making yourself happy instead.

On the surface, many people are open to change, but privately, or even subconsciously, they resist change at every turn. When you don't make the changes you know are necessary, you feel weak and depressed. Contrarily, when you successfully make changes, you feel positive and in control. Now here is a key thing to understand: It is not

the *change* that makes us uneasy or gives us anxiety; it is how we *perceive* and handle that change. Let's now outline the three key ways in which people make changes in their lives. One of these ways is more powerful than the others in terms of conscious, lasting change: Drastic circumstances require drastic measures. You could have a heart attack, lose your job or experience some other sort of personal tragedy. Where you might not have felt compelled to change your situation before, however, such events force you to change. The second way people make change in their lives is slowly but surely. Gradual changes like this are more likely to evolve through personal relationships and other such long-term molding influences. The third change-inducing factor is internal change. Both positive and negative factors can compel you, but it is under this unique method where you have willfully hit the pause button and made a conscious transformational decision.

To get change to stick, you must make sure three things occur. First, you must have a firm commitment to change. You have to have reached the point where, in your mind, there is no other option. Second, you must be willing to pay the price for change's rewards, persisting even when you feel weak. Third, you have to know where the change is taking you. How is this life transformation going to affect your life? What will the end results be? One thing that can really alleviate the fear of the unknown is doing your homework so you know exactly what to expect. Carefully plan your steps toward success—even when you've never been there before. Remember, there is much more security traveling new terrain with a map!

When those closest to you seem to be the most discouraging, remember that they have only seen you the way you have always been. They have no experience with the person you're going to become. Fair or not, it is only human nature that we are judged and that we also judge others based on past experience rather than projections of their future potential. Some people may take these sentiments as unsupportive and extremely crushing to their confidence in proceeding. If you fall into this category, do not cast your pearls before swine! This doesn't mean you shouldn't still pursue loving relationships with those around you, but you don't have to constantly be laying everything out on the line for them to scrutinize, either. Why make yourself vulnerable to those you know are

not going to cheer you on? In this case, it is simply a matter of being careful and wise about who you open up to. On the other hand, some people may find the naysayer to be a serious motivator. Whatever works for you, go for it. Just make sure you keep the positive energy flowing.

Finally, we have all heard the saying that a habit is made in twenty-one days. If such a short-term benchmark motivates you, go for it, but don't believe for a minute that twenty-one days will make you home free. Certainly, if you can persist in doing something for twenty-one straight days, you are on the road to success. These short-term successes are important because they enable you to start seeing and tasting what ultimate success might be like. But also remember that even after two or three months of steady commitment, we can still topple from our new routines. Such an experience would be more closely aligned with alteration than true change. The key is to continually reinforce your new habits and to hold yourself accountable to your new discipline. That way, you won't revert back to the old habits of your comfort zone.

The Four Major Obstacles to Lasting Change

The biggest obstacles to change are fear, lack of motivation, lack of knowledge and lack of vision. People will not change if they fear failure, if they don't have a reason to, if they don't know how to or if they don't know where change will take them. If you want to inspire change in others, you have to make their future rewards stronger than their current fears. If changes are to be lasting and successful, it is essential to have the necessary reinforcement and tools at your disposal to assist you in the transformation process. First of all, we know that one must have the desire before change can take place. Therefore, dangling bait in front of somebody's nose is useless if it's not something they find desirable. What do they want, and do they want it *enough*? The desire has to be there.

Second, their desire must be coupled with enthusiasm. They can't say to themselves, "That would be nice." They really have to feel like, "All right, let's do this!" Not like, "Yeah, I want that, but...." For lasting change to manifest in them, there is no room for

half-heartedness or apathetic feelings on the part of your prospects. They must embrace change as their vehicle and *step on the gas!*

Third, your prospects must be open to suggestions, input and new ideas. Nothing is going to change if they keep doing the same things they've been doing all along, right? So, they've got to be open to new possibilities, new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things. People can't *act* differently if they don't *think* differently, and they can't *think* differently if they aren't open to new information.

Fourth, your prospects must have a positive outlook on change as a growing process that will not take place overnight. Nothing sucks the energy out of someone faster than the realization of unrealistic goals or false hopes. At the very first encounter of struggle, such individuals shrink away in defeat. The challenges seem too daunting, or they slide into a negative, complacent attitude, thinking, "See, I knew it wouldn't work...." Then they're just back to where they started, or worse.

Since it is one of the leading obstacles to positive, lasting change, let's first talk about fear. First of all, what is this debilitating but alarmingly common emotion? It is anxiety or tension that is caused by danger, apprehension, harm, pain or destruction. Fear stems from sources that can be real or imagined. The danger of unchecked fear is that it becomes a vicious cycle: You shy away from things because you're afraid of them, which in turn deprives you of crucial experience, which in turn feeds your lack of knowledge, which is one of the very things that makes you afraid in the first place. Whatever the root of the fear is, there is one thing that is always constant: Fear is an emotion, and like any emotion, it can be redirected. Consider the fact that psychiatrists find only two fears in a newborn baby: fear of falling and fear of loud noises. In other words, all other fears are learned, which means they can also be *unlearned*. Sounds too easy, doesn't it? Let's take a look at the four main steps in overcoming fear.

- 1. Develop a sound knowledge and understanding of what is triggering your fears.** Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Knowledge is the antidote to fear." This

statement is so true. We always hear the saying “the fear of the unknown.” I’m sure you can think of several examples, both historically and in modern times, of people who responded irrationally to situations and to people they didn’t understand. Has this type of response ever proven to be a *good* thing? I can’t personally think of a time when it has. Knowledge is never going to hurt you. What you don’t know, however, *will* hurt you. In this particular case, knowledge is only going to better equip you to grab your fears by the horns. So, how does one acquire this knowledge? If you don’t already know, deep down, what you fear, you’ve got to pinpoint *exactly* what you’re afraid of. Isolate the fear-inducing thing, person or situation—whatever it is—in writing. Write it down!

2. **Ask yourself: What is the worst thing that could happen?** Take a serious look at your fear in the face. Is the worst-case scenario a life-and-death situation? Could it even really be considered devastating? And even if it could, will it be more devastating to live an unfulfilled life than to take the chance? You gain strength, courage and confidence with every experience in which you confront your fears, no matter how painful. In retrospect, you are always able to say to yourself, “I lived through this. I made it. I can handle whatever else may come along.” Eleanor Roosevelt once very wisely said, “You must do the thing you think you cannot do.”

3. **Allow yourself to feel capable of overcoming your fears.** Try to visualize your success, to feel what success would feel like. Success has to be real in your mind before you can make it real in true life. We always hear the saying that “seeing is believing.” Well, actually, in a case like this, *believing first* will mean seeing down the road. You can’t achieve what your mind doesn’t believe. Martin Luther King said it best: “Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase. Just take the first step.” When you can see positive transformation, when it becomes a part of you, it will happen. Every time you feel capable and you mentally see yourself making the changes you want to make, a little chunk of internal doubt will erode away.

4. **Take decisive action right away.** Once you've pinpointed exactly what your fear is, you've mentally confronted the worst-case scenario and you've let yourself work through the emotions of what your success is going to feel like, then you must take immediate and decisive action to diminish and ultimately overcome your fear. Hesitation only allows fear to fester and enlarge. Do something about it, before that fear continues to grow! Taking action will empower you. Doing nothing will just perpetuate your feelings of helplessness.

Now let's talk about the second most common obstacle to positive, lasting change: lack of motivation. We all have those days when we just don't feel like doing what we need to do. We intend to, but then it still doesn't happen. Well, not only do we have "those days," but we could probably point to such a scenario *every single* day! Procrastination is just part of the human condition—"Oh, I'll get to it...later...." How do we muster the motivation to get things done and to stay on track, even during those inevitable times when we just don't feel like it?

Basically, there are only two things that motivate us in life: inspiration and desperation. We either move toward that which inspires us, or we move away from something that fills us with despair or discomfort. The majority of the world's population uses desperation as a motivator. Desperation is like a cattle prod forcing you to move forward and take action. I can motivate anyone in the world with desperation. The problem is that motivation that is spurred by desperation doesn't last. Think of that person you know who is always lying on the couch. If you douse the couch with gasoline and light a match, you'll see instant motivation. But once the fire is out, you will see her/him turn back into a lazy person.

If you want motivation to last, you have to rely on inspiration. The positive results that spring from using inspiration as a motivator are obvious. Inspired people tend to be proactive, passionate and driven. They are happier and enjoy greater life fulfillment than those who are desperation-driven. If you just check the help-wanted section of your

newspaper, these types of inspired people are always in demand. To be most effective, inspiration needs to be internalized. Motivation becomes long-term when the intended goal taps into one's inner drive and emotion. The key to finding success lies in being emotionally motivated with a purpose.

The third obstacle to positive, lasting change is lack of knowledge. Sometimes, people are immobilized from moving ahead simply because they don't know what to do or where to begin. To bring change about in your life, you need the necessary knowledge to make that change successful. Consider what you can read, whom you can talk to, what seminar or workshop you can attend. Who could be your coach? Discover all the resources that are available to you. Remember, there is no challenge so unique that humanity has never seen or heard of it before. There are always going to be others who have been through what you're experiencing and who will know exactly what you're up against. It is much better to get as much information as you can from those individuals who have gone before you than to try to figure everything out on your own.

Think of acquiring knowledge in terms of your own personal development program. Did you know that there is a direct relationship between your personal development program and your income? In the sales industry, we've found the more CDs listened to, the more books read and the more seminars attended, the higher the salesperson's income. Brian Tracy tells people that their income will double every year if they just read thirty minutes a day. Lastly, consider that fact that most homes worth over a quarter of a million dollars have a library. I'm not saying that a huge income is your major goal—maybe it is, maybe it isn't—but the point is, increased knowledge impacts your output, in whatever form it takes on

The bottom line is, the more you learn, the more you earn. Anything you could possibly ever wonder about has most likely already been written about, so invest in the books, the CDs, the seminars and the professional advice that are going to give you the knowledge you need to get ahead. As your knowledge increases, you will experience a parallel increase in motivation and desire. Researchers at Harvard University found that those

who are learning and growing every day are more optimistic about life. They are more enthusiastic about where they're going and what they're going to accomplish. Conversely, those who aren't learning and growing every day become negative, pessimistic and doubtful about themselves and their future.

The last major obstacle to positive, lasting change is lack of vision. As we discussed earlier, being able to visualize your success first is crucial to it actually playing out in real life. If your mind can't conceive it, you sure won't achieve it! Since belief dictates behavior, you've got to believe first. And it is much easier to believe in something if you can visualize it. So, take the time to vividly imagine and play out in your mind exactly what your successes are. Let your mind create all the details—it's got to be as real and authentic in your mind as possible. Taste it, touch it, feel it, eat it, drink it, sleep it, breathe it. Some may find such visualization a frivolous expenditure of time, but I cannot stress its importance strongly enough: This activity is VERY worthwhile! When I find people who have not tapped into this success skill, I know they are broke. Again, beliefs and attitudes shape your future!

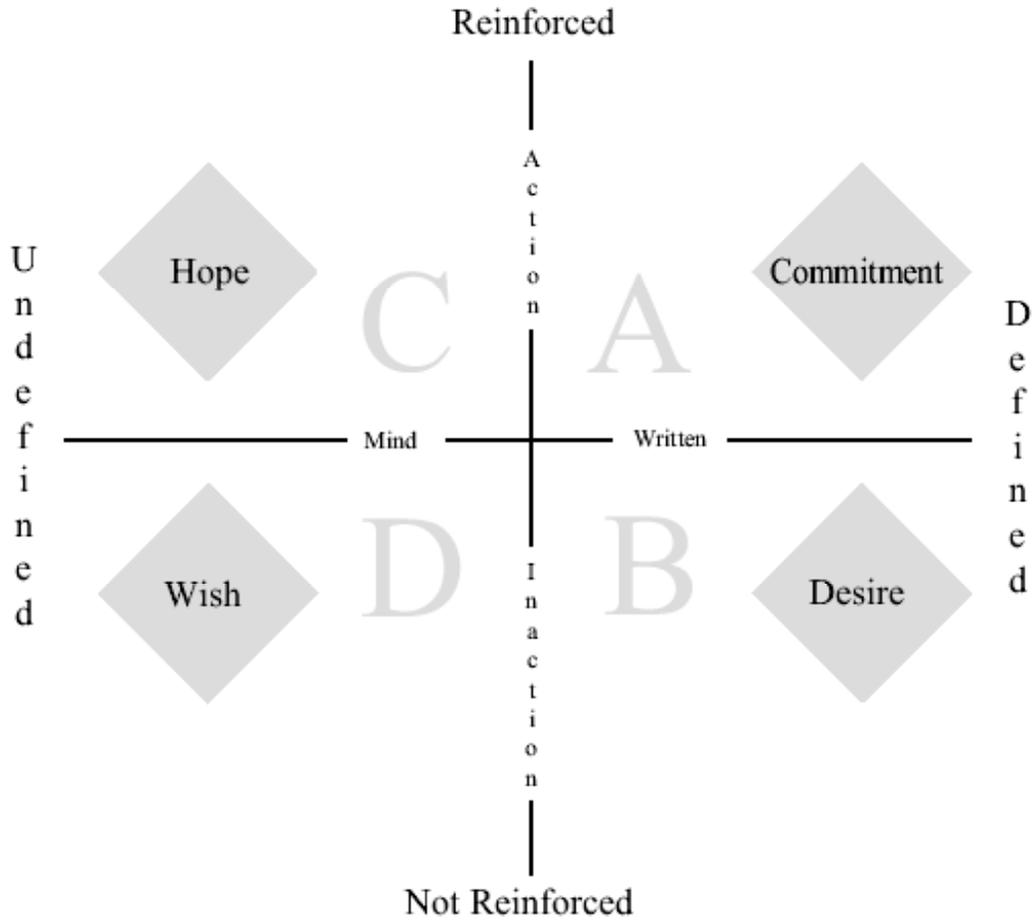
Vision is a powerful tool in helping you see the big picture. Once you begin to have a grasp on where today fits into the future, suddenly everything you do today matters. Vision gives us energy, passion and a reason for living, growing and working hard. Knowing exactly where you want to go is the surest way to end aimless "going through the motions." Stephen Covey said, "To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction."

The Positive, Lasting Change Chart

Change is such a key ingredient in helping you discover and achieve success, and adaptability to change is vital to coping with some of life's most common challenges. Now it's time to really assess where you are on the transformation scale. How badly do you really want to change? Take a look at the change chart.

Change Chart[®]

Do You Really Want to Change?



The closer you find yourself to the top right quadrant of the Change Chart, the more likely your changes will stick long-term. If you've followed the advice given thus far in this chapter, you have a well-defined commitment to change that is reinforced by well-planned action. It is also likely that your goals are actually written out and in a place where you can review them often. All of these elements must be part of the equation if change is to be successful. Is this where you find yourself?

Now, take a look at each of the other quadrants. Action without definition will only yield frustration over lots of running around and arriving nowhere. What is happening in your life? Is it activity or accomplishment? A defined desire, no matter how strong and distinct, will remain just that—a desire—if you never get up off the couch. And lastly, if you just have vague hopes with no plan of action, your yearning will amount to nothing more than a puff of smoke. Hope without a plan is a form of delusion. We can all think of different situations that fit into each category. Reflect back on those experiences and consider what your end results were in each area. It will not take you long to see that you must be in that top right quadrant of the Change Chart if you hope to really see the results you're looking for.

When we have the necessary desire and plan to change, it's time to be brutally honest about the real reasons behind the behaviors and situations we don't like. For example, you may say you're overweight because your depression makes you overeat. But why are you really depressed? Smoking, family tensions—the list of bad-habit inducers goes on and on. You've got to be ready to admit that your habits were formed for a reason. If you can uncover that reason, you know what kind of battle you're up against. And the more you know about what you're dealing with, the more empowered you become to change the results. This transformation mentality also involves changing your thinking. You cannot defend or justify old habits. The more you can change your point of reference, the more you will expedite change. Sometimes, this change incentive is just a new outlook; other times, it means changing your environment or even your friends.

Before you attempt to overcome a bad habit, be sure you have a well thought-out plan in place, one that you are committed to being accountable to. For example, don't try to just drop a bad habit cold turkey. Instead, replace it with something else that is both positive and productive, something that will be rewarding to you. Stop focusing on the past and how you used to do or enjoy something. Instead, focus on the future. It will feel awkward at first, just like when you try to throw a ball with your non-dominant hand. It will take some time to get used to, but you will eventually become accustomed to it. If you can keep yourself constantly engaged in things that you find rewarding and invigorating, you will no longer have the need to avoid your problems.

Understand that you can only change certain things in your life. Some things you should not change or you simply cannot change. If an acorn wants to grow up to be a redwood, it's not going to happen because it's simply not what nature intended. If you are the size of an offensive tackle in football, you probably will never be a professional jockey. You will find what is possible if you really put your mind to it and follow your heart. Your heart will tell you what you can or cannot do and will guide you toward the path you should take. Take time out to be alone with your thoughts. Turn off the TV or radio in your car. It is OK to be alone. It's perfectly acceptable to listen to your thoughts and to find out what your heart is telling you. If you never allow yourself any alone time, you might never find out what your dreams, desires or passions really are.

Conclusion

Change is critical to your success and happiness. I cringe to think what might happen in our lives if we don't allow ourselves the opportunity to make the appropriate changes. Sure, we can pretend that we don't need to change, that there is nothing wrong with our lives. Then, however, we soon forget the consequences of not taking action and making the changes we know we need to make. One story that illustrates this point well is from Samuel Whitman.

The ice storm wasn't generally destructive. True, a few wires came down, and there was a sudden jump in accidents along the highway.... Normally,

the big walnut tree could easily have borne the weight that formed on its spreading limbs. It was the iron wedge in its heart that caused the damage.

The story of the iron wedge began many years ago when the lad of a white-haired farmer toiled on his father's homestead. The sawmill had then only recently been moved from the valley, and the settlers were still finding tools and odd pieces of equipment scattered about....

On this particular day, it was a faller's wedge—wide, flat and heavy, a foot or more long, and splayed from mighty poundings which he found in the south pasture.... (The wedge is put in a cut made by an axe and then struck with a large hammer to enlarge the cut.) Because he was already late for dinner, the lad laid the wedge...between the limbs of the young walnut tree his father had planted near the front gate. He would take the wedge to the shed right after dinner, or sometime when he was going that way.

He truly meant to, but he never did. The wedge was there between the limbs, a little tight, when he attained his manhood. It was there, now firmly gripped, when he married and took over his father's farm. It was half grown over on the day the threshing crew ate dinner under the tree.... Grown in and healed over, the wedge was still in the tree the winter the ice storm came.

In the chill silence of that wintry night...one of the three major limbs split away from the trunk and crashed to the ground. This so unbalanced the remainder of the top that it, too, split apart and went down. When the storm was over, not a twig of the once-proud tree remained.

Early the next morning, the farmer went out to mourn his loss....

Then, his eyes caught sight of something in the splintered ruin. “The wedge,” he muttered reproachfully. “The wedge I found in the south pasture.” A glance told him why the tree had fallen. Growing edge-up in the trunk, the wedge had prevented the limb fibers from knitting together as they should.

If we neglect change, if we try to bury our problems in our life, the wedge of not changing will be more destructive than the hammer of change. Open yourself up to see what you really want to become. Set the course and then make the changes. You and you alone can navigate your life. See the horizon of success and never let anything take you off course.

The Structure of Power:

How Power Increases Persuasion and Influence

Power is intricately connected to persuasion in that it increases your ability to persuade, influence and stir action in others. Power enhances all aspects of persuasion and influence. Power will magnify your ability to hit the persuasion target and it opens the window for you to have greater persuasive capabilities and influence over your audience. Consequently, when your audience perceives that you hold great power over them, you will be very persuasive in moving them to action.

Power exists only because your audience allows it to. They grant you the ability to persuade them based upon your real or perceived power over them. Your audience has the discretion to follow, to remain indifferent or to rebel against your power. Even if your boss has made threats or the thief wields a gun over you, you have the choice of deciding which behavior you will use in response to his power play.

You only have power over a person to the extent that you control something s/he wants, needs or desires. This “something” could come in the form of safety, information, rewards, freedom or avoidance of punishment. Keep in mind that power does not have to be exerted to be effective. A bank robber holds power over his audience as he stands menacingly with a pointed gun at them, yet he doesn’t have to actually shoot anyone to exert that power. A police officer has power over you when he’s simply sitting in his police car, even if he’s not following you with his siren and lights on. Likewise, the fact that your boss can fire you, even if he hasn’t made any threats, gives her/ him a position of power over you.

Interestingly, it seems to be natural human tendency to seek not only out power but also those who have it. Dr. Floyd Allport, a social psychologist, talks about this instinctive characteristic in his book *Social Psychology*. He believes that deep inside each person there exists a desire to produce reactions in others. He further asserts that as we age, these

desires grow even more strongly into a yearning for control.²⁵ Let's face it—we hunger for power. When we have power, we feel more confident and in control. Why is power so seductive? Because when we possess power and control over our environment, we feel strong, invincible and often exhilarated.

Indeed, the world runs on the concept of power. There would be no order without it. The legal system has the right and power to interpret laws. The military and police have the power to enforce laws. A manager has the power to fire a dishonest employee. Parents have the power to discipline their children.

As Abraham Lincoln said, “Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.” The question remains then, what makes power good or bad? Power tends to make us nervous—and with good reason. We have all seen great abuses of power—many of them tragic, deadly abuses. We also feel that power inhibits our personal freedoms and our ability to control our own lives. But just like persuasion, power is really a neutral concept. It can be used to inspire and uplift to great good. The good or bad aspect of it comes from the person who is exercising that power. If a police officer uses his power to stop a murderer, he is bringing good to the world. However, he could just as easily use that same power to help drug dealers, thereby bringing bad into the world. Here you see that the power is the same, but the intentions of the person behind it are different and ultimately the controlling factor.

Using and Responding to Power

There are five points of power that move an audience to respond. These points are called the Five Power Structures and are: Authority, Coercion, Legitimate, Reward and Psychological. These structures will be discussed in detail later in this chapter. For the time being, however, it is important to remember that the more sources of power you possess, the easier it will be to persuade and influence your audience.

²⁵ Allport. *Floyd Social Psychology*. New York Houghton Mifflin. 1999.

People react to power in different ways, but there are three general responses to power figures. First, there is the automatic response—performing the action with no thought or questions. Second, there is the manual response—you understand that the person has power, you have second thoughts about doing what s/he requests, but you comply anyway because of her/his power position. Third, there is resistance—you know the person has power over you, but you do everything within your personal power to resist her/him. Alternatively, resistance manifests itself when the power source removes her/himself from the situation.

Authority Power: Instant, Automatic Power

Authority Power is based on how other people perceive your authority. You have authority over others when they believe you have a greater title, control or strength over them. Authority allows those in power to intimidate or even force others to comply with them because of their status, position, background or rank. Police officers are excellent examples of this type of power. Whether it is their uniform, their title, their badge or their car that motivates you, you feel compelled to comply with cops based on their position and authority.

We can't be blamed for our natural urge to follow authority. That's because we have been taught since childhood to believe and follow proper authority. It all started when our parents taught us that disobedience to authority is wrong and that it has consequences. From a very early age, we are taught to listen to our teachers, our parents, political figures, etc. Even in church, we learn that strict obedience is what brings blessings upon us and makes God happy. As the biblical stories go, Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden and Jonah was swallowed by a whale because of disobedience. In contrast, Abraham was blessed for his willingness to follow authority and to sacrifice his son. Parents know more than children; God knows more than us.

Often, we submit to our authority figures in an effort to avoid pain and punishment. This desire to avoid unpleasant consequences is part of the reason why we hold such respect for authority—disobedience can have stiff penalties. Authority Power, if used

improperly, can make us feel controlled or manipulated. By wielding this type of power, you may get the immediate results you're looking for, but they're not going to last and you're not going to have people's respect or friendship when all is said and done. Ultimately, this kind of manipulation will destroy cooperation and breed resistance. It will kill enthusiasm and in its stead stir up animosity.

Master Persuaders know how people handle the different types of Authority Power. In your persuasive efforts, understand that there are three ways in which people generally deal with Authority Power.

1. *Reliance* – They have complete confidence that the authority figure can do no wrong. They don't have to make decisions because the authority figure has made them for them.
2. *Indifference* – They are apathetic toward authority. They really don't care what the authority figure says or represents.
3. *Suspicion* – The opposite of reliance, suspicion is distrust of authority and resentment of anyone in charge of or wielding power over someone else.

Authority Power can be further subdivided into more specific categories. These are authority by Position, Uniform, Title, Public Opinion and External Characteristics. With the following examples, you will see that Authority Power can have a very motivating influence on an individual.

1. Authority by Position

Those who have authority based on the position they hold within the community have Positional Authority. Such authority figures include your boss, the U.S. President or a police officer. A landmark study conducted by Stanley Milgram²⁶ at Yale University illustrates just how powerful Positional Authority can be. In his experiment, Milgram had some participants pose as “teachers,” while others portrayed the “learners.” The “teachers” were told that they were going to help the researcher test the learning levels of

²⁶ Milgram, Stanley. *Obedience to Authority*. Harper Torchbooks. New York. 1974.

the “learners” by giving those “learners” progressively more intense shocks each time they answered memory questions incorrectly.

Of course, no real shock was administered, but the “teachers” were not aware of the false premise and the “learners” were instructed to act as though the pain were real. In other words, it appeared to the “teachers” as though the “learner” were suffering from intense pain each time a question was answered wrong. The purpose of the study was to see how far the “teachers” would go in obeying the head researcher’s authority, even if it meant inflicting great pain on a fellow human being. The results were astounding: Two-thirds of the subjects delivered as much pain as they could (450 volts), pulling all 30 of the shock switches, even when the acting “learners” pleaded, begged and even screamed for them to stop the experiment.

This experiment strikingly demonstrates the concepts we’ve made about Positional Authority. Consider the following key points. First of all, the “teachers” were noticeably uncomfortable with what they were doing. In fact, they hated it. Many of them asked the researcher to please end the experiment. But when he refused, they continued on nonetheless, trembling, perspiring and sometimes even laughing nervously. In spite of their extreme discomfort, almost all of the “teachers” continued to obey the head researcher until the experiment was over. The converse is also revealing: When the scripts were reversed and it was the “learners” ordering the “teachers” to deliver more shocks while the researcher protested, not even one single person disobeyed their superior! One hundred percent of the “teachers” refused to obey the “learners” over the researcher. After obtaining the shocking (no pun intended) results of this experiment, Milgram wrote, “It is the extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority that constitutes the chief finding of the study.”²⁷

When someone has a higher position or more authority than you, the automatic trigger in your mind is that whatever that person says must be true. In another study, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) found that many errors made by flight captains were not

²⁷ Ibid.

challenged or corrected by other members of the crew. This blind obedience to position and authority sometimes resulted in catastrophes. One airline, concerned about this evidence, tested their own flight crews via flight simulators. They created conditions that would lead to mental overload and emotional stimulation. As a result, the captains (in one study) made fatal mistakes at critical moments. In those cases, the airline was shocked to discover that 25 percent of the flights would have crashed because the subordinates did not take corrective action and challenge the position of the plane's captain.²⁸

2. Authority by Uniform

When you wear a uniform to play a certain role, that uniform wields power over others. People create impressions or even illusions of power simply with what they wear. When you wear the right clothes for the situation, you can persuade without even speaking. Think of what a police uniform says. Now imagine a police officer trying to clear an urban riot in street clothes. The officer in uniform will get immediate attention because we respond and respect uniforms. Even clergy who wear their robes command more respect and are able to persuade and influence with higher efficiency than they can when sporting street clothes. We see a doctor in a white coat and we automatically assume he is a medical professional who knows exactly what to prescribe. When a businessperson shows up in a \$1,500 suit and polished shoes, we automatically assume he is in charge or is the decision maker. We know that people treat us differently based on how we dress.

In one experiment, a man was told to stop pedestrians in New York City. Once halted, the experimenter either had them pick up paper bags, move from where they were standing or give money to a perfect stranger. The experimenter would point to another man nearly fifty feet away, telling them the man had over-parked and didn't have any change to pay the meter. He would then tell them to go give the man the necessary change. Researchers watched the experiment to see how many people complied when the experimenter was dressed in normal street clothes versus when he was dressed as a security guard. After giving the command, the experimenter would turn a corner so he was out of the

²⁸ Harper, C., Kidera, C. & Cullen, J. (1971). Study of simulated airplane pilot incapacitation: Phase 2, subtle or partial loss of function. *Aerospace Medicine*, p. 946-948.

pedestrians' sight. Incredibly, almost all of the pedestrians obeyed when he was dressed in uniform, even after he was gone! When he was dressed in street clothes, however, less than half of the pedestrians complied with his request.²⁹

In another study, Lawrence and Watson found that individuals asking for contributions to law enforcement and healthcare campaigns gathered more donations when they were wearing sheriffs' and nurses' uniforms than when they were just dressed normally.³⁰

3. Authority by Title

We are all suckers for titles. What goes through your mind when you hear “Esquire,” “President” or “CEO”? When we hear the word “doctor” in front of a name, it automatically registers in our minds that this person is important, powerful and intelligent. We don't even ask if s/he graduated at the bottom of her/his medical class. In the medical profession, the “Dr.” is king and head decision maker. We love to hear “two out of three doctors recommend” or “nine out of ten dentists use this product or service.” This advertising tactic is all based on Authority Power. That's because we respect, admire and follow the recommendations or opinions of those in authority.

In one particular case, researchers wanted to test to see if the power of authority by title won out over established rules and regulations. Their strategy was to see if nurses would over-prescribe an unauthorized drug to a patient when a doctor they didn't know requested that they do so. A researcher would call in and tell a nurse that he was a doctor and that he wanted a 20mg dose of a drug called Astrogen administered to a certain patient. He would then tell the nurse to follow his order as soon as possible so the drug would have time to take effect by the time he arrived. He further stated that he would sign the prescription upon his arrival. The experiment intentionally violated four critical rules. First, the hospital forbade prescriptions to be made over the phone. Second, Astrogen was an unauthorized drug. Third, the dosage was dangerously excessive. In fact, it was double the amount specified on the label. And fourth, the order was given by a supposed

²⁹ Bickman, L. (1974). The social power of a uniform. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, p. 47-61.

³⁰ Lawrence, S. & Watson, M. (1991). Getting Others to Help: The Effectiveness of Professional Uniforms in Charitable Fund Raising. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, p. 170-185.

“doctor,” whom the nurse had never met or even heard of. In spite of these red flags, a whopping 95 percent of the nurses headed straight for the medicine cabinet and on to the patient’s room. Before they went any further, they were stopped by an undercover researcher, who informed them of the experiment.³¹

4. Authority by Public Opinion

Authority by public opinion occurs when a person has power or authority that is not directly related to her/his experience or expertise. Rather Public Opinion Authority arises simply because a person is held in high esteem by the public or via public outcry. An example of this type of authority is seen with scholarly or academic journals, which are more likely to publish articles written by people who are fairly established and somewhat renowned within their respective fields as compared to those written by someone who is virtually unknown. A really interesting study involved taking previously published articles that were written by prestigious and reputable authors and resubmitting them to those same journals without any alterations except replacing the original authors with “unknown names.” Out of twelve resubmitted articles, nine of them went through the review process undetected, and eight of those were rejected! This high rejection rate occurred in spite of the fact that each submitted article had been previously published and all that was different were the names.³²

Another similar experiment was conducted whereby a writer submitted Jerzy Kosinski’s novel *Steps*, word-for-word, to twenty-eight literary agencies and publishing houses. Ten years earlier, the book had sold a half million copies and had won the National Book Award. Now, appearing to have been authored by a lesser-known writer, the manuscript was deemed “inadequate” by all twenty-eight organizations—including Random House, the novel’s original publisher!³³

³¹ Hofling, C.K., Brotzman, E., Dalrymple, S., Graves, N. & Bierce, C. (1966). An experimental study of nurse-physician relations. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*. 143, p. 171-180.

³² Peters, Douglas & Ceci, Stephen. (1982). Peer-review practices of the psychological journals: The fate of published articles, submitted again. *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, p. 187-195.

³³ Ross, C. (1979). *Rejected*. New West, p. 39-43.

Here is another great example of authority by public opinion. An error in Intel's Pentium chip was detected in 1994. News spread quickly about the flaw, and public backlash exploded, even more so when Intel tried to downplay the issue. It wasn't long before Intel was flooded with e-mails and phone calls requesting a no-questions-asked return policy on the microprocessor. In the heat of the whole mess, complaints peaked at 25,000 in a single day! In spite of the huge public outcry, Intel refused to offer the requested return policy. Not surprisingly, the press got wind of the story and Intel's stock dropped dramatically. Finally, Intel was forced to adopt a new return policy. What was the result of putting off public opinion for as long as they had? A mere \$475 million write-off,³⁴ that's what. In just a matter of weeks, public opinion had influenced the value of the entire company. Ignoring public opinion proved a very costly mistake for Intel.

5. Authority by External Characteristics

Some people perceive a person to be powerful because of her/his physical characteristics. For example, being tall can emit a feeling authority over another person, even before you've spoken to her/him. If you look back through history, presidential elections in the United States have been won by the taller candidate twenty out of twenty-three elections since 1900.³⁵ Another example of how height scores points is apparent in the battle for romantic affection. Research suggests that women are significantly more responsive to a man's published personal ad when he describes himself as tall.³⁶ A final example of how physical characteristics portray authoritative qualities is exhibited in our natural response to someone who has a deeper speaking voice. That is, we subconsciously respond to deeper voices as more commanding and authoritative.

Recognize that many of the things we physically possess serve as status symbols. Moreover, the more we have, the more "rich and powerful" we may be perceived by others. One study that was conducted in the San Francisco Bay area showed that people who drove expensive cars received better treatment from other drivers than those who

³⁴ Rosen, Emanuel. *The Anatomy of Buzz*. Doubleday New York. 2000, p.16.

³⁵ Lynn, M. & Shurgot, B. (1984). Responses to lonely hearts advertisement. Effects of reported physical attractiveness, physique and coloration. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, p. 349-357.

³⁶ Sheppard, J. & Strathman, A. (1989). Attractiveness and Height. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, p. 617-627.

drove more modestly priced cars. For example, researchers found that motorists waited significantly longer before honking at a new luxury car that was lingering at a green traffic light than they did at an older economy model doing the same thing. What's more, nearly all the motorists honked their horns impatiently more than one time at the cheaper car. In the case of the luxury car, 50 percent of the motorists waited respectfully, never honking at all.³⁷

Another external item of authority is exuded by our surroundings. In one study, the appearance of a professor's office changed the way a student perceived that professor. As the experiment unfolded, the students were told to meet their professor in his office. When they arrived, they found that the professor was not yet there. They were asked to wait for five minutes in his office. Some students waited in a clean and organized office, while other students waited in a dirty and disorganized office. After the five minutes had passed, the student subjects were told that the professor could not make the appointment. Later in the study, the students were asked to rate the professor based on his lecture. Researchers found that the visit to the office had a dramatic influence on the students' overall perception of their professor. More specifically, the students who visited the disorganized office rated their professor as less authoritative, less open, less trustworthy and less friendly than their peers who had visited the organized office did. Bottom line: Appearance affects your authority.

Coercive Power—Weapons of Force

Coercive Power is an individual's ability to control or force someone to comply. Such power includes intimidation, manipulation, scare tactics, threats, deceitfulness and lies. Coercive Power could come in the form of mafia protection fees, constant threats of being fired, blackmail, physical force, economic dependence or emotional control. Why do people use coercive power? Why is coerciveness the power we see most often? Because Coercive Power is the easiest power to learn and use. Many people have seen great examples of Coercive Power in their personal lives. For some, it may be the only

³⁷ Doob, A. & Cross A.(1968). Status of frustrator as an inhibitor of horn-honking response. *Journal of Social Psychology*, p. 213-218.

type of power they know. It doesn't take much talent or skill to threaten, pressure or scare someone else into submission. When people can't get compliance with their persuasive skills, most will resort to coercion. They hit desperation and frustration either because they are unable to use the higher forms of persuasion or because they lack knowledge of a better way.

Coercive Power is seductive and you usually get instant results by employing it. Coercive Power is fundamentally grounded in bringing others down instead of lifting them up to a higher level of thinking. Instead of climbing the highest mountain, Coercive Power players will climb the smallest one and then blow up all the others so they are the only one on top. Such power also requires the least amount of planning and time investment; there is no need to convince someone with words when you get immediate results with force or coercion. As the great mobster Al Capone said, "You can get more with a kind word and a gun than with a kind word alone!"

This type of power causes unwanted long-term consequences. Coercive Power is grounded in fear, and fear only lasts while the threat is present. When the threat disappears, so does the power. This type of power does not require the creation of a belief in or an inclination for true influence to work. I have seen coercion kill creativity, numb the human spirit and create resentment and rebellion. Trust me when I say that coercion will always eventually backfire.

In one study, researchers tested the use of coercive power in fraternity pledges. They wanted to see if they could get people to volunteer to perform an unpleasant task by threatening them with varying levels of punishment. A fraternity member participating in the experiment explained to his pledges that they had to help him collect research data for his psychology class. As their contribution, they would have to copy numbers for three hours straight. He explained to them that even though it would be an extremely boring and tedious task, it had to get done. If the pledges did not agree to perform the task, some were told they would be paddled (low coercion), while others were told they'd be called before a tribunal or even be restricted from joining the fraternity altogether (high

coercion). The results demonstrated that the more coercion was used, the more the pledges were dissatisfied with the assigned task, and conversely, that the less coercion was used, the more the pledges were content to comply.³⁸ When you use Coercive Power, people will resent or find more dissatisfaction in what you are forcing them to do than they would if you used some other forms of power or influence.

A study conducted by Aronson and Carlsmith researched similar issues as the one illustrated above. In a group of small children, half of the youngsters were told not to play with a certain popular toy that was placed on a nearby table. The other half were told the exact same thing, except they were threatened with the warning that playing with the toy would make their supervisor (one of the experimenters) very, very angry and upset and that they would be severely punished for doing so. The experimenter then left the room. The results of this experiment proved that the more severe the threat, the more the children readily gave up playing with the toy. When the threat was mild, however, they were more inclined to go ahead and play with the toy despite requests not to.³⁹ There is no doubt that coercive force works in the short-term. It is the long-term results that have a drastic and detrimental effect on one's ability to persuade and influence.

Legitimate Power: How to Build Loyal Followers

Legitimate Power, also known as Earned or Respect Power, is a combination of respect, reputation and one's history. Reputation is the sum total of how you have conducted yourself in your professional and personal affairs. If you have shown respect, integrity and character in all your dealings, people will know it. Legitimate Power is the type of power an individual has when s/he is placed in special regard because of her/his honorable character. As a result of being honorable, other people trust and respect these individuals and willingly follow them. This type of power is earned through one's track record, stability and use of past power. It precedes a person and remains to influence others, even when the power-holder's physical presence is gone. Legitimate Power

³⁸ Brehm, T. & Cohen, A. (1962). Explorations in Cognitive Dissonance, New York: John Wiley and Sons.

³⁹ Aronson, Elliot and Carlsmith, J.M. (1963). Effect of the severity of threat on the devaluation of forbidden behavior. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, p. 584-588.

exaggerates strengths and can create an aura about a person that instills respect, and even awe.

But more than just reputation, this power is rooted in true influence. Respect Power is the hardest of all powers to gain. It must be earned one drop at a time, but it is also the longest lasting. Respect Power exerts a sustained influence over the audience long after the speaker has physically walked away. A persuader must have honor, integrity, character and trustworthiness and must engender respect to earn Legitimate Power.

Respect Power is based on having unquestionable honor, integrity and dependability. When someone possesses Legitimate Power, her basic character is without deceit or fraud. Rather, her character is based on the truth. Such a personal commitment to integrity is felt by those around her and creates a long-term loyalty toward and respect for that individual. When people perceive their leaders as legitimate, power is granted to those leaders. People instinctively trust legitimate leaders and are thus willing to be led and persuaded by them.

Parents and religious leaders often possess this type of power. Because of their reputation, people are instantly influenced by them, without needing to analyze their message or the persuasive situation. Reputation like this wields a magical power. With one stroke of its wand, your good reputation can double your ability to persuade and influence.

Francis Bacon once said, “Knowledge itself is power.” Knowledge Power is earned Legitimate Power. It is based on the individual’s expertise in a certain subject, procedure or situation. People can be persuaded by you if they think you have more expertise in a given area than they do. For example, lawyers and doctors possess this type of power. People rely on their opinions, believe what they say and trust implicitly what they do simply because of the extent of schooling or experience they have. We accept the arguments and data of people we assume have knowledge, whether it’s real or perceived. Knowledge Power also includes experience, wisdom and intelligence.

Types of Knowledge Power: The Instant Impact of Knowledge

Informational Power – When you know something others need to know, you hold power over them. Informational Power is exerted when an institution's or individual's influence is based on the information it holds. Aristotle Onassis said, "The secret of business is to know something that no one else knows."

Resource Power – If you have access to key persons, commodities, goods or services that are valued by others, you hold some power over them. As the saying goes, "It's not what you know; it's who you know."

Expertise Power – When you have special skill sets, expertise or knowledge that others believe is relevant to their needs and which exceeds their own, they will do what you say and/or listen to your opinions.

Reward Power: Gain Willing Cooperation

Reward Power refers to the ability to deliver rewards or benefits as a means of influencing others. This type of power can come in the form of financial, material or psychological rewards. The use of Reward Power is one of the fastest ways to persuade. This power is the opposite of Coercive Power. With Coercive Power you punish, while with Reward Power you offer incentives. Reward Power is based on utility, which is an understanding that in every transaction there is a potential for exchange. Basically, utility power recognizes that there is always something I want and something you want. We can meet each other's needs by swapping what we have for what the other wants. Prizes are a form of utility power. They are a way to reward people for doing what you want them to do. With Reward Power, the reward becomes the incentive for compliant action. Examples of utilities include sales bonuses, paychecks, incentive clauses on contracts, bonus miles on airlines and bonus points on credit cards.

It is important to understand that while some incentives will work well with one person, they will not work with another. To some people, money is the reward. Still to others, recognition is the reward. As a persuader, you need to find the motivating force or reward that will work for each person you are dealing with. That is, you must understand the particular desires of the person or group. Reward Power is extremely effective in changing human behavior and in increasing your ability to persuade. When you effectively wield such power, you get what you want with minimal effort. Let's face it—everyone has a price.

There are several inefficiencies to note, however, when using rewards. First of all, keep in mind that the law of diminishing returns quickly takes over when you employ this type of power. Diminishing return means the more you use the reward, the less powerful it becomes. When people become accustomed to an incentive, they can become bored with it. Then they will either expect more or drop performance standards if the incentive is removed. One example of diminishing return is the common practice of offering elementary school children rewards for reading. Under such a program, the students win pizza or other prizes after they have read a certain number of books. Unfortunately, these incentives often backfire because many of the children think they need a reward to read. Reward Power ultimately leads to the desired outcome, but the incentive generally has to be repeated if the desired outcome is to be achieved each time. Moreover, the reward is only effective as long as the prospect doesn't see a "better deal" elsewhere. In other words, your incentive will always be compared to the next person's offer so you have to keep upping the ante. Rewards reinforce behavior, but as long as you are using them, expect your prospects/employees to keep demanding them.

Reinforcement Theory has a lot to do with both Reward Power and Coercive Power. Basically, if a person knows a positive consequence will follow a certain action, then s/he will willingly perform that action. Consequences, be they positive or negative, influence behavior. The type of consequence involved influences what actions people will take and what ones they will avoid. Three main rules of consequence exist. They are:

(1) Consequences that provide rewards increase behavior.

- (2) Consequences that provide punishments decrease behavior.
- (3) Consequences that provide neither rewards nor punishments extinguish behavior.⁴⁰

Remembering these basic rules can serve as an excellent guide for deciding what to do in certain situations, depending on the desired outcome. Just be sure you take into account some of the Reinforcement Theory's limitations. Some examples of such limitations are listed below.

Limitations of Reinforcement Theory

1. What is considered a reward or a punishment will vary according to who you're working with and what her/his exact circumstances are.
2. As mentioned earlier, rewards can lose their value over time. When that happens, instead of feeling rewarded, the person will feel like you owe her/him something.
3. Other sources of reward or punishment may interfere. For example, an employee may value the reward of esteem and friendship with other less productive employees over what you, as the employer, have to offer.
4. If a person is merely responding to a reward, then there has not really been an internal change. S/he will revert back to her/his old behavior if the reward doesn't remain part of the new routine.
5. Punishment is difficult to deliver well. It is a powerful tool, but it must be executed appropriately if it is to work right. Punishment must have the following elements to be effective: a) it must be immediate, b) it must be strong or firm, c) it must be unavoidable and d) it must be consistent.
6. Punishment can breed anger, fear and hopelessness. These negative emotions will be associated with the person inflicting the punishment.

⁴⁰ Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and Human Behavior*. New York: Macmillan.

The challenge you face when using rewards in your persuasive efforts is the decrease in internal motivation that results. Once you condition your prospects to expect something for their compliance with your request, they will continuously seek out external rewards for their behavior. This endless search for reward causes your prospects to perform your request only for the benefit you are offering as incentive and not for any other reason. We have found that even if a person were willing to exhibit the desired behavior without the reward, once the reward is given as an incentive, the subject will no longer perform the desired behavior without the reward. An experiment proved this concept.

Subjects, sitting together at a table, worked on a puzzle for half an hour. After the half hour was up, the experimenter told the subjects that the solving session was over and that they had to leave the room. The experimenters then went into the waiting room and began to monitor the behavior of the subjects. What would they do during their free time? Would they play with the puzzles? Would they choose other activities? The study found that those subjects who were paid for doing the puzzles were far less likely to play with them for fun during their free time. What's more, those who did not receive an external reward for their efforts were far more likely to play with the puzzles during their free time. Persuaders know that a behavior that is chosen out of free will last longer than a behavior that is rewarded by an external benefit.

2. Psychological Power: The Mind Game

Psychological Power is the ability to disguise what people really want from you when they are attempting to persuade or influence you. Psychological Power is based on the ability to alter an individual's perception of reality. This power (like most power) can obviously be used dishonestly. However, it is important to understand the various psychological tactics involved in persuasion so you will have a greater ability to detect people who are being dishonest or devious with you. Armed with such knowledge, you will be able to tell the difference between the Psychological Power of the salesman and the Legitimate Power of the Master Persuader.

Time Pressure

People are typically slow to make decisions because they're afraid of making mistakes. The longer someone waits, however, the more likely it becomes that they won't follow through. Procrastination, in other words, is persuasion's foe. Hence, the faster you can persuade and influence a person to make a decision, the more likely you will achieve your influential goals with him or her. Time pressure is where we get promotions like "one-day sale," and "this offer won't last long" (The Law of Scarcity). On the flip side, be sure that time constraints don't ever pressure you into an impulse decision you'll later regret. I remember once negotiating a contract for the marketing department of a big corporation. I knew the Laws of Persuasion and I knew what I wanted. I had a million other things to get done, so I felt rushed to hammer out the details of the contract that morning. The person I was negotiating with, on the other hand, was in no hurry and had nowhere to go. We bantered back and forth for six hours and still had not reached a resolution on a contract we were both happy with. In that particular case, my urgency to leave affected the terms I was finally able to get.

When we're in a hurry, we'll usually pay more to get what we need. When we need something right now, and someone has it, we will pay or do anything to get it. Think of all the convenient services that cost more. For example, the all-night convenience store charges twice as much for a gallon of milk as the grocery store down the street. Likewise, the 24-hour copy mart charges more than the traditional print service. Think about how much you paid for that book or magazine at the airport before you rushed to catch your plane. Being in a hurry definitely costs money.

Boldness

Acting with boldness will not only emit the perception of confidence to others, but it will actually help you feel more confident. What's more, you'll come across as brave and bold, and people will rally behind you. Their lack of esteem or confidence will naturally attract them to someone like you who is bold and assertive. Boldness can lead to the accomplishment of unimaginable things. Assertive and bold behavior creates self-confidence and hides our deficiencies from our audience. When you assert yourself,

people automatically assume that you know what you are doing. Boldness and assertiveness create not only authority but also often fear. This self-assuredness sends a clear message to others on how they should treat us. What's more, assertiveness creates power and enables persuasion. Shy, timid, weak people cannot persuade or change the minds of others, but bold, assertive, strong-willed people can.

A great example of what boldness and assertiveness can accomplish happened in 1925 in Paris, France. At that time, the French scrap metal owners were summoned together and taken to the nicest hotel in Paris. There, they were wined and dined and told an incredible story about the Eiffel Tower. Over the course of the meeting, the scrap metal workers found out that the tower was considered an eyesore and that the cost of maintaining it was astounding. Originally, the tower had only been intended as a temporary fixture and Paris now wanted it removed. As a result, for the next three days, city council would be taking bids for the scrap metal. A bold and assertive salesman then flashed a badge at security and took the metal owners for a tour. He was so bold and convincing that one company paid over one million U.S. dollars for the tower. Obviously, it was a scam, but they managed to repeat it when they "resold" the tower to someone else six months later.

Unpredictability

Be unpredictable. Nothing confuses a target more than unpredictability. Tornadoes, hurricanes and earthquakes are probably the most frightening events we as humans live through because of their sheer unpredictability. These phenomena don't fit comfortably into our daily routines and so they are unnerving to us. Humans are creatures of habit; we love the familiar and predictable. We love a set routine and a predictable outcome. As a result, when you, as a persuader, are predictable, your prospects feel a sense of control over you. Unpredictable and inconsistent behavior, on the other hand, keeps them off balance and guessing. We have all had a boss or parent who was unpredictable. At any given moment, we did not know if this person was going to yell at us, reward us or thank us for what we were doing. S/he spent calculated time trying to understand our next moves. This type of unpredictable power is very intimidating. What's more, it's uncontrollable.

Surprise/Distraction

People who are taken off guard or who are surprised by a request become unsure. Thanks to their lack of confidence, they will often comply with the request. You can use the surprise strategy to your persuasive advantage, because the resulting insecurity and imbalance makes your prospects more persuadable. A study by Milgram and Sabini demonstrated that people riding the New York subway were twice as likely to give up their seats to people who surprised them with the request, “May I have your seat?” as opposed to when they were told ahead of time that the person intended to ask for their seat. Fifty-six percent of surprised passengers gave up their seats compared to 28 percent of those who had been warned in advance.⁴¹

Distraction is also a form of Psychological Power. When you use distraction, your prospects’ minds are elsewhere, so you give them something to think about aside from your request. This type of Psychological Power is an unethical form of power play that you need to be aware of. Sometimes this tactic can end up putting you on the defensive, sidetracking you or getting you angry. Distraction can come in the form of dropping something, screaming, throwing insults at you to get you off track or distracting you from the real intended purpose.

Pity

Every year, Jerry Lewis hosts the muscular dystrophy telethon. Critics hate how he uses pity to raise funds, calling it demeaning and stigmatizing. Others argue, however, that the financial results far outweigh anything that could possibly be bad about it: Reaching more than 100 million viewers through 200 different channels, the telethon raises over one hundred million dollars each year.⁴²

⁴¹ Milgram, S. (1992). The individual in a social world. J. Sabini & M. Silver (Eds.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

⁴² Gass, R. & Seiter, J. *Persuasion, Social Influence and Compliance Gaining*. Allyn and Bacon Boston. 1999, p.270.

As another example, there is a crosswalk in my town where no one likes to stop for pedestrians. I'm always intrigued by what makes people stop at a crosswalk. I've noticed at this particular crosswalk that people normally just drive right through, without even noticing the pedestrians waiting to cross. One day, I suddenly noticed all of the cars stopping. I wondered what was happening until I saw an attractive college student with crutches waiting to cross the street. The power of pity pulled at the heartstrings of the usually stoic drivers and influenced them to act in her favor.

Absence

Absence really does make the heart grow fonder. Research proves that too much exposure to a product actually makes the perceived price go down. In other words, the more a product is seen, the more common it appears in the eyes of its viewers. As a result, it is rendered less valuable to the consumer. Likewise, in a social setting, the more you are seen and heard, the more common you appear.

Absence also creates value through scarcity. A real key to using the principle of absence lies in knowing when to enter and when to leave. A strong presence will draw power and attention to you, but a point is eventually reached when presence creates the opposite effect. In other words, the more you are seen and heard, the more your value decreases.

Napoleon once said, "If I am at the theater often, people will cease to notice me." Increase the value of your presence by knowing when to stay away and when to be seen. Make yourself less accessible and you will increase the value of your presence.

Space Invasion

There is a science called proxemics that studies the use of space. Each culture has unwritten rules about the use of space. If you break the rules, you make people uncomfortable, so doing so can be used to create Psychological Power. How much space people need depends upon the region(s) of the world in which they were raised. In the United States, for example, people typically stand about twenty inches apart. In South America and the Caribbean, the comfortable distance is fifteen inches for a normal

conversation. In some parts of the Middle East, personal space is so inconsequential that you can feel the other person's breath as you converse with her/him.

Being close to a person can give you more control over her/him. Think about football coaches. They get right up in their players' faces to let them know what they think. The exact same message wouldn't come across quite as strong if the coaches yelled it from even a short yard away.

When you know you have a negotiation or meeting to spearhead, see if it can take place on your home turf. If you're in your own office or some environment you're familiar with, you'll feel more in control of the situation and more collected. It's like a sports team's "home field advantage." If the meeting has to take place elsewhere, see if you can spend some time there in advance to familiarize yourself with the area ahead of time.

Power

These five forms of power increase your ability to persuade and influence others. Obviously, some forms are better and more ethical than others. Analyze each persuasive situation to see who has what forms of power. How can this power be used? Can it be used for or against me? Remember, power is neutral, so use it wisely.

How to Increase Persuasion with Humor

“It has always surprised me how little attention philosophers have paid to humor since it is a more significant process of mind than reason. Reason can only sort out perceptions, but the humor process is involved in changing them.” – Edward de Bono

Humor’s Role in the Persuasion Process

Many people take for granted the powerful persuading influence of humor. Humor is often tossed off as sheer entertainment or mere speech filler. The truth is, when you engage an audience with humor, you are accomplishing much more than just getting a laugh out of them. Humor disarms an audience, making them more likely to open up to you. Once your prospects feel comfortable with you, they will be more in tune to your message and more likely to remain attentive. Audience members usually *like* and are *drawn* to a person who can make them laugh, helping them become more receptive. And perhaps most powerful of all, in our fast-paced culture where most things are fleeting, they remember you and continue to hold you in a positive light long after the initial exchange. When you leverage the element of humor, any message coming from you receives more weight than one that comes from someone who has *not* created the audience rapport you have achieved. All people’s minds wander from time to time. Humor not only reels them back in but it also reenergizes their soul.

The use of humor can divert your audience’s attention from negative thoughts or it can counter an argument that is playing in their minds. Humor can also distract your audience’s tendency to overanalyze your message. Humor can even win over and disarm your audience. Herbert Gardner said, “Once you’ve got people laughing, they’re listening and you can tell them almost anything.” Understand that you can have a serious message without having to make the entire presentation serious. People hope and expect to be entertained while they listen. If they are not listening, they are not going to be persuaded. Your audience, be it comprised of one or one hundred individuals, will appreciate a moment to smile or laugh in this serious world they live in.

The actor John Cleese once said, “If I can get you to laugh with me, you like me better, which makes you more open to my ideas. And if I can persuade you to laugh at the particular point I make, by laughing at it you acknowledge its truth.” Understanding the value of humor in a persuasive context gives you tremendous leverage. Your task is to not only realize humor’s profound influence but also to develop the skills necessary to be able to use humor in a powerful and ethical way. As you become more and more skilled at incorporating it into your presentations, you will discover that humor almost always has a place. It doesn’t matter if you’re talking to an audience of two hundred people or you’re having an intimate discussion with your spouse. It matters not if you’re seeking to sway the favor of corporate executives or trying to convince your well-meaning but shortsighted teenager. Consider the following uses of humor in everyday situations, for groups or an individual, in formal or informal situations.

Humor During Your Presentation...

- Eases Emotional Pain
- Creates a Positive Environment
- Generates Interest in What You Are Saying
- Helps Your Listeners Sense Your Goodwill
- Increases Participation

Humor Will Help Your Message...

- Reveal Important Truths
- Become More Memorable
- Make Difficult Topics More Accessible
- Bring Needed Entertainment
- Strike an Emotional Chord

Humor Will Help You Do the Following with Your Audience...

- Ease Their Tensions
- Put Them in a Good Mood

- Disarm Them
- Maintain Their Attention
- Enhance Their Receptivity

Humor Will Help You...

- Increase Your Likeability
- Establish Rapport
- Increase People's Trust in You
- Enhance Your Image
- Strengthen Your Relationships
- Boost Your Own Confidence

The list could go on and on, but this should begin to give you a sense of just how far-reaching and consequential the use of humor can be.

Techniques for Connecting with Humor

Can you think of a time when you or someone you knew heard a really funny story and then tried to tell it to someone else without evoking a single chuckle? Instead of peals of laughter, you got the old "Guess you had to be there" response. Why is it that the exact same story is hilarious in one instance and bland in another? It all has to do with the delivery. There are many different elements that factor into making humor work. Timing, gestures and facial expressions, vocal tone and inflection, and the setting are examples of just some of the things that should always be considered when delivering a shot of humor. Gestures and facial and vocal expression are things you have direct control over and should be amply practiced. If you are willing to exercise the discipline to rehearse in front of a mirror, or even better, in front of a video camera, you can then step back and observe yourself. In so doing, you will reach a greater degree of mastery.

A critical part of your preparation is to know your audience. Often, understanding the basic attributes that your audience members have in common will give you clues as to what sort of humor might work with them. For example, if you are talking to business

people, workplace humor may likely strike a chord. If you are talking to moms, on the other hand, you might center your humor on keeping up with all the demands of home and family. Similarly, coaches and athletes would appreciate sports humor. You need to ask yourself, “What are the commonalities among these individuals that bring them all together to hear the same speech? What would be funny to *this* particular group of people?” The more you know about your audience, the better you’ll be able to connect with them. And the more you can bring yourself onto their turf, the more apt they will be to identify with you and to respond to your message. As the late Victor Borge once said, “Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.”

Sometimes humor will come to you off-the-cuff. This element of spontaneity can be very effective, but depending on the situation, it must often be planned for and implemented with care. This advice holds especially true when introducing a topic that you hope will really resonate with your audience by the end of your presentation. Spontaneous humor is an opportunity to gain instant rapport, one that should not be passed up. William Norwood Brigance wrote:

The humorous introduction needs careful handling. Humor is invaluable for establishing friendship with the audience. It also establishes a part of the speaker’s prestige, shows whether he is a sympathetic human being, a dull bore or a stuffed shirt. We might say that, as an operating rule, every speech, excepting on solemn or state occasions, needs humor at the start in order to establish rapport between speaker and audience.

You can see that the proper use of humor in your introduction is crucial. Your opener is where you set the stage, create the mood and get your audience ready to laugh. It sets up the rest of your delivery. Once you’ve successfully launched your presentation, you will want to continue using humor throughout. Sometimes, you will use humor to change your pace and re-center your audience’s focus. Other times, you may use it to underscore a key point, to lighten the mood or to simply maintain rapport. Don’t despair if everyone does

not laugh. In fact, many people won't laugh, but they will still be smiling on the inside. A physical or mental smile also helps during the persuasion process.

When preparing humorous material, it is worthwhile to take a step back and review the structure of a well-told joke or story. There are four basic components to effective humor: the introduction, the groundwork, the build-up and the punch line. Similar to introducing a topic at the beginning of a speech, the introduction to a joke or story grabs the audience's attention and prepares them for what is to follow. You want them to be listening attentively and expectantly before diving into your humorous material. Try to make your introduction succinct.

When you know you've got their attention, transition into laying your humor's groundwork. This involves setting the scene, painting the picture and unrolling the storyline that will ultimately lead up to the punch line. In this phase, try to draw your audience in to the situation as much as possible. Make it as vivid and descriptive as possible so they can readily place themselves in the scenario you are depicting. Be careful that you don't spend too much time on the groundwork or rush to the next stage. Even if you've told this joke/story a hundred times before, keep in mind that it's the first time this audience is hearing it. Pace yourself so the humor will be effective and produce the desired results.

As the plot progresses and you build up to your story's climax, you transition again. At this point, you want your audience to be intensely interested in what is going to happen. A sense of tension has to exist before the resolution. Utilize the element of drama to evoke as much anticipation as possible. Finally, give your audience the punch line. Most effective punch lines contain some element of surprise. There has to be some kind of twist to your joke's conclusion so you keep your audience guessing. Nothing diffuses the impact of a joke more than if people know all along what the punch line is going to be. Make the punch line short and to the point. Your efforts will fizzle if your audience has to sit there and try to figure it out.

Read the following story and see if you can identify the four different components of an effective joke or story: Communication is critical to any relationship. Even married couples who have been together for years need to communicate their expectations of each other. Communication is a lifelong process. That reminds me of an old friend I used to work with who was the quiet type. He never said much, but he always got the job done. He was a dedicated worker and had been married for over twenty years. When he won the \$20,000,000 lottery, the news traveled around his workplace like wildfire. When he regained his composure, he called his wife, who still didn't know what was going on. The phone rang and rang until at last she finally picked up. He told her that he'd won the \$20,000,000 lottery and would be cleaning out his office and saying good-bye to his coworkers. He instructed her that she should also get her things packed right away. His wife was thrilled over the prospect of celebrating and wondered where he would take her—Alaska? Mexico? She was eager to get packing and asked him where they were going to go. The new millionaire happily remarked, “You can go wherever you want, as long as you're gone when I get home!”

Other Factors Influencing the Impact of Humor in Persuasion

There are a lot of factors that contribute to whether or not humor will be effective in persuading someone. Often, it will simply be the mood or situation that makes it obvious whether humor is appropriate or not. For example, if someone has just learned of a death in her family, you probably shouldn't start cracking jokes. Another example would be if you were speaking in a religious setting where there was an expectation that a certain degree of reverence always be maintained. You probably wouldn't go wild with the humor in this kind of setting. The appropriateness of humor for a particular setting or mood is usually not too difficult to discern. You just have to be observant. What may be funny to one person one day will not be funny the next, even if it's the exact same joke told in the exact same way. Humor's effectiveness will always ride the emotional tides of your audience members. How well a joke goes over may depend on whose company your prospects are in, whether they are winding down for the day or still up against deadlines or other workplace pressures, whether they are awake and alert or feeling drowsy,

whether they have a headache, etc. Always be in tune with how your audience is feeling and always assess the atmosphere you're in to determine whether it is conducive to humor.

There are many other less apparent factors that influence humor. Have you ever considered factors such as what time of day it is, the number of people in your audience or even the layout and lighting of the room? All of these things can influence how your humor will come across. As far as time of day, mornings are typically more stressful, since it is then when most people are confronted with all the demands that await them. Under certain circumstances, this stressfulness may be precisely the type of mood you're looking for. Other times, you may want an audience that's a little more relaxed. When people are on a lunch break or winding down for the day and readying themselves to leave work, you may find that they are more receptive to a good joke.

When considering the size of your audience, the general rule of thumb is "the bigger, the better." That is, the bigger your audience, the more laughter you will typically get. Why is this? It's because laughter is contagious. The more people involved, the more we laugh. For example, when a movie theater is packed, the laughter tends to be greater and last longer than when there are only four people in the audience. This is one of the reasons why TV producers use canned laughter in their programming. Often the scenario being acted out really isn't even that funny, but studies show that the use of laugh tracks actually gets us to laugh more. Whether the material even registered as being funny or not, we are more inclined to laugh along if we hear others laughing.

Knowledge of this tendency can give you a real advantage when considering the layout of the room you'll be speaking in. Notice the seating arrangement. How many people are expected to show up compared to how many chairs are set up? Always make sure there are less chairs set up than there are people expected. If audience members sit closer together, it will be easier to get the energy going and evoke more laughter than it would be if they were spread out all over the room. A seemingly sparse audience will surely dampen humor's designed effect. A more compact seating arrangement will not only help

people laugh more freely and more often, but it will also give off the illusion of greater attendance. Another consideration is the lighting of your speaking area. The audience's ability to see your facial expressions and body language is of prime importance.

The Use of Persuasive Humor in the “Real World”

Humor's catalytic effects make it a popular tool in countless “real life” situations. I already cited the example of canned laughter in sitcoms. When two audiences have been shown the same show, the only difference being the presence or lack of canned laughter, the one that hears the laughter always laughs longer and more frequently. Why are producers interested in the quality of the laughs they're evoking? One word: ratings. Humor, in fact, can be powerful in practically any marketing situation. Television commercials and print advertising are often designed to make us laugh. It is likely that if you find a commercial to be really funny, you'll remember the chuckle it produced when you see the advertised product in the store. If nothing else, the commercial or ad will be memorable, and each time you recall it, it will cultivate and strengthen positive associations with the product being advertised.

All of these efforts are worthwhile to the marketer because s/he knows it is only a matter of time before the cumulative effect of humorous messaging will compel you to buy. How about salespeople? Have you ever had a salesperson who was a real jokester? Often, salespeople use humor to get a prospect to relax, open up and connect. This strategy works, too. If the salesperson gets us laughing along, we like them and we feel like we're having a good time. We're glad for a sales representative who appreciates our needs and concerns but who can also take the stress and anxiety out of making an important purchase. These effects, all wrought by the salesperson's use of humor, bring down our guards and make us more inclined to be influenced. You might think you are funny, but you could be annoying your prospects. We have all met someone who thought he was funny but did not even make us smile. Remember that when you use humor, your prospect will either laugh with you or feel sorry for you. Make sure all your humor is tested and your prospects are in the mood for it.

No matter how much you prepare or practice, sometimes your story or joke will bomb. Even if it has worked in the past, sometimes, depending on the audience and the circumstances, the story or joke just won't go over well. You have to be able to handle yourself after the bomb, perhaps using even more humor to make fun of yourself. For example, I have heard the following comebacks:

If silence is golden, that joke must be worth about \$100,000.

That story/joke takes a while to sink in. Around two A.M., that's going to seem so funny that you won't be able to go back to sleep.

Blame someone in the audience or the writers for the failed joke/story.

OK, here is another joke you might not care for.

That was a joke designed to get a silent laugh...and it worked.

Many of you look a little puzzled. You don't know if I was making a serious point or making fun. (pause) You know, to tell the truth, I don't know either.

You may have heard about the slow but sure movement of "humor in hospitals." The trend continues to grow as healthcare professionals become more and more convinced of humor's therapeutic power. Another reason for comedy's popularity is that it buffers the growing sentiment that hospitals are becoming more and more depersonalized in their handling of patient care, focusing instead on more technology and other medical advancements. Advocates swear by humor's tendency to shorten hospital stays and reduce the need for medications.

"Humor in hospitals" takes on many forms, including the very popular volunteer clowns, "humor carts" bearing funny audio and videotapes, cartoons, games and other funny

props, and even entire rooms devoted to humor and fun. Remember the movie *Patch Adams*? Hunter “Patch” Adams, the actual pediatric physician on whom the movie was based, made it a common practice to wear his clown suit—red rubber nose and all—as he made his rounds. Adams, still active in promoting humor in the healing process, says, “Joy is more important than any other drug.”

There are countless other examples of humor’s use in the “real world.” Whether you’re trying to persuade or not, humor generates high spirits and goodwill. Thus, it has an overall powerful, positive impact on an entire organization. In myriad industries, human resources departments use humor to retain employees, to boost morale and to stimulate productivity. Teachers use humor in the classroom to engage students, to increase comprehension, to generate greater participation and to make the learning process more enjoyable. Parents, coaches, religious youth group leaders, bosses, managers and other teachers and leaders all have plenty of use for humor in their interactions with those they have responsibility over.

Best Resources for Humorous Material

I would say that your number one resource for funny material is yourself. When searching for comedic stories, think back on your own life experiences. Often those embarrassing moments and awkward scenarios provide excellent, true-to-life humor that people can appreciate, relate to and enjoy. Such personal stories are doubly effective when they underscore a key point you’re trying to make to your audience or when they offer a lesson to be learned from the experience. Other definite perks of using your own stories include the fact that the material is truly authentic and original. Even if it’s a common experience in the human family, your personal account will never be “worn out.” As you go about your daily tasks, always be aware that the situation you find yourself in at any given moment may have some humor in it. You should always carry around a little pocket notepad and pen with you to capture ideas and insights when they occur.

The next best source for humorous material is friends and family. Again, their stories are the kind you know are genuine and that people are likely to respond to. The beauty of firsthand and secondhand accounts is that people can readily put themselves in the situation or imagine someone else close to them in the situation. If it's *real*, it's not ever going to come across as dry, manufactured or "trying too hard." Take the time to ask parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, friends, etc. about funny stories and experiences, and literally start building a "humor database." Sometimes gathering others' stories is easier to do with a handheld recorder than trying to write everything down. Whatever the method you opt for, get started today. The more stories you have up your sleeve, the more prepared you will be.

What makes people laugh? What can you use to create humor during a presentation? There are a variety of ways in which you can spice up a presentation with a few laughs and smiles. You can use a joke, a story, an embarrassing moment, an exaggeration, a pun, irony, self-depreciation, a metaphor, a put-down, silliness, surprise, an anecdote, satire, the one-liner, innuendo, an embellished story, a witticism or even an outrageous statement. Humor really works well when you catch someone off guard, especially with exaggeration. For example, "It was so cold in NY that the Statue of Liberty was holding the torch under her skirt." Even a little embellishment can go a long way. Notice in the local newspaper: "Missing dog, right ear missing; broken left leg; half of tail gone; recently neutered. Answers to the name of Lucky." What about the shocking statement: "If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments."

TV comedians do the put-down very well, but if you follow their strategy, you have to be cautious you do not offend your audience. David Letterman once said, "Fall is my favorite season in LA, watching the birds change color and die." Keep watch and you will find plenty of material to spice up your presentations. Another example of effective humor lies in the way you say things. That is, the way you package your words. Don't just call someone dumb, stupid or less than intelligent. Instead, you might use the following:

- ❑ Got a full six-pack, but lacks the plastic to hold it all together.
- ❑ Gates are down, the lights are flashing, but the train isn't coming.
- ❑ Most drink from the fountain of knowledge; he only gargled.
- ❑ Got into the gene pool while the lifeguard wasn't watching.
- ❑ The wheel is spinning, but the hamster's dead.
- ❑ If brains were taxed, he'd get a rebate.
- ❑ Studied for a blood test and failed.
- ❑ Dumber than a box of hair.
- ❑ Sharp as a marble.

Inspiration may also come from cartoons, comics, humor websites, books, comedy sketches/audios and movies. Immerse yourself in anything where you think you might find humor you can adapt to your needs. Take advantage of what's there. If you check your local university, you may be surprised by some of the public-speaking arena offerings. The National Speakers Association also offers classes, some dealing exclusively with humor. Often, cartoons can be an effective presentation medium if you can use PowerPoint or an overhead projector. There are many websites that allow you to search for cartoons by keyword or topic and then immediately download them for your own personal use. Sometimes you have to get permission or pay a small fee, but if you know a cartoon will elicit laughs, it's definitely worth it. Here are some of my personal favorite websites:

www.cartoonbank.com

www.comics.com

www.dilbert.com

www.cartoons.com

www.glasbergen.com

Other favorites I can recommend are Jerry Seinfeld, Bill Cosby, Tim Allen and Dave Barry for comedians and *Dilbert*, *The New Yorker*, *Calvin and Hobbes* and *The Far Side* for comic strips.

Humor to Help Others Feel Happier

In our modern, fast-paced but tension-filled world, consider the popularity of or emphasis on such things as psychological care, anti-anxiety and anti-depression medications, treatments, spas, vacation getaways, etc. In this age of “self-help,” self-improvement seminars and workshops of all sorts abound. They may take on any one of many different possible forms: public speaking, fashion, wellness, sales, parenting, education, finances, etc. Whatever subjects these workshops address, in the end, they all aim to help people feel better about themselves. It is essential that you know this at the outset. Many people come to hear presentations to feel better about themselves, their lives and their circumstances. They may not even overtly realize or intend this, but seminar attendees certainly don't attend in the hopes of feeling *worse*. You want to be sure your message will give your audience that boost they need to take the next step. You want them to come away with a fresh perspective that inspires them and makes them hopeful. This is yet another area where humor can be a powerful ally.

People coming to hear you speak all have concerns and stresses they will return to when they leave your presentation. Think of your humor as having a therapeutic effect that will give your audience members the fortification and uplifting they need to confront their challenges. Dwight D. Eisenhower said, “Laughter can relieve tension, soothe the pain of disappointment and strengthen the spirit for the formidable tasks that always lie ahead.” Through your presentation, you are providing a time and place where distressing emotions are replaced with positive ones. It is very unlikely that your prospects will feel angry, depressed, anxious, guilty or resentful and enjoy your humor at the same time. Your humor can have a domino goodwill effect in instilling positive, happy emotions in your audience members. If you can help them to feel happier, in turn, you will open the locked doors of persuasion and influence with your prospects. Goldie Hawn once said, “Comedy breaks down walls. It opens up people. When you become good, you can fill up those openings with something positive. Maybe you can combat some of the ugliness in the world.” Humor also increases energy and productivity, which will feed your prospects' positive emotions even more.

By the time a child reaches nursery school, s/he will be laughing about 300 times a day. How about adults? Do you have a guess? Adults laugh an average of only 17 times per day. Make it your goal to change this statistic. If you can teach others to see the lighter side of life, even in their day-to-day situations, you will give them the key to feeling greater happiness more readily and more often. All aspects of their lives will be enhanced, simply by virtue of their new, positive outlook. I cannot think of a greater reward as a speaker/trainer. You can improve lives and make the world a better place.

Humor is both an art and a science. Like any skill, it can be learned and mastered, but only with consistent practice. Sometimes you may fail, but keep at it until you have harnessed the power to make others laugh. Then, others will always feel good when they are in your presence. They will also take what you have to say more seriously. Humor will give you the power to motivate and influence others in a productive, positive way.

Present with Passion, Compassion and Purpose

“If all my talents and powers were to be taken from me by some inscrutable Providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the power of speaking, for through it I would quickly recover all the rest.”

Daniel Webster

Have you happened to notice the dramatic changes that have evolved in training and teaching over the last twenty years? The basic focus used to be to educate. Now, the latest research is all about how to grab the attention of and maintain the interest of your audience. We can no longer focus simply on educating; we must now *entertain*. Why? Because our audience members’ attention spans are getting shorter and shorter, so to keep their limited attention they must be kept entertained. Nowadays, you have only fifteen to thirty seconds to create a powerful, positive first impression before your audience begins to tune you out. Today, the process of combining education with entertainment is called “edutainment.” Like it or not, today’s media-influenced culture breeds listeners who want to be entertained. I’m not saying that you’ve got to go out and learn how to juggle swords and swallow fire if you want to garner your prospects’ attention, but it’s paramount to your livelihood as a speaker and teacher to be engaging. Long gone are the days of counting on the subject matter to speak compellingly for itself, compensating for your inadequacies as a presenter. Nowadays, you’ve got to get inside of your prospects’ minds, and you’ve got to get there fast—before you’re even into the heart of your message. When asked what they thought made their managers most effective, 90 percent of all respondents mentioned communication and presentation skills. This tendency reveals how truly critical a life skill effective communication really is.

What are the key ingredients that will make you an engaging, compelling and persuasive speaker? How can you educate, inspire and entertain with passion, compassion and purpose? In this chapter, I’m going to take you through the five most critical components of a powerful presentation. They are what are known as the five Ps: psyche, preparation,

presentation skills, people skills and persuasion. Let's start with the first major component.

Psyche

Above all, you must approach becoming and being a powerful presenter with the right mindset. There are many factors that play into this strategy, but two of the most crucial ones are visualization and the nature of fear. Visualization refers to what I like to call "mental programming." I call it mental programming because I believe that you can literally program your mind to achieve certain goals, thereby controlling much of what actually happens. So much of what is manifested on the outside reflects what's going on in the inside. These days, this statement is almost beginning to sound a little cliché, but I still hold firmly to the belief that it is indeed the case, perhaps sometimes more than we'd like to admit. Think of any successful Olympic athlete. S/he has seen her/his victories over and over again in her/his mind, long before the world ever saw them. Psychologists believe that the subconscious mind cannot differentiate between that which is real and that which is vividly imagined. Therefore, whatever you consistently and vividly rehearse in your head, your subconscious will accept as the truth.

So you see, "mental programming" is actually quite a literal thing. You can also see how it can be either a very powerful tool or a very dangerous one. Where are your thoughts taking you? What kinds of messages do you play over and over again to yourself? Mental programming has too powerful and too direct of an impact on your behavior to not take it seriously. How does all this apply to public speaking? Practice your presentation in your mind. Visualize your perfect performance mentally before you do it physically. Program even the smallest details, like your gestures or how you will tilt your head and raise your eyebrow when you make that certain point. Also envision your audience and how they will positively respond to you. You would be amazed at how things actually play out as precisely as you imagined they would. Choose to have the right mindset. Just remember that your thoughts control your emotions and your emotions control your actions. Don't plant that negative thought in your mind.

I want to spend a moment analyzing the nature of fear. Fear is so debilitating, and yet it is so prevalent. I would say, in fact, that it is probably the number one obstacle standing in the way of having a solid, positive mental mindset. Yet when its true nature is revealed, we are no longer bound by the mental and emotional limitations it imposes upon us. What are our most common fears when it comes to public speaking? That people will think we're stupid, that our message will be criticized or rejected, that we'll freeze up and forget what we're supposed to say. I want you to think about this fear thing from another perspective. Can you imagine members of your audience sitting out there saying, "I hope he does a terrible job," or "I hope she is really dry and boring," or "I hope he gets nervous"? Do you see how ridiculous this line of reasoning is? No one out there is hoping for your demise.

Of course, I'm being a little facetious here, but really, can you recall a time when you heard a speaker or a musical performer who really didn't do a good job? Perhaps the performer even performed terribly. When you witnessed her/his failure, you probably actually felt pained, didn't you? If the performer feels awkward and uncomfortable, then you as an audience member do, too. And who wants to feel like that? Your audience really does *want* you to do a great job. They want to hear a presentation that is engaging and credible, exciting and solid. Furthermore, consider the fact that they have made an investment of time, money or both into attending your presentation and would, therefore, be totally entitled to *expect* you to do a fantastic job. Sometimes something as simple as realizing that your audience really is rooting for you can go a long way toward alleviating your fear.

Laliaphobia is the fear of public speaking, an affliction with which most of us are faced at one point or another in our lives. Here's another thing to consider when it comes to fear: Many believe that public speaking is universally regarded as the number one most common fear. On the other hand, however, we also know that human beings' only *inborn* fears—that is, the only fears they have as newborn infants—are loud noises and falling. Any other fear is *learned*. Think about that for a minute. Any other fear you can possibly

think of is learned. Do you realize what a powerful realization this is? I use the term powerful to describe it because if you can learn it, you can also *unlearn* it.

Recall the mental programming we talked about. You have the power to rewire your thoughts and beliefs. You're only afraid of public speaking (or anything else for that matter) if you tell yourself you are. I'm not saying fears aren't real and that eradicating them is so simple that they can just be swooshed away by the wand of "happy thoughts." An in-depth discussion of the intense psychological therapy that may be involved in resolving traumatic, deep-rooted fears is beyond the scope of this manual, but I truly do believe that the basic premise that "what the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve" holds true.

I want you to now focus on what is driving your fear of speaking. Think about the first time you felt fear over getting up in front of a crowd. What triggered this learned fear? The moment you can realize why you feel this fear, you can change your future. Why are you so concerned about what people think? So what if they judge or criticize you. They aren't thinking about you or judging you as much as you think they are. In fact, Napoleon Hill said, "The fear of criticism robs man of his initiative, destroys his power of imagination, limits his individuality and takes away his self-reliance." Focus on a great presentation, not on whether people will criticize you. You will quit caring about what others think of you when you realize how little they actually do think about you.

Understand that you must never plant the seed of nervousness in your prospects. What I mean by this is that you must never tell your audience you feel uneasy or nervous. The moment you spill the beans, they will start to look for evidence of your nervousness. Ninety-nine percent of the time, your audience has no clue how nervous you really are. Don't expect perfection the first time you speak. In fact, I have never seen a perfect presentation. Nervousness is normal. Everyone feels it before a presentation. In fact, a great presenter once said, "It is OK to have butterflies; you just need to get them to fly in formation." You are the master of your domain.

I remember my very first speaking engagement. I was excited but also a little nervous. You know, I was faced with some of the common fears we just discussed. Even though we may know that many of our fears are most likely not ever going to actually happen, they still have a way of trying to take center stage right before we get on stage. Anyway, back to my first public speaking engagement—the sound crew had put my microphone (lavaliere) on. I was pacing back and forth, with a few minutes still left to go, so I decided to visit the men’s restroom. When I came out, I realized that my microphone had been and still was live and that all that business in the restroom had echoed throughout the whole audience. Another time, I had to give a very long presentation. I was getting toward the end without incident but still had quite a bit to go. I was feeling fatigued, so I paused to take a drink of water. Well, to make a long story short, the liquid went down the wrong pipe and in a coughing, gasping spasm, I sprayed the whole front row with water. And yes, in regards to the classic speaker’s screw-up, I have tripped and fallen on my face. My point in sharing these personal bloopers with you is to help you see that even when you make mistakes, it’s OK. In spite of the momentary mortification, it’s a learning experience. You will get past it, and believe it or not, it is something that later you will very likely actually find humorous. Better yet, it provides you with humorous presentation examples the next time you’re in front of an audience, just as I’m doing right now.

If you’re serious about being the best you can possibly be, you owe it to yourself to really take ownership of where you’re at and where you’re headed. To accomplish this objective, put yourself in the seat of an audience member. Do you have any irritating body language? How is your vocal projection? Do you need to sound more animated? All in all, are you someone you would want to listen to for any period of time? Additionally, it is important to read relevant books, attend enrichment seminars, listen to cutting-edge audio programs, etc. In a nutshell, immerse yourself in the world in which you want to excel. This kind of intense focus will yield vast improvement in your persuasive capabilities. Lastly, always remember that improvement is a process. While you will have “aha!” moments, where something will suddenly click, your complete transformation will not happen overnight. Stretch yourself, but be realistic.

Often, honing a new skill is like exercising for the first time after a five-year hiatus. That is, there's some definite discomfort at first. Developing public speaking and presentation skills is no different. After you start mastering those skills, it feels great. But how do you get to that point? You've really got to treat yourself as a do-it-yourself. A simple strategy is to videotape yourself when you speak. As tedious or even painful as it may be to do so, you will gain valuable insights from watching yourself, insights that can be harnessed in no other way. Feedback from any other source will be helpful, but it will always be secondhand.

Preparation

Once you get your mindset on the right track, you must turn your focus toward preparing for your presentation. There are many factors that go into your preparation. Obviously, you must have your message prepared, but there are many other things to consider as well. For example, you have to know as much as you possibly can about the people who will comprise your audience. You must uncover what their interests and expectations are. You must also take into consideration where you'll be speaking, what time of day it will be and what logistical and technical considerations may play a role. Perhaps most important of all, you must know the members of your audience as intimately as possible. Your whole objective is to effectively and successfully get a specific point across to them. Hence, you must first understand to whom it is you're presenting and where they're at, philosophically, in relation to your point. The more information you have at your disposal, the more effective your persuasive attempts will be. Consider the following list of questions when striving to learn more about your audience:

1. What is their common background or interest that brings them together to hear you speak?
2. Who are these people as individuals (business professionals, students, mothers, etc.)?
3. Will your audience tend to be more one gender than the other, or will they be pretty equally mixed?

4. Do you need to be aware of their political, religious, professional or other associations?
5. What will their average education and/or income level be?
6. What topic can you speak about that they will universally care about and understand?
7. What types of things would they be looking to get out of your message?
8. In terms of your key point(s), are they likely to agree, disagree or be indifferent?
9. What is their general age range?
10. Will they tend to be more conservative or liberal in their life views?
11. Is this likely to be an easygoing or more demanding type of crowd?
12. How long will you be likely to keep them engaged? How much time is even permissible?

These types of questions will allow you to customize your presentation to your audience. Obviously, you will not present to a board of college professors in the same way you would address a group of inner-city youth. After you've discovered all that you can about your audience, you begin to tailor and customize your message and decide exactly how to present it. This process is a simple formula, really: discover, design and deliver. So, once you know all there is to know about your audience, you must then figure out how to organize your presentation in the most appropriate fashion. Again, when doing so, there is plenty to consider. Think about the following ideas when you are in the "structure and design" mode of your persuasive message:

1. How much time is allotted for you to speak?
2. What will the setting be (auditorium, office, classroom, etc.)?
3. How large will your audience be?
4. Will you be speaking from a platform in front of a microphone, or will you be sitting in an intimate circle?
5. What time of day will it be? Will your audience be tired, refreshed, hungry, preoccupied, etc.? Should you/can you consider scheduling a break in your presentation?

6. Will there be any possible distractions that you can avoid by knowing about them in advance? For example, noise from neighboring rooms, outside distractions, children, traffic volume as people move from one room to another, sunlight producing too much glare, etc.
7. Can you inspect the presentation venue ahead of time? Where will you present from and what will your audience's seating situation be?
8. What equipment will be accessible, if needed, like an overhead projector, a portable microphone, a flip chart, a blackboard or a dry erase board (along with chalk or markers), etc.?
9. What kind of sound system will be used, if any? Can you come to the venue early to do a sound check and familiarize yourself with the equipment?

Another crucial part of the “design” phase in the discover–design–deliver formula is the crafting of your actual message. What is a good outline for the message itself? The first area of concern is your opening. How do you grab your audience's interest within the first fifteen to thirty seconds? In this brief window of opportunity, you must also introduce your topic. In other words, what is the issue being discussed?

Once you've engaged your audience's attention with a solid opener, the body of your presentation becomes the next most important phase. It should provide relevant information and provoke discussion (if appropriate) about the issue at hand. In so doing, it should progressively lead up to your solution or key point. After you've stressed your key point or presented your solution—whichever format is most appropriate to the situation—you then conclude your presentation by summarizing the key points. Finally, you clearly and *concisely* issue your audience a “call to action.” In other words, what exactly are you telling them to do once they walk away from your talk? Your call to action should be straightforward, easy to remember and easy to carry out. When issuing it, you must empower your audience to want to do exactly what it is you want them to do. Confidence and conviction during your call to action is a critical persuasive component. The effectiveness of your call to action is all about how the audience perceives you. Because it is such a crucial component, I would suggest that you write your call to action

before beginning any other phase of your presentation. When doing so, ask yourself what exactly it is you want your audience to do upon completion of your presentation and then build your presentation around the answer.

I recommend sticking closely to this outline, or a similar variation, when preparing for any persuasive speech. You must keep your presentation cohesive and easy to follow. Experts say that you forget 80 percent of everything you've heard within twenty-four hours of hearing it. With odds like that stacked against you, you really can't afford for your presentation *not* to be cohesive and easy to follow. To make your presentation even more effective, consider stressing a main theme and then reiterating it via three to five main points throughout your presentation. The human mind loves theme and repetition. Of course, I'm not saying you should be redundant. For variety, you can underscore key points in different ways, but all the spokes of your "wheel of evidence" should point back to the same hub. Repetition increases awareness, attention and comprehension.

Do you remember the infamous OJ Simpson trial? The thing we will all always remember about that courtroom drama is the line, "If the glove doesn't fit, you must acquit." With that simple repeated phrase, defense attorney Johnnie Cochran created an unforgettable line that he knew would lock itself in the jury members' minds. Gerry Spence, a commentator during the OJ trial who is widely heralded as "America's Finest Trial Lawyer," has never lost a case. One of the reasons he has maintained a flawless record is because he always presents a crystal-clear theme that he knows will resonate with his audience. One of his most famous cases involved the defense of a bankrupt family-owned ice cream business in a suit against McDonald's over breach of an oral contract. His theme? "Let's put honor back in the handshake." In their defenses, Cochran and Spence were both on to the same winning technique: A common and memorable theme that is backed by supporting material and that is organized into three to five main points is a surefire strategy for getting your message across clearly, easily and easier to remember.

You will feel more confident in yourself and your message when you find ways to rehearse and practice your speaking before you actually get in front of an audience. When you know your introduction like the back of your hand, you develop more confidence. When you are prepared, the fear of the public-speaking situation erodes away. If you want to dazzle your audience, make your topic dance in front of them. I believe there is no such thing as a boring topic; there are only boring speakers. Here are some ways to increase your confidence and your ability to present with power.

- ❑ Practice in front of a mirror.
- ❑ Get familiar with the location where you will be speaking.
- ❑ Videotape yourself and watch for ways to improve.
- ❑ Test all your stories and jokes on a neutral audience.
- ❑ Visualize your success before the presentation.

Structuring Winning Arguments

Why should we be concerned with the structure of an argument? Well, all effective persuasive messages have several vital pieces of information. Just as Plato stated that every message should have a structure like an animal (head, body and feet), so too must our arguments follow an understandable pattern. A confused mind says “no.” If the audience can’t follow your facts or the substance of your message, then their brains will not accept your message. That’s because there is no clear message to accept.

At one time or another, you have probably been in a classroom where the teacher has completely lost you. You had no idea where the topic was going or where it had been. When this happens, your mind stalls and the learning process stops. Confusion is a state of mind that creates tension. We all hate to be confused. When, as persuaders, we create this mental confusion in our audience, we are shooting ourselves in the foot. Most uneducated “rookie persuaders” follow Harry Truman’s advice: “If you can’t convince ’em, confuse ’em.” This manual aims to help you avoid making such a mistake in your persuasive efforts.

Before we jump into the meat of this topic, remember as you prepare your persuasive message that you want to focus on one defined issue. Keep in mind that you are not there to persuade your audience on ten different points. Stay focused and steer clear of sensitive issues that aren't integral to your original agenda. In other words, don't inadvertently offend your audience on one issue when your focus is on another. The structure of your persuasive message should follow the pattern discussed below.

1. Create Interest.

You have to generate an interest in your chosen topic. Your audience needs a reason to listen to you. In other words, why should they care? What's in it for them? How can you help them? A message that starts with a really good reason to listen will grab the attention of the audience, thereby enabling you to continue with your presentation. Without this attention, there is no hope of getting your message across.

2. State the Problem.

You must clearly define the problem you are trying to solve. The best pattern for an effective persuasive speech is to: 1) find a problem and 2) relate to the audience how it affects them. In this way, you show them a problem they have and why it is of concern to them. That is, you illustrate why this issue is a problem to your audience and then you reveal to them how this problem affects them.

3. Offer Evidence.

This is the support you give to back up your argument. Evidence validates your claims and offers proof that your argument is correct. It allows your audience to rely on other sources besides you. Evidence can include examples, statistics, stories, testimonies, analogies and any other supporting material that is used to enhance the integrity and congruency of your message. When you include different supporting material (examples, statistics, stories, testimonies, analogies) in your presentation, you can individually target different personality types. Everyone resonates with different supporting material, so the more pieces of evidence you incorporate, the more audience members you'll convince.

4. Present a Solution.

You have gained your audience's interest and you have provided evidence in support of your message. Now you must solve their problem. In leading up to the resolution, you present the argument you want your audience to believe and then satisfy the need you have earlier identified or created. In so doing, you have created dissonance in your audience's mind and now you are providing them with the solution. How can your product meet their needs and wants? How can it help them achieve their goals?

5. Give a Call to Action.

A persuasive message is not true persuasion if your audience does not know exactly what they need to do once they walk away from you. When presenting your call to action, be specific and precise. In order to complete the solution to your audience's problem, you must spur them to take action. This is the climax of your presentation, the peak of your logic and emotion. Keep in mind that the prescribed actions must be feasible for your audience. Make your call to action as easy as possible.

Using this type of call-to-action structure facilitates people's acceptance of your message and clarifies what you want them to do. We all have a logical side to our mind, which results in our need for order and arrangement. If we don't sense some sort of structure, we tend to become confused. In response to this confusion, we create our own organizational flow—thus creating our own solution. If you can't be clear, concise and orderly in your call to action, your prospects will find someone else who is.

Presentation Skills

Solid speaking skills are next in line when it comes to developing a powerful presentation style. This is where the honing of a solid, positive mindset and where thorough preparation come together to really give your message substance and polish. We previously talked about a presentation's basic outline: opening, body, recap and conclusion. Let's now talk about some great ways to open. Remember, you've only got about fifteen to thirty seconds before people start to settle into their impressions. Hence, when effectively presenting, we want openers that will not only grab our audiences'

attention, but will also quickly establish our credibility, cultivate goodwill with our listeners and introduce our topics.

Think of your opening as not being more than 10 percent of your entire presentation. Budgeting your speech in this manner forces you to organize your time so that you know exactly what you're going to say and how you're going to say it. Scrap the old fillers like, "Today's topic is..." or "I'm going to speak on..." or worse, "I was assigned to talk about..." When preparing your opener, think of efficiency and accuracy. First of all, consider ways that will grab your audience's attention and perk them up. Several of the most effective approaches involve the use of humor, the telling of a personal story, the posing of a question, the sharing of a quote or the presenting of a startling fact or statistic. Anything that you feel will get your audience to tune in is critical to your opening.

When preparing your opening, how do you establish credibility? One thing is for sure: Don't just start spouting off your accomplishments and credentials. Nothing will turn an audience off faster. Sure, education and experience matter, but there are subtler ways of mentioning them. Sometimes it will be natural to mention the school from which you graduated, to refer to a publication you authored, etc. Many times, you can do so without seeming pompous. A better strategy than tooting your own horn is to have someone else introduce you before you come on. Another handy way to highlight your qualifications without including a "Why I'm So Great" section in your speech is to include a written bio sketch in any materials you may hand out. Your biography could even be included if a basic itinerary is handed out. Such background information is commonly seen for keynote speakers in programs, for example. A written bio can be very effective, but it is very important to keep in mind that when furnishing this "blurb" about yourself that it be written in the *third person*—that is, as if someone *else* is describing you ("s/he" instead of "I").

When I say you want to establish goodwill with your audience members, what I mean is that you want them to feel that you genuinely care about their needs. You want to exhibit your desire to share something that is both meaningful and useful to them. Very early on

in your presentation (in your opening), you must clearly communicate the answer to the audience's two most pressing questions: "WIIFM?" and "WSIC?" "WIIFM?" stands for "What's in it for me?" "WSIC?" means "Why should I care?" Your audience has to have a reason to want to listen to you and providing them with the answers to these questions gives them one. If you can answer their unspoken, but sincere interest in WIIFM? and WSIC?, they will definitely feel goodwill towards *you*. You can then achieve a win-win situation where the feeling of goodwill extends in both directions.

Finally, how do you go about introducing your topic? Your introduction can be worked into the opening story, question, statistic, quote or joke you use to grab your audience's attention. Alternatively, you can set up your presentation so that the way in which you grab their attention smoothly transitions into your topic. Last but not least, I will state the obvious and remind you that a charismatic demeanor from the get-go will carry you miles beyond a dry, monotone one.

Understanding different types of audiences will also help you determine how you design and deliver your message. Following are some different categories of audiences and some strategies on how to deal with each of them.

The Hostile Audience

This audience group openly disagrees with you and may even actively work against you. For a hostile audience, use these techniques:

- ❖ Find common beliefs and values. Find something to agree on.
- ❖ Use appropriate humor to break the ice.
- ❖ Don't start the presentation with an attack on their position.
- ❖ Keep in mind that you are only trying to persuade on one point; don't talk about anything else that could be considered hostile, offensive or condescending.
- ❖ Because of your differences, a hostile audience will question your credibility. Increase your credibility with expert studies or any source that will support your claim.
- ❖ A hostile audience will try to find reasons to not like you; don't give them any.

- ❖ Don't tell them you are going to try to persuade them.
- ❖ Express that you are looking for a win-win outcome rather than a win-lose situation.
- ❖ If possible, meet with the audience more than once before confronting them on areas of disagreement.
- ❖ Show them you've done your homework.
- ❖ Respect their feelings, values and beliefs.
- ❖ Use logical reasoning as clearly and as carefully as possible.
- ❖ Use the Law of Connectivity and the Law of Balance as leverage. (See Maximum Influence.)

The Neutral or Indifferent Audience

This audience understands your position but doesn't care about the outcome. The key to dealing with this audience group is to create motivation and energy. In other words, be dynamic. To persuade the indifferent audience:

- ❖ Spell out the benefits or the "what's in it for them."
- ❖ Point out the downside of not accepting your proposals. Use a combination of inspiration and desperation.
- ❖ Grab their attention by using a story. Make them care by showing them how the topic affects them.
- ❖ Get them to feel connected to your issues.
- ❖ Avoid complex, hard-to-understand arguments.
- ❖ Use concrete examples that incorporate familiar situations or events.
- ❖ Identify why they should care. How will this enhance their life?
- ❖ Use the Law of Involvement and the Law of Social Validation as leverage. (See Maximum Influence.)

The Uninformed Audience

These audience members lack the information they need to be convinced. To persuade the uninformed audience, you should employ the following techniques:

- ❖ Encourage them to ask questions throughout the presentation.
- ❖ Keep the facts simple and straightforward.
- ❖ Find out why they are uninformed.
- ❖ Use examples and simple statistics.
- ❖ Quote experts the audience respects.
- ❖ Stress your credibility, pointing out such things as degrees, special expertise and experience.
- ❖ Make your message interesting in order to keep their attention.
- ❖ Use the Law of Dissonance and the Law of Scarcity as leverage. (See Maximum Influence.)

The Supportive Audience

A supportive audience already agrees with you. As a result, you may think that persuading these people will be easy, but remember that your goal is to get them to take action, not necessarily to just agree with you. These techniques should be used with a supportive audience:

- ❖ Increase their energy and enthusiasm with inspiration. Help them see the vision.
- ❖ Prepare them for future attacks by inoculating them against other arguments.
- ❖ Get them to take action and to support your cause.
- ❖ Let them know what needs to be done.
- ❖ Use testimonials to intensify their commitment.
- ❖ Use the Law of Esteem and the Law of Expectation as leverage. (See Maximum Influence.)

Most audiences are a mix of all four of the preceding types. When dealing with a new audience, find out the dominant type that will be present and tailor your remarks accordingly. Of course, you should always consider mixing in some techniques from the other three areas since your prospects will always be a blend of all four audience types.

It Is Not Always What You Say; It Is How You Say It

Verbal packaging is another critical aspect when it comes to sharp presentation skills. The words we use and the way in which we use them can have a huge impact on how we are perceived by our audience. As Mark Twain said, “The difference between the right word and the wrong word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.” You see this all the time in marketing and advertising. Have you noticed that used cars are now referred to as “pre-owned” or even pre-loved? Somehow this terminology softens the negative connotation associated with the word “used.” Other examples include “invoice” instead of “bill,” “representative” instead of “salesperson,” “concern” instead of “problem” and “investment” instead of “price.”

The airline industry has some good examples of creative packaging, too: “delayed” instead of “late” and “flotation device” instead of “life preserver.” If we examined other industries, the list could go on and on. You can take a cue from these industry giants by employing a bit of your own verbal packaging. That is, it would be a great idea for you to develop your own list of words and phrases that are relevant to your industry or topic. That way, you will have alternatives in your persuasive toolbox for words that may be jarring or have negative connotations. Other ways you can make your language more effective are to use words like “we” and “us” more. That way, you can engage your audience and create a cooperative, “we’re in this together” feel to your presentation.

You might also consider making your language verb-oriented. Doing so gives your speech a feeling of energy, momentum and vitality. When you’re really trying to paint the picture and help your prospects feel like they’re in the actual situation you’re describing, use vivid language. Lastly, as a general rule, and particularly when you’re trying to get a key point across, always lean toward being concise rather than verbose. If you can get the point across in five words instead of ten, then don’t complicate your message by trying to be flowery and clever. Chances are people will start thinking about how pretentious you are rather than focusing on the point you’re trying to get across. As we were discussing in relation to structuring your message, it holds true here as well that clear and concise are your safest bets.

I mentioned earlier the power humor exerts in grabbing your audience's attention and in creating immediate rapport with them. Humor can be a very effective persuasive weapon when it is used skillfully. Of course, you can end up really embarrassing yourself if you don't tell a joke quite the right way and no one laughs. When it comes to humor, the audience will either laugh with you or feel sorry for you. Check out websites like www.cartoon.com and www.cartoonbank.com for humorous ideas. You can also find entire books that are dedicated to humor, quips and stories for speakers. It is always a good idea to test your humor on friends or, better yet, on individuals who might be of the same mindset or understanding as your audience before you're in the actual persuasive situation. Stories are another way to easily engage an audience. Often, it is through telling a story that a message can best hit home with your prospects. Stories give people something to identify with. They can entertain, teach and inspire all at once. When incorporating stories into your presentation, you can draw from your own experiences as well as others'. The *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series is an excellent resource. These volumes contain stories that are tried and true and that you know have already touched millions of people.

We've already touched upon humor and storytelling as far as opening your presentation, but they are also effective tools throughout the body of your presentation. Other sources of supporting material you may consider incorporating into your presentation include statistics, testimonies, articles and visual aids. You do not necessarily have to use all of these tools; in fact, to do so may be overkill. The key again is what will most clearly, concisely and efficiently deliver your message. If you make a lot of noise about props and visuals, you may end up defeating your purpose by just creating distraction. Draw from any source that you feel will enhance your presentation, but don't feel obligated to use a piece of arsenal if it's not appropriate.

Let's now turn our attention to the use of visual aids. What might these include? When we think of visual aids, we envision the common ones, like charts, graphs, pictures, Power Point presentations, etc. During your presentation, you can also use handouts,

video footage or even a physical object if it is relevant to your message. Visual aids are effective persuasive tools because they are optically stimulating. Most people are visually oriented. When you tap into *both* the auditory and visual senses, comprehension and retention increase dramatically. When preparing your presentation, consider what your different options are in terms of what kinds of visuals may be most effective for your particular situation. As a general rule, the shorter your presentation is, the simpler and fewer your visuals should be. Conversely, if you're going to be speaking for quite a long stretch, it may be wise to utilize different visual stimuli throughout your presentation as a means of holding your audience's attention.

However long your presentation is, you need to manifest enthusiasm for your subject. If your objective is to inspire people and get them to act, then you must transfer pure energy to them. As a university instructor, I have my students give passion speeches, where the only point is to see if they can instill the same intensity of interest in the subject in their audience that they as the speaker project. I remember one student who gave a very impassioned speech about frozen yogurt. And you know what? Afterwards, you really felt like going out to get some frozen yogurt. That's the point of exhibiting enthusiasm for your subject matter. You want people to be inspired enough that they are actually moved to action. While creating action is your ultimate objective, you also want to keep your enthusiasm up throughout your entire presentation. This will keep your audience's attention and maintain a sense of energy.

I was doing a presentation once where I offered a free CD to anyone who ran to the front of the room. There was one guy sitting off to the side who jumped up and ran toward the front of the room in pursuit of the prize. In the process, his right leg (prosthesis) fell off, but refusing to be stopped, he literally did a roll forward (in his suit!). He then crawled until he'd made his way up to the front. It seems crazy, but the audience loved it. He was a great sport. Everyone was genuinely having fun, and most importantly, they were really interested in what was going on. That's the kind of excitement and energy you want to generate in your audience.

Since we're talking about being exciting and enthusiastic, it's worth taking a moment to talk about stage presence. I mentioned this earlier, and I just can't stress it enough: You **MUST** videotape yourself while you are presenting. We want you to be energetic during your presentation, but obviously you can't get carried away. Make sure you don't have any irritating mannerisms while you are speaking in front of others. These quirks can be overt or subtle, but in either case, you probably won't realize they're irritating—that is if you even realize you're doing them at all—until you see them on video. When viewing your tape, check for common public-speaking blunders like vocal fillers (“um” is the big one) or annoying gestures. Do you use your hands and arms to the point of flailing? Are you always touching your face? Do you pace back and forth? Know clearly what you look like to your audience before you're up there in the actual situation.

We talked at the beginning of this section about how to have a good opening to your presentation. Your closing is a little more basic. Where your opening equaled about 10 percent of your speech, think of your conclusion as taking up only 5 percent of your total speaking time. As highlighted previously, your conclusion entails the time it takes to clearly and concisely restate your main points. Once you've successfully gotten your concluding remarks across, get right down to your “call to action.” Make it short and to the point, and energetic. Engage your audience's emotions so that you can really drive home your point. Think of your conclusion as the final punch, the thing you want your audience to remember most. You've spent so much time setting it up, so you want the conclusion to be really powerful.

People Skills

Part of the public-speaking package requires you to have great people skills. Such skills will definitely carry over into your presentation style. In this way, people skills and presentation skills should essentially become inseparable. You want your people skills to be so polished that they invariably permeate your presentations. You want every audience member to feel like you're reaching her/him individually. When it comes to effective people skills, there are two key areas: trust and connectivity. Trust obviously heads the list because if people don't trust you, you can forget everything else. In my persuasive

toolbox, I have what I call “The Five Cs of Trust.” If you consider each of these five attributes, you will recognize that you really must have all of them to be a truly trustworthy person. These Five Cs are character, credibility, competence, confidence and congruence.

To illustrate The Five Cs of Trust, let’s use the example of moving into a new area and needing to find a dentist. Suppose a certain dentist was competent, confident in his abilities, had credible qualifications behind him, but lacked in the character and congruence areas. Suppose he did great work but was always over-billing his patients. Would you go to him? Would you *trust* him? What if he measured up in each of the other four areas but demonstrated a real lack of confidence? What if he was always wringing his hands, was always second-guessing his work and was just generally unsure of himself? Would you feel comfortable seeing him? Would you trust him? What if he was a really nice, well-meaning guy with solid credentials who wouldn’t hurt a fly, but he was always making careless mistakes in his work? Would you go to this dentist? Would you trust him? In this light, it is easy to see that each area of trust is crucial. Put another way, strength in one area does not compensate for lack in another. So too it is in your interactions with others. You can’t leave any room open for people to doubt you or your intentions in any way. If they do, their perceptions of even the most remarkable presentation will always be slightly tainted. For ultimate trustworthiness, and therefore the greatest potential to influence people for the better, always seek to be square with yourself and with others in each of the five areas of trust.

Connectivity is another area that is critical in the development of your people skills. Connectivity is the ability to connect with others and to make them feel that they can connect with you. It is a mutual rapport that develops spontaneously and naturally. How does this connectivity transfer from people skills into your presentations? If you can’t connect with people on a one-on-one basis, how are you going to connect with an entire audience? Remember, your audience is a group of individuals, so you still have to think of connecting with them in that way. You still want your communication to penetrate

each member of your audience in a personal and intimate way. The best place to begin working on your degree of connectivity then is in your interactions with individuals.

The first element of connectivity is attraction. As superficial as it may be, we feel more connected to people we find attractive. Did you know that research shows that ugly convicts get longer sentences than better looking ones? Did you also know that better-looking students get better grades? It's totally illogical, but that's what the research shows. I'm not saying that in order to be an effective persuader you have to look like you should be on all the magazine covers, but you should take care that you are well groomed and professionally dressed. A polished appearance truly does make a difference, even if only on a subconscious level.

The second element of connectivity is similarity. It's just basic psychology that we are drawn to people we view to be similar to ourselves. This similarity could come in the form of hobbies, interests, beliefs, etc. An interesting study shows, for example, that smokers buy from smokers and that people of certain religious backgrounds buy from others of the same religious background. Again, you want to cultivate the ability to readily establish your similarities with individuals on a one-on-one level if you hope to be able to do so with an entire audience.

Another way you can cultivate your connectivity is by being sure that your language and tone are always positive and empathetic. People want to know that they are being heard and understood. They want to feel uplifted and like they are in a better mood for having spoken with you. Always try to exhibit a positive, spirited aura about yourself. Besides the fact that others will notice that aura and like being around you, your optimism will help you in your own life as well.

Persuasion

We know through research at the Persuasion Institute that the world of persuasion has changed. It now takes more work to be influential and persuasive. Analysts are now saying that one individual can be bombarded by up to 5,000 persuasive messages a day.

That sounds like a lot, but by the time you factor in all the commercials, billboards, newspaper ads, junk mail and even the messages on your cereal box as you eat every morning, it's not as unbelievable a figure as it first seemed. What has this advertising overload done to the average consumer? It has made all of us more skeptical. We now have our guard up more than ever. Moreover, people are more educated nowadays and, as a result, tend to be more analytical.

So, how do you cut through all the hype and remain persuasive in spite of today's heightened skepticism and mistrust? For starters, all the persuasive skills we've discussed thus far will give you a huge edge. Are there any other skills you can hone to make yourself even more persuasive? I would say it would be a giant plus to learn effective closing skills. Even if you're not a "salesperson," you are trying to "sell" an idea. Even when you're not dealing with an actual physical product, the same "sales" techniques and strategies apply. It would be very worth your while to take a course in effective closes. Besides reviewing this manual's chapter on closing skills, there are all kinds of other books out there that are solely devoted to this one topic. Also, for additional information on this topic, check out my website, www.magneticpersuasion.com. It is chock full of great ideas, tips, suggestions, strategies and techniques. Additionally, if you want to see how your persuasiveness stacks up, take my persuasion IQ profile at www.persuasioniq.com.

Even when you have mastered these skills, you meet some resistance. Resistance can always be categorized in one of three ways: 1) your prospects still don't have a strong enough reason to move forward; 2) they simply and honestly do not have the resources to move forward or 3) they still don't feel a strong enough rapport with you as the product or service's representative. When your prospects are resisting you because they just don't have a strong enough reason to move forward, you simply go back to square one. You highlight their current situation and show them how it stacks up against their desired situation. To overcome their resistance, you have to walk them through a comparison of the pain, discomfort or less-than-desirable state associated with their present situation versus the gains and advantages their new situation will bring about. Usually, if you do a

good enough job in sharply contrasting the two situations, the answer becomes obvious and your prospects persuade themselves.

When someone struggles in the area of resources, this does not always mean money. While you may be limited in the amount of financial help or suggestions you can offer, don't give up. It might be that your prospects are lacking resources in other terms, such as support, time or ability. These are areas in which you may have a little more flexibility and control. For example, can you help your resistant prospects figure out an alternative schedule that would allow for more time? Is there a spouse or parent you can involve to bring more support on board? Is lack of ability possibly attributable to simply a lack of information or education? Be creative and look for alternative ways to resolve these issues. Rarely is resistance a permanent and unalterable situation.

Finally, if it is because of you, as the product or service's representative, that your prospects are struggling, go back to your basic people skills. Do they trust you? If not, figure out why and how you can rectify their concerns. Hone your connectivity. Do they feel like they can relate to you and that you have their best interest at heart?

As you develop each of the five areas of powerful presentation—psyche, preparation, presentation skills, people skills and persuasion—you will find that you will become more and more able to effectively communicate with others. I know that the gift of powerful presentation changes people's lives. The fact that you are even reading this manual demonstrates that you have the interest and desire to persuasively succeed. I want to stress to you that you are on the verge of taking on one of the most rewarding talents possible. Whether it is speaking before thousands or persuading the children under your own roof, as you master the techniques outlined in this manual, you will become able to skillfully and convincingly change lives. By the time you've completed this manual, you will know how to excite and influence, to create converts and to have a coherent persuasive plan so that people feel empowered by your message. Always remember that as you communicate with others, the power lies within you to educate, inspire and entertain with passion, compassion and purpose

Secrets of Successful Negotiators

Negotiation Versus Persuasion

Let's talk about where negotiation fits into the world of persuasion and the difference between the two. Persuasion occurs when your ideas are so convincing that the other party ends up adopting your point of view. With persuasion, there is no compromising as there is in negotiation. Rather, the other party willfully and enthusiastically abandons their position to embrace yours. This abandonment is not brought about by manipulation because the other party clearly sees the gains and advantages of doing business with you. Negotiation, on the other hand, is a process of give and take. It's being able to overcome objections on both sides of an issue and ultimately reaching some common ground. While persuasion is the ultimate ideal, anytime any one of us is presenting our ideas, the other party is often equally committed to their own convictions, thus making negotiation the next best path. Often when we hear the word "negotiation," we think of a complex deal going on in the business world. In reality, however, all of us are involved in multiple negotiation processes every day. For example, when you want steak but your spouse wants lasagna, you may banter back and forth about why one is better than the other. In the end, however, you end up going to a place that offers a bit of both. In that instance, you may not have thought of yourself as *negotiating*, but that's really what it was. Negotiation is so common in day-to-day life that you must master the skills of great negotiators to become a Master Persuader.

Negative Associations with Negotiation

While persuasion is what most of us are striving for, cooperative negotiation can yield win-win situations and should not be overlooked. In the previous example in which the spouses were trying to agree on dinner, both parties win because they end up going to a place that offers both of their dining preferences. Neither party has to compromise; both parties get what they want. When discussing negotiation in training seminars, I ask the audience what their perceptions of negotiation are. I commonly hear things like "two parties ready to fight," "frustration," "manipulation," "long hours," "deceit" and the list goes on and on. Despite what my audience members might suggest, there are only four

true outcomes to negotiation: win–win, no deal, lose–lose or win–lose. The problem is that too often we get stuck in the mindset that negotiation is a game like football. That is, we think there has to be a clear-cut winner and loser. That mentality, however, does not reflect real negotiation. The truth is, everyone can win in a negotiation setting. If we want to use a sports analogy, a better one would be tandem parachuting. Tandem parachuting is where two people jump together, sharing the same parachute. In this sport, like in negotiation, you are in it together, you work together, and when you land safely, everybody wins. If you don't, everyone loses!

Stephen Covey, author of the best-selling book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, is a big advocate of either going for the win–win situation or not going for it at all. If you think about it, if it turned out any other way in your own negotiations, would your prospects ever want to do business with you again? Would they recommend you to their friends? Aside from that, it would simply be wrong and any possible short-term gains would not be worth the damage to your reputation and future business.

Preparation Is Key to Negotiation Success

Preparation is the magic ingredient to all successful negotiations. When negotiating, you have to be prepared for anything. You need to know the ins and outs, the intricacies of both sides. The more you prepare, the more knowledge you have, and the better you will do. Skills, techniques and personality will never replace the concrete knowledge that can and will only be gleaned by doing your research and homework before the negotiation process begins. The bottom line is that the negotiator with the most knowledge is the most prepared, and that is the type of negotiator who will succeed. The bottom line is, your negotiation success is determined by your preparation.

Before the negotiation begins, you must determine what your needs and interests are. In other words, you must first decide what you want out of the negotiation. Then you must prioritize those needs and wants. The heat of the moment is *not* the time when you should step back and try to figure out which option you're really pushing for. For example, let's

say you have just opened your business. You've submitted a bid to a very large corporate entity and have been invited in for a meeting concerning your bid. You are excited because landing a client like this one will bring great credibility to your new company. You decide beforehand that your greatest needs are to establish more credibility and to increase name recognition. While in the meeting, your prospective client states that if you bring your bid down, you will get his business. The figure he gives you will only allow you to break even, but you recognize the significant benefit of having this client on your reference list. Hence, you lower your price. Going into the meeting, making money was absolutely one of your interests; however, it was not your top priority. You were prepared to handle this situation because you had determined in advance what your number one objective was. By sticking to your plan instead of crumbling under the pressure or emotion of the moment, you have wisely created a way to strengthen your company's credibility and to secure a flow of work in the future.

After you have a concrete idea of what you want to get out of the negotiation, you need to examine the needs and wants of the other party. Put yourself in their moccasins and ask, "What would my needs be if I were in their position?" Besides thinking the negotiation process through on your own, it is strongly advised that you simply ask what your prospects' needs are. Decrease your margin of error by eliminating guesswork. To be a powerful negotiator is to be exact in addressing all angles of the issue. This step is crucial if you ever hope to reach mutually satisfactory agreements. Your prospects' side of the issue needs to bear as much weight in your mind as your side does. Certainly, a demonstrated interest in and knowledge of their perspective, their circumstances and their objectives will get you much farther than a strictly one-sided presentation. Be assured that one-sidedness will only be seen as shortsightedness. How can your prospects collaborate with you if they aren't confident in your ability to see, understand and appreciate their primary objective and goals?

After having thoroughly accounted for the key issues on both sides, it is time to prepare a number of different proposals on how you see the two sides coming together. This is a time where it's important to think creatively. Don't just divide the pie evenly. Rather,

seek out ways to expand the pie. What I mean is that you must be prepared to not only fulfill each party's bottom line but also to increase the benefits to all involved. Placing yourself in a position to "over-deliver" is never a bad thing; it will only be met by pleasant surprise. Better still, it is then often followed by cooperation.

After you have devised a few creative alternatives that could possibly satisfy both parties' needs, you are ready to narrow down your list of options. Which agreement is most beneficial and fair to both parties? Establishing a standard of fairness is often a very difficult process for negotiators. That's because each side has their own subjective perception of fairness. In such cases, it is recommended that an independent standard be sought. In other words, what is accepted in the industry? When preparing and doing your homework, look at industry standards, market rates, cost analyses and other neutral indicators that will enable you to establish a standard of fairness during your negotiation process.

After all these exhaustive steps, you might be thinking that in order to come up with the perfect plan, we're now ready for you to charge in there and knock 'em dead—wrong! No matter how brilliant your projections seem, you must set up three alternative negotiation plans. Too often, people go into negotiations with only one alternative in mind. When that alternative is not acceptable to the other party, then the situation really gets sticky. Since the negotiator didn't prepare any other options, s/he is stranded with nowhere to go. Like I mentioned previously, the emotion of the moment is not the time when you want to be making weighty decisions. To prevent yourself from being backed into a corner, be sure to have alternative agreements in mind that will still meet your most important needs, wants and goals.

Equally crucial to the preceding steps is the final negotiation step of *mental rehearsal*. A wise and skillful negotiator will *never* enter into a negotiation unrehearsed. It is of prime importance that you have practiced all the likely scenarios you will encounter and that you are prepared to handle any possible turns with skill and finesse. Don't underestimate the power of visualization. Play out the entire meeting from beginning to end. What could

happen? What is your opponent's initial perception of you and your offer? What roadblocks could you hit? Can you articulate your opponent's view and concern about the issues at hand? What are your opponent's needs? What has happened in the past? What will your opponent ask for? Will your personalities clash? When you are prepared for negotiation, your stress and fear will subside. You might feel some pressure, but you will not lose control. Going through a pre-negotiation process creates a map for you to follow in any type of terrain you might encounter. Armed with advance preparation, you will overcome any potential obstacles placed in your path. Find a way for all sides to achieve their goals, feel satisfied with the negotiation and find a resolution.

Now, if you find yourself not being able to reach your needs, and if there still seems to be a considerable amount of distance between you and the other party, do yourself a favor; get up and leave. Too often, less experienced negotiators continue to negotiate after this point has been reached. If they blindly forge forward, they may reach an agreement but later realize that not even one of their needs were met. **Be careful that you don't commit any of the following common negotiation errors:**

- ❑ Being politically incorrect
- ❑ Showing disrespect
- ❑ Using any form of miscommunication
- ❑ Using the wrong word choice
- ❑ Having an irritating style
- ❑ Having no or a poor agenda
- ❑ Personalizing the negotiation
- ❑ Revealing too much information
- ❑ Committing cultural blunders
- ❑ Becoming emotionally involved
- ❑ Desiring to destroy
- ❑ Exhibiting perceived cockiness

Always focus on the following behaviors:

- ❑ Be firm.
- ❑ Use silence.
- ❑ Stay focused and perceptive.
- ❑ Be attentive.
- ❑ Don't rush the negotiation.
- ❑ Have plenty of energy.
- ❑ Know that it is OK to lose a few battles to win the war.
- ❑ Avoid unnecessary humor.
- ❑ Get plenty of sleep.

Negotiation: Face-to-Face, by Phone or via E-mail

In our age of ever-expanding communication possibilities, researchers have been drawn to answer the question of which communication mode is most likely to lend itself to successful negotiation. Their answer? It depends. Face-to-face communication is more likely to alleviate any possibility of miscommunication or deception. When you're actually there, in person, you are more apt to pick up all the nuances of the exchange. That way, you will be better able to gauge what the other party is thinking and to determine the direction in which the negotiating is headed.

For the same reasons, it is also easier to create and maintain rapport. If there is already a fair amount of tension in the air, however, negotiating by phone can take the edge off, can provide breathing room and can minimize the effectiveness of any pressure tactics that may have been employed. E-mail's main advantage is that both parties have control over saying exactly what they want to say and how they want to say it. Since there is no ebb and flow to live conversation, the involved parties can keep the floor as long as they want. On the flip side, e-mailing can tend to make the negotiating parties less restrained and more impulsive in their communication. This rashness isn't always a bad thing, but it definitely can be if tensions exist. One study found that abrupt and unmannerly exchanges occurred 102 times when negotiating via e-mail as opposed to only 12 times when negotiating face-to-face.⁴³

Understanding Personality Directions

The more you understand personality directions, the better you will be able to customize your negotiation tactics. A personality direction is the way in which we lean most of the time in terms of the way we act and react to most stimuli. We hate to be boxed in and categorized, but the reality is, most of the time we are predictable. Sure, people aren't going to be 100 percent predictable all the time, but the more discerning you become, the more you will see how predictable individuals really are. Each individual's personality direction will dictate how you customize your message. When you analyze personality directions, ask yourself the following questions:

I. Is your audience mostly logical or emotional?

A. Logical people:

1. Think with their heads
2. Go with what makes sense
3. Are persuaded by facts, figures and statistics
4. Rely on past history
5. Use their five senses

⁴³ Allport, Floyd. *Social Psychology*. New York Houghton Mifflin. 1999.

B. Emotional people:

1. Think with their hearts
2. Go with what feels right
3. Are persuaded by emotions
4. Rely on intuition
5. Use their “sixth sense”

II. Is your audience introverted or extroverted?

A. Extroverted people:

1. Love to communicate
2. Are talkative
3. Involve others
4. Tend to be public people
5. Want face-to-face contact

B. Introverted people:

1. Keep their feelings inside
2. Listen more than they talk
3. Like to work solo
4. Tend to be private
5. Use memos and e-mails over face-to-face communication

III. Is your audience motivated more by inspiration or desperation?

A. Desperation-motivated people:

1. Try to get away from the problem
2. Are stuck in the past, are afraid of repeating mistakes
3. Avoid pain
4. Want to get away from something

B. Inspiration-motivated people:

1. Work towards a solution
2. See a better future
3. Are motivated by pleasure
4. Want to move forward, have vision

IV. Are your audience members or prospects assertive or amiable?

A. Assertive people:

1. Consider results more important than relationships
2. Make decisions quickly
3. Want to be in control
4. Are task-oriented
5. Don't waste time
6. Are independent

B. Amiable people:

1. Consider relationships more important than results
2. Are friendly and loyal
3. Like to build relationships
4. Are great listeners
5. Avoid contention
6. Are nonassertive and agreeable

The Negotiation Hazard: Don't Push Too Hard

Negotiation hazards tend to occur when you are taking a particular strategy too far. What might work wonderfully in one negotiation situation will not always be appropriate in another. The instant someone feels cheated, misled or taken advantage of, your opportunity to negotiate with her/him is over.

Many rookie negotiators have a tendency to push the envelope a little too far. Their ambition as beginners is understandable, but it will rarely result in a win–win situation. Negotiating rookies want to be the victors, like they are hunting prey. Even if the other party consents, they are likely not doing so without some serious repercussions. High-pressure tactics will most often be read as offensive, condescending, obnoxious and insulting. Then, trust is lost and ultimately the ability to negotiate is lost, too. You can always tell that you're going too far if your prospects find something you say or do alarming, or if they seem uncomfortable in your presence. Always be sensitive to the mood and rapport of the meeting so you don't find yourself in this situation in the first place.

The Use of Power in Negotiation

Power increases your ability to negotiate and persuade. Obviously, however, this persuasive tool can also be improperly used. Manipulating others may get you the immediate results you're looking for, but they're not going to last. If you use manipulation to get your way, you won't have people's respect or friendship. Rather, they'll harbor animosity, resistance and resentment toward you. There are three major types of power that are used in negotiations: Legitimate Power—power that is rightfully earned and rightfully exercised, Authority Power—power that is based on external factors such as position or title and Psychological Power—power that is derived from playing off of another's psyche. The following paragraphs take a brief but closer look at these various types of power that are used in negotiations.

Legitimate Power

Legitimate Power is the hardest type of power to gain, during a negotiation. Legitimate Power continues to influence others even after you've walked away from the negotiating table and your physical presence is gone. Legitimate Power is often based on knowledge; that is, your expertise in a certain subject, procedure or situation. People can often be persuaded if they think you have more expertise in a subject area than they do. For example, lawyers and doctors possess this type of power. People rely on attorneys' and

physicians' opinions, believe what they say and trust implicitly what they do because of the extent of schooling or experience they have. We accept arguments and data from the people we assume have accurate knowledge, whether it's real or perceived. Legitimate Power can also be based on your resources. If you have access to key persons, commodities, goods or services that are valued by others, you hold some power over them. As the saying goes, "It's not what you know; it's who you know."

Authority Power

Authority Power is based on how other people view your status in relation to their own, be that viewpoint real or perceived. For example, have you ever gone up to someone in a store who looked like an employee to ask her/him for help? Even if you didn't know for sure that s/he was an employee, somehow s/he still gave you the impression that s/he was the one to approach for direction. That's an example of Authority Power based solely on appearance. On the other hand, your boss, the U.S. President and a police officer all wield real Authority Power by virtue of the positions they hold. Impressive titles are another way in which people hold Authority Power. When we hear "doctor" in front of a name, it automatically registers in our minds that the person is important, powerful and intelligent. We love to hear phrases like "two out of three doctors recommend" or "nine out of ten dentists use this product or service."

Psychological Power: The Mind Game

Psychological Power is the ability people have to influence you while disguising their true intentions. People who are adept at using Psychological Power seek to alter another individual's perceptions. Some of the most common and effective Psychological Power techniques are outline below. When reviewing them, consider how you would use them versus how you could see them being used on you.

Technique # 1: Time Pressure

People are slow at making decisions because they're afraid of making mistakes. Negotiators hate to leave deals open-ended too long because the more time passes, the

more time their prospects have to think of all the reasons why they should walk away. The reverse is also true: The more quickly you get a commitment out of your prospects, the more likely it is they'll follow through. Basically, people who utilize this psychological tactic are leveraging the moments when emotion is high and judgment is suspended. It's the "get 'em energized, seal the deal while they're still soaring" mentality. It is from this mentality that we get promotions like "This offer only good for next hour" and "This offer won't last long." I remember once negotiating a contract for the marketing department of a big corporation. I had a million other responsibilities weighing on me, so I felt rushed to hammer out the details of the contract that morning. The person I was negotiating with, on the other hand, was in no hurry whatsoever and had nowhere else to go. We bantered back and forth for six hours and still had not reached a resolution on a contract we were both happy with. My urgency to leave the meeting affected the terms I was finally able to get.

When we're in a hurry, we'll usually pay more to get what we need. When we need something right now, and someone else has it, we will pay whatever it takes to get it. Think of all the convenience services that cost more. The all-night convenience store charges twice as much for a gallon of milk as the grocery store down the street. Likewise, the 24-hour copy mart charges more than the traditional print service. Think about how much you paid for that book or magazine at the airport before you rushed to catch your plane. Being in a hurry definitely costs money. So too, being in a hurry will cost you the negotiation.

Technique #2: Boldness

Acting with boldness not only emits the perception of confidence to others, but it actually helps you *feel* more confident about yourself. When you come across as confident, whether you really are or not, people will be much more likely to rally behind you. They will automatically assume that you know what you are doing. Boldness can lead to the accomplishment of unimaginable things, which then in turn makes your confidence more and more genuine. When you are on the receiving end of boldness, however, be aware that another's assertiveness is sometimes used as a means of coming across as a better

negotiator. People who come across as timid or weak-willed are much less likely to be good at negotiations.

Technique #3: Unpredictability

Sometimes, negotiators try to use unpredictability to throw the other person off. Humans are creatures of habit; we love the familiar and predictable. We love routine. Hence, when something unpredictable happens, we feel out of control. Think of a person you know who has an unpredictable personality. You never quite know if s/he is going to be happy or angry, thankful or resentful, elated or depressed. How do you feel when you're around this person? People sometimes do this on purpose to intimidate you or to feel a sense of control over you. Some negotiators will work through lunch, yell, lose control or be seen tearing down a colleague. These examples will often throw rookie prospects off guard. Be aware of these psychological negotiating tactics that could make you feel intimidated or out of control.

Technique #4: Surprise/Distraction

People who are caught off guard by a request will often comply with it simply because they make a knee-jerk reaction during a brief moment of insecurity. A study by Milgram and Sabini demonstrated that people riding the New York subway were twice as likely to give up their seats to passengers who surprised them with the request, "May I have your seat?" as they were when they were told ahead of time of the passenger's intention to ask for their seat. Fifty-six percent of surprised passengers gave up their seats compared to twenty-eight percent of those who had been warned in advance.⁴⁴

Distracted is also a form of Psychological Power. Sometimes negotiators use this technique to lead the negotiation away from a main objective. To that end, they say or do something to break the focus on the point at hand and get their prospect on another completely different topic. Of course, this negotiating strategy can be unethical, but unfortunately, it also runs rampant. Distractive techniques might come in the form of

⁴⁴ Harper, C., Kidera, C. & Cullen, J. (1971). Study of simulated airplane pilot incapacitation: Phase 2, subtle or partial loss of function. *Aerospace Medicine*, 946-948.

smoking in a non-smoking room, fire alarms blaring during critical moments or strange, unscheduled interruptions occurring.

Self-Serving Perceptions and Biases

It is a natural tendency for us to take in information and interpret it in a manner that will best serve our personal wants and needs. We do not always do this consciously. What's more, the converse is also true in that we often pass over information that is critical to understanding the other side, particularly when the other side is in conflict with us. We naturally enhance our own position while vilifying the opposition's. The result is that perceptions and beliefs are based on information that is highly inaccurate and exaggerated. Especially striking examples of this oppositional bias are seen in the Israelis and Palestinians or the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland.

A famous Harvard study involved giving some executives insider information about one company's plans to acquire another. The executives were randomly assigned to role play the part of either the buyer or the seller. Unbeknownst to them, the information given to each side was identical. After analyzing the information, the executives each had to give their private assessment of the company's fair value (as opposed to how they might present that value in negotiations). Not surprisingly, the executives playing the part of "seller" gave values that were more than double those offered by those who were playing the role of "buyers." Interestingly, the results were driven by what would best serve the party in her/his randomly assigned role.⁴⁵

It is to be expected that each negotiating side will bring its own biases to the table. Simply knowing that these biases exist will help those involved in negotiation to not be caught off guard. Put yourself in the other side's shoes and think of what their most powerful case could be. This empathizing tactic always sheds light on new thoughts and ideas that you might not have thought of otherwise. Lastly, it will never hurt you to seek the input of an uninvolved third party.

⁴⁵ Bickman, L. (1974). The social power of a uniform. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 47-61.

Explaining Exactly What You Want

It is natural when you're negotiating with a person you don't know very well for her/him to regard you with some suspicion. In a negotiation setting, it will be the other party's instinct to assume the worst about your motives. There could be a million legitimate reasons why we have to hold out on an offer, but instead of considering what any of those reasons might be, people are much more inclined to draw negative conclusions. For example, if you cannot agree to his terms, your negotiation partner may automatically "decide" that you're greedy, demanding or unreasonable without even stopping to consider what other factors might be at work in your inability to agree to his terms. Because of these suspicious tendencies, it is imperative that you reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings in your negotiation efforts by clearly stating what you need. It would be horrible to lose out on a deal altogether just because someone misunderstood you and deduced that you were untrustworthy. Conversely, if you can give clear reasons why your stance is what it is, your negotiation counterpart has the opportunity to process this information and respond more favorably. In this way, you enhance understanding, open communication and trust.

Cultivating a Relationship of Trust

Try to think of the negotiation process as more of a discussion or an exchange of ideas than a competition or fight. One of the best ways to get your negotiations on the right track is to make sure you cultivate a relationship of trust right from the start. Even the initial small talk that takes place before the actual meeting starts will help your prospects feel comfortable with, and more trusting of, you. When your prospects trust you, they will be more willing to take the necessary risks to help both parties move in a direction that will most greatly benefit everyone involved. If prospects don't trust you, on the other hand, all the evidence, reasoning, facts or figures in the world won't get them to budge. Be sure you listen attentively and carefully to your prospects concerns. Respectfulness will go a long way toward a successful outcome. One of the advantages of face-to-face meetings is that your prospects will be able to see and experience your sincerity firsthand.

Expectation in Negotiation

The fact that people's expectations influence reality can help dramatically in the negotiation process. Individuals tend to make decisions based on how others expect them to perform. When we know someone expects something from us, we try to satisfy her/him in order to gain respect and likeability. You have probably heard the saying "What gets measured, gets done." The same is true for expectations: That which is expected is what usually happens. People rise to meet your expectations of them, thereby turning your expectations into reality. Ever notice how people who think they're going to be fired suddenly experience a drop in the quality and enthusiasm for their work? Then what happens? You guessed it; they get fired. Their belief in their impending termination causes them to act a certain way, and those expectations then work to bring about the very thing that at first was only a figment of their imagination.

Numerous studies have shown how expectation dramatically influences people's performance. For example, in one study, girls who were told they would perform poorly on a math test received poor grades.⁴⁶ In another, assembly line workers who were told that their job was complex performed less efficiently at the same task than those who were told that their job was simple.⁴⁷ Another case study demonstrated that adults who were given complex mazes solved them faster when told that the mazes were based on a grade-school level of difficulty.⁴⁸ Based on these examples, it is clear to see that if you add the use of expectation to your negotiation repertoire, you have one more tool through which you can influence the other party.

When using expectation in negotiation, there are two key ways in which the technique can be most easily and effectively used: time expectations and reputation expectations. Below we will examine each these expectation types in depth.

⁴⁶ Lawrence, S. & Watson, M. (1991). Getting Others to Help: The Effectiveness of Professional Uniforms in Charitable Fund Raising. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 170-185.

⁴⁷ Hofling, C.K., Brotzman, E., Dalrymple, S., Graves, N. & Bierce, C. (1966). An experimental study of nurse-physician relations. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*.143: 171-180.

⁴⁸ Peters, Douglas & Ceci, Stephen. (1982). Peer-review practices of the psychological journals: The fate of published articles, submitted again. *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 187-195.

Time Expectations

In our modern world, we are bound by time. This being the case, we have certain expectations about how long it will take us to accomplish our various tasks. Time often becomes distorted through our perceptions and expectations. Why do some afternoons speed by faster than others? Why do we finish projects just one minute before the deadline?

Parkinson's Law states that work expands to fill the time available. So, if a project is given a three-month deadline, it will take the full three months to complete. If that very same project is given a six-month timeframe, it will still take the full six months to complete, even though it could easily be completed in three. It may sound strange, but this law holds weight because the time allotted for completion of a project sets our expectations. It is actually our expectations that influence how we will work on a project and, therefore, when it will be completed. Your time expectations going into a negotiation will determine how you negotiate. A word of advice: Don't show your cards. Never let the other party know how fast you need to seal the deal.

Reputation Expectations

The most effective psychological tool for getting someone to follow through on a promise is to let her/him know that you believe s/he is the type of person who will follow through. Using phrases such as "You're the kind of person who..." or "You've always impressed me with your ability to ..." or "I've always liked the fact that you..." invoke the powerful psychological law of internal consistency. Winston Churchill, one of the greatest masters in dealing with people, said, "I have found that the best way to get another to acquire a virtue is to impute it to him."

When people are aware of the good opinions others have about them, they want to live up to those opinions. This tendency is why we act out the roles that are assigned to us. If we receive praise, we want to be worthy of that praise. There was a police officer who always seemed to be able to get even the toughest criminals to open up to him and tell him everything. His technique was to tell the criminal, "I know you have a reputation for

being the tough guy who's been in a lot of trouble, but everyone tells me the one thing that stands out about you is that you never lie. They tell me that whatever you say, it's always the truth, no matter what."

Honestly assess how you think you make others feel when they're around you. Do you make them feel small and unimportant, or do you inspire them to achieve more? Your actions towards others will tell them how you feel or think about them. The German writer and poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe once stated, "Treat a man as he appears to be and you make him worse. But treat a man as if he already were what he potentially could be, and you make him what he should be." Reputation is everything in negotiation.

Have you ever noticed how the people you assume are going to be tough turn out to be just that? And if there is someone you're especially excited to meet, then when you do meet her she seems great? Often our assumptions and expectations about someone we're about to meet for the first time play out exactly as we've already mentally conceived that they would. When first meeting someone, you will send subconscious messages about how s/he is to respond and behave.

The Structure of Your Presentation

Why should you be concerned with the structure of your negotiation? Use the following key areas as a guideline in developing your own negotiation strategies:

Create Interest

Make sure the other party is interested in what you have to offer. What's in it for them? How can you help them be open to negotiation and create a win-win resolution?

State the Problem

Clearly define the problem you intend to alleviate. Relate your understanding of how the need or problem affects the other party so they know that you understand exactly where they're coming from.

Offer Evidence

Support and validate your claims and concerns. Expand your credibility by giving the other side additional sources to rely on besides you. Evidence can include examples, statistics, stories, testimonies, analogies and any other supporting material that is used to enhance the integrity and congruency of your negotiation efforts.

Present a Solution

Clearly and convincingly present how your solution will meet their needs and will help them achieve their goals and objectives.

Agreement

After showing them how you can fulfill their needs, your prospects should be interested in pursuing the deal further. Then, a discussion of terms naturally follows. Work out terms that are agreeable to all.

Using this type of structure facilitates people's acceptance of what you have to offer. We all have a logical side to our minds, which results in our need for order and arrangement. If you can't be clear, concise and orderly, the negotiation will be unclear, non-concise and disorderly.

Verbal Packaging

The more skillful a person is in the use of language, the more persuasive s/he will be in a negotiation setting. People are persuaded by the words we use and how we use them. Since even a single word can affect an individual's perception about a negotiator and what s/he is trying to negotiate, negotiators choose their words especially carefully. Below is a list of words that are commonly used in business or negotiation settings and some alternate phrases that can make a negotiation transaction go more smoothly.

Words That Repel**Words That Persuade**

Contract

Agreement

Meeting

Time to get together

Sign here

OK, autograph

Cancellation

Right of rescission

Cost

Investment

Ruling

Resolution

Problem

Challenge

Objections

Concern

Expensive

Top of the line

Cheaper

More economical

Service charge

Processing fee

Your word choices will paint different pictures for different people because the way in which we define words is based on our belief systems, our past experiences and our social roles. The associations we hold about certain words will dictate our actions and how we respond to them. For example, some cultures view death as a celebration of life, while others view death as a tragedy. Sometimes, if used improperly, positive words can still lead to a negative response. For this reason, negotiators will often avoid certain words that are generally positive and instead use words that may still bear positive associations but are more ambiguous. For example, in the world of politics, we hear phrases like “freedom of choice,” “fiscal responsibility” or “responsible taxation.” When politicians use such generalities, people of differing viewpoints can actually all be appeased. Those individuals hearing these words fill in the blanks and provide their own definitions.

Below are some simple guidelines that will help you keep your verbal packaging on the right track:

- Don't use jargon or technical language unless you are sure every member of the negotiation understands its meaning.

- Don't use profanity or slang. In general, using profanity damages your credibility. Be sensitive to whatever language your audience might find offensive, profane or otherwise. Avoid name-calling and other forms of abusive language.
- Speak in everyday language. You want everyone involved in the negotiation process to relate to you and to feel as comfortable with you as possible. Utilize language that will make you seem familiar and easy to follow.
- Keep your language simple and clear.
- Keep your sentences short. Use as few words as possible unless you are painting the overall picture. Portray just one idea at a time.
- Don't use vague and abstract words. They muddle your meaning and confuse your listener(s).
- Don't talk down to the other party by using pompous and pretentious words. Be direct; don't bluff or beat around the bush.
- Use verb-driven language. By using verb-driven language, you will arouse a greater sense of action and motivation in your prospects. Your statements will also sound more convincing. Verbs that are abstract or overused do not communicate excitement.

Connectivity: Winning Instant Acceptance from Others

We have all had the experience of feeling an instant connection or bond with someone after just a few seconds of being in her/his presence. This is referred to as connectivity. The more we feel connected to, part of, liked by or attracted to someone, the more persuasive s/he becomes. As we feel more comfortable, a natural sense of trust ensues. This ability to work well with people tops the list of common skills and habits that highly successful people possess.

People skills are crucial because they have a huge impact on our success. First impressions are made within only four minutes of an initial interaction with a stranger, so we don't have time to *not* have good people skills. One of the most important characteristics to show up front in a negotiation is goodwill. Goodwill means being caring, kind, sensitive and thoughtful. It means demonstrating genuine interest in others

instead of focusing on how to get them interested in you. It also means being a good listener. This kind of compassion and empathy will win you loyalty from all those you come into contact with. Negotiation is not a war; you can connect with everyone in the negotiation process.

You can also hone your abilities to interact with others by using appropriate body language. Whether we realize it or not, we are constantly reading and being read by others. Even without the utterance of words, the language of the body speaks volumes. Always be mindful that everything about you, be it flamboyant or subtle, communicates something about you to somebody else. The words you use, your facial expressions, what you do with your hands, your tone of voice and your level of eye contact all contribute to the way people feel about you. Consequently, they also play a role in how likely they will be to accept your message.

Fortune 500 companies commonly require listening training, even though many employees think it's a waste of time. The truth is, poor listening skills account for the majority of people's negotiation problems. Good listening is not just looking at someone and nodding your head in agreement. You have to acknowledge what is being said and let the other person know that you understand. The more you can acknowledge what is being said by others, the greater your ability to negotiate. Why? Because the person/group speaking with you will feel important and understood. Why is listening so difficult for most of us? Consider the top five challenges to effective listening during negotiations:

1. **Thinking about Our Response or Comeback.** Instead of thinking about what the other person is saying, we think about what we want to say next or where we want the negotiation to lead. Thinking about your stance on an issue or why the other side is wrong is an obstacle to effective listening.

2. **Not Concentrating.** We talk at a rate of 120 to 150 words per minute, but we can think 400 to 800 words per minute. As a result, we often act like we're listening when we're really thinking of something else. Stay focused during your negotiations.

3. **Jumping to Conclusions.** Sometimes we assume that we know exactly what the other side is going to say next. As a result, we begin forming reactions based on those assumptions. In other words, we begin putting words into our fellow negotiator's mouth.

4. **Prejudging Based on Delivery and Appearance.** We judge people by the way they look or speak instead of listening to what they say. Some people are so put off by personal appearance, regional accents, speech defects and mannerisms that they don't even try to listen to the message a person is trying to convey.

5. **Lack of Training.** Some people haven't ever had any training or guidance in how to listen effectively. As result, they don't realize the mental effort or level of involvement required to do so.

If you know how to listen, you'll always know what someone is thinking. You'll also always know what s/he wants from you. Listed below are the insider secrets for effective listening. Follow these guidelines, and you'll always be able to delve below the surface during your negotiations:

1. **Give the other side your undivided attention.** Make them feel like they are the most important people in the world to you at that very moment in time.

2. **Look them directly in the eye while they are talking.** Lean forward to indicate interest and concern. Listen calmly.

3. **Show sincere interest in them.** There is no need to talk. Just nod your head and agree with verbal sounds like "uh huh."

4. **Keep the conversation going by asking questions.** Prompt more information from them by repeating their phrases.

5. **Use silence to encourage them to talk.** You have heard that silence is golden and that maxim certainly holds true in negotiation. Being silent encourages all parties to talk about themselves and to reveal information that will help you in the negotiation process.

6. **Pause before replying or continuing.** Wait three to five seconds and then reply thoughtfully. Don't leap in, even if you know the answer. When you pause, it shows the other person that you consider what s/he is saying is valuable.

Sometimes we enhance our listening capability by honing our *watching*. As a negotiator, it is crucial to be very attentive to the cues and signals that the other party may be sending out in addition to the words they're saying. A "powerful curiosity," as it has been called, is invaluable in detecting other important but unspoken messages. For example, when the other party nods and says "yes," is that sincere agreement or polite diplomacy? It is far too easy to get caught up in our end of the bargain and miss the valuable signals that are being sent by the other party about how they really feel.

The Art of Questioning in Negotiation

Of all the tools in your negotiation toolbox, questioning is probably the one that is most often used by great negotiators. Questions create involvement, guide the conversation, set the pace of the conversation, clarify statements and objections, determine beliefs, attitudes and values, uncover the party's thoughts and needs and show your sincerity. Neil Rackham and John Carlisle observed hundreds of negotiators in action in an attempt to discover what it takes to be a top negotiator. Their key finding was that skilled negotiators ask more than twice as many questions as average negotiators.⁴⁹

If you are probing for lots of information, it is best to keep your questions open-ended. The more open-ended the question, the more information you are likely to get. This questioning strategy deters a person from being able to answer simply "yes" or "no." With open-ended questions, the other person will be doing most of the talking. Then her/his answers can lead into more detailed questions without your seeming intrusive.

Be prepared to field questions that the other party will ask and want to know. Brainstorm ahead of time for possible questions, scenarios and answers you will encounter. There

⁴⁹ Sheppard, J. & Strathman, A. (1989). Attractiveness and Height. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 617-627.

will always be tough questions. If you are the expert, you are expected to know the answers. Obviously, if you don't know the answer, you should not make one up. How do you save yourself from losing credibility? One way is to throw the question back and ask for her/his insights or opinions. Another strategy is to ask to have the question repeated. This stalling tactic gives you more time to think of a response. Restate the question and ask if it is correct. Such a strategy also helps you make sure you understand the question.

Remember that the person with whom you're negotiating may answer all your questions but still hold back pertinent information simply because you did not directly ask for it. Your negotiation partner is not going to volunteer crucial information just out of charity. Hence, it is imperative that you thoroughly prepare in advance so you know *when* to ask, *what* to ask and *who* to ask. If you think of something important that the other party did not disclose, you'll have all the more reason to be watchful and wary.

Handling Objections

When you get people involved in the negotiation process, you will almost invariably get some objections. The way in which you handle objections will correlate with how mentally involved people become with your message. The better you become at handling objections, the more persuasive you will become at negotiating. The key to great negotiation is anticipating all objections before you hear them. Fielding questions and handling objections can make or break you as a negotiator. Such skills will help you in every aspect of your life.

Here are some tips on how to effectively handle objections:

1. Find out if the objection is something you can solve or compromise.
2. Let the other side(s) state their objections. Hear them out completely, without interruption.
3. Always ask your opposing team(s) to restate their key points. Letting them speak, particularly if they are upset, drains emotion from their objections. Allowing them to voice their concerns also gives you time to think of a response.

4. Skillful negotiators will always find some point of agreement with their counterparts. It's important to recognize the apprehension or objections people have instead of ignoring them.
5. Stay calm. Scientific tests have proven that calmly stated facts are more effective in getting people to change their minds than being emotional is.
6. Don't be arrogant or condescending.
7. Give the person room to save face. People will often change their minds and agree with you later. It could just be that they did not have all the facts, that they misunderstood or that you didn't explain everything correctly.

Agreement: Win-Win Solutions

The agreement is the most important part of your negotiation. It is highly recommended that you have the resulting agreement put in writing, including what the consequences will be if either side does not live up to its end of the bargain. This is what the whole negotiation process is about: finding the win-win solution. Coming to a resolution does not have to take weeks, months or years. Agreeable negotiations can finish in days or even hours.

101 Powerful Ways to Inspire, Motivate and Energize Your Team

The Foundation of Teambuilding

Anytime you're in a leadership position, you are faced with the question of how best to motivate those who work under you. There are countless philosophies and ideas out there, all claiming to be exactly what you need. The truth is, there is no one perfect answer. Moreover, what works at one time will not always work at another. There are team dynamics that you must always be in tune with. For example, suppose you offer a trip to Hawaii for the quarter's highest closer. If newer or less experienced reps feel like they can't stack up against the competition, then not only will they feel discouraged, but they may actually feel like there's not much use in trying. They will then become even less productive. Some reps will respond to cash rewards, while others are incited even more by praise and recognition. As Maslow said, "If the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer, then you will treat everyone like a nail." The truth is, everyone is *not* a nail. To be an effective motivator, you need to become an acutely attuned student of human nature and understand what makes people tick. Not until you do this on an individual level can you integrate your observations into a team-incentive approach that will work for the whole.

I strongly recommend having this discussion with your team members on an individual basis: "What do you need right now to help you feel like you can do your best? What are your goals in your work here, and how can I help you achieve them?" I can think of no better way of clearly and directly communicating your sincere and honest interest in your team and what they can bring to the table. This direct line of questioning also demonstrates to your employees that they are not just another grunt or number. This direct approach, combined with quiet observation, will give you the vital information you need to discover what motivates each particular employee.

One of the biggest mistakes managers make is withholding praise or acknowledgement until *after* an employee has "been good" or done something to "deserve" it. You may have heard the old grass adage: You tell the grass, "When you grow, and only after you

grow, will I *then* give you water.” This is just not how motivation works. This kind of reward system demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of human nature and basic human needs. It breeds insecurity amongst employees, who may never function at their best over the long-term because they can never feel confident about what they’re doing or where they stand.

Rewarding after the fact also creates resentment. It doesn’t take an employee long to figure out that a boss considers her/his value conditional. How can anyone be expected to feel enthusiastic about her/his work and free to unleash her/his greatest productive energies with such a message confronting her/him every day? Yes, it is the typical tug-of-war in the workplace: Employers feel that their employees are privileged to even have the job; employees feel that employers don’t appreciate how hard they work. Going back to the grass analogy, I would suggest that “nourishing” your team from the get-go, whether they have merited it or not, will spawn the greatest growth and productivity over the long term. Your employees will work thoroughly, creatively and enthusiastically because you have bred this kind of work ethic. Then, you’ll no longer feel like you’ve got to pull teeth to get even the bare minimum accomplished.

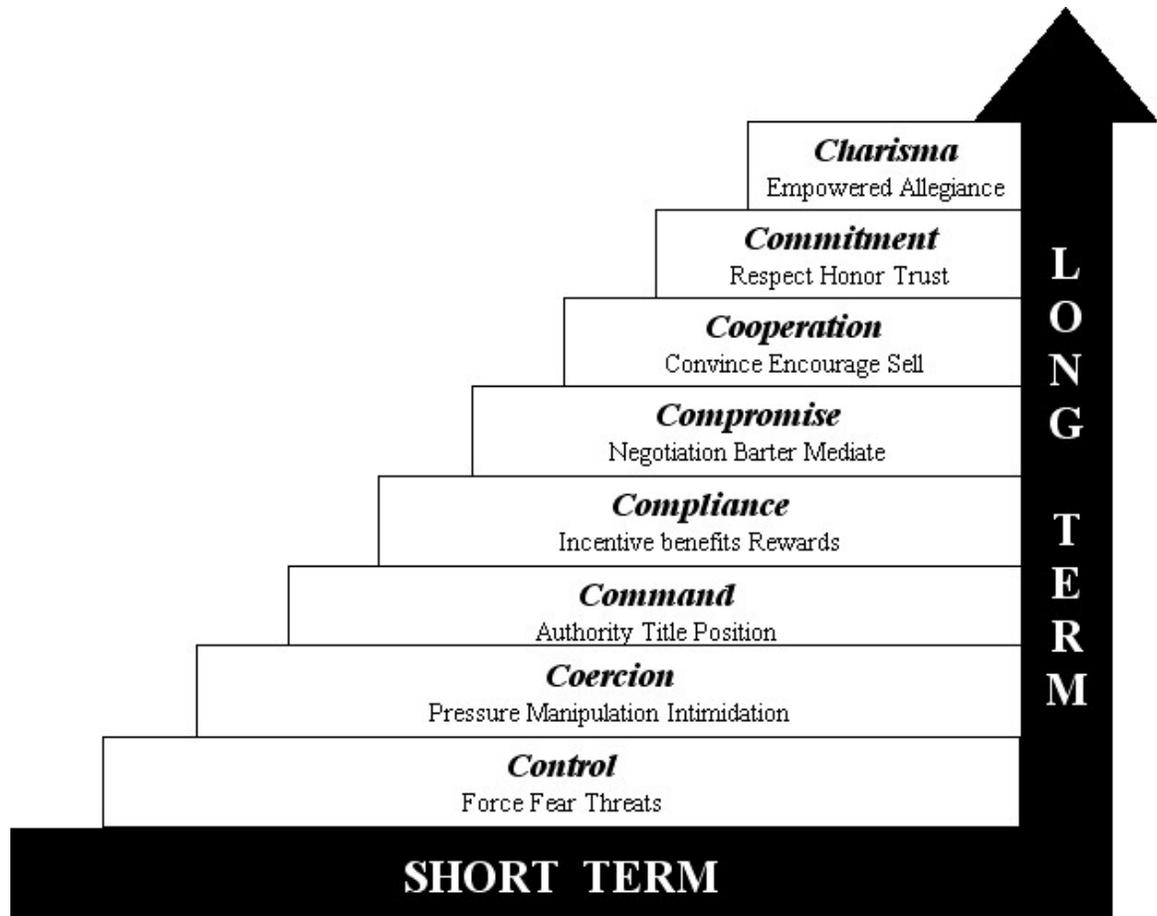
Let’s spend some time together exploring what it takes to get the best out of your team. There needs to be enough pressure that your workers are stimulated to action, but not so much that the environment becomes stressful and debilitating. One of the best ways to accomplish this proper level of pressure is to help your team members feel like they personally have stock in the outcome. Brainstorm ways in which a certain task or project can really become something your team can take ownership of, rather than something you’re barking at them to do. Your team members have to feel compelled to achieve because of their personal stake in the situation, not because “the boss said so.” How do you inspire *them* to have a vision for why the task has to be done? How do you instill in them that they are a vital part of the company’s success? This type of communication and understanding, before the task is even begun, speaks volumes to your team. There is no better way to kick off a new campaign than for your employees to all have a secure

knowledge of their standing within the company and why the company values and needs them.

When motivating others, there is a direct relationship between the type of persuasive technique used and how short or long-lasting the results will be. Basically, the most controlling and coercive measures yield the most temporary results, while the most deferring and respectful measures, those in which people feel free to act voluntarily, yield the most lasting results. Another interesting relationship is that it is often the use of control or force that is the easiest motivator to employ, perhaps giving reason to why this strategy is so commonly used. On the other end of the spectrum, control takes more time and patience to develop.

Over the years of my study of persuasion, leadership and influence, I have developed what I call the Hierarchy of Persuasion. In the past, I have only offered the abbreviated version of this hierarchy. In this chapter, however, I want to reveal the full version of the Hierarchy of Persuasion. View the diagram below to see what types of persuasion are best utilized in building a strong team foundation.

Hierarchy of Persuasion



© Persuasion Institute

Obviously, the attributes at the top of the diagram are more desirable, but you cannot hope for instantaneous respect and rapport on this level if it is not something you've taken the time to cultivate all along. For example, imagine you are the sales manager for a large company. You are in line for a vice president position, and you feel things are running well. The CEO invites you in for a meeting about the company's goals and future. You feel excited because you smell a promotion coming. The CEO is not in the mood to chitchat, so he gets right down to business. He appreciates your hard work and knows you are in line for this big promotion that will take place in the next six months;

however, sales performance is not as high as he would like it to be. He wants to increase sales by 25 percent in the next three months. When this happens, the promotion will be yours. He doesn't care how you do it; he tells you to "just make it happen." He doesn't want to be bogged down with the details. He just wants you come back with the job successfully done. Do you think you'll be able to pull a team together and make it happen if you don't have a solid relationship with them already? In this scenario, it would be quite late in the game to start thinking about how to get your team members to make this work, particularly if they feel like they'd just be doing it so you can get your promotion.

Look through each of the eight levels of persuasion and influence in the preceding diagram and assess whether they would be effective or not. Also, determine what the results and long-term consequences of each strategy would be. You could force or manipulate your team with threats of poor evaluations, loss of Christmas bonuses, loss of a shot at a raise or even loss of their jobs. Or maybe you could get them to do your bidding by asserting your authority over them: "I'm the boss; you have to do what I say." These are probably the easiest motivational methods, and they probably will get you the results you desire, but it's a double-edged sword. You may get the results you need for your promotion, but you'll also "gain" people who hate you, a nasty reputation, a loss of trust, etc. Hence, you have to decide if it's worth the trade-off.

Suppose you rule these options out and move toward a more negotiation-oriented approach. You could meet with each team member one-on-one and discuss possible incentives or rewards. Let's say you offer two extra weeks of paid vacation. Wow!—you see your team start hustling. The downside to this motivation is that it's external. Once the reward is given, your workers go back to normal. It is highly unlikely that your team will maintain their heightened activity once the incentive is removed. Furthermore, a danger exists that rewards will become expected. Rewards become crippling when they are *required* to produce any movement rather than being the occasional perk. Yet another downside to this motivational approach is that you may get what you want, but it may also cost you the kitchen sink in the process. Offering incentives also communicates to your employees that they can control you.

Hopefully, you've been more long-sighted and realized that having a great relationship with your team is the best way to motivate them. With this kind of work atmosphere, you can be up front with them about your promotion without worrying about what they'll think and say about you when you're not directly over them anymore. You also won't have to beg or bargain to get their help. You always seek a win-win situation, but the ultimate commitment from your team occurs when they'll step up to the plate, no matter what, based solely on the relationship of trust and respect they have with you. This kind of allegiance takes time and trust to develop.

To be an effective leader, always seek to build these kinds of connections with your team, even when you're not under pressure for them to perform. The ideal situation is to pursue this kind of team unity not necessarily because of what you hope it will ultimately get you, but just because you care about your team and consider them worth investing your personal energy and interest in. Because your team members trust that you truly care about them as individuals, they can feel free and empowered to really give it everything they've got and to be an enthusiastic part of the team. Under such conditions, they're not worrying about where they stand or what your motives are. Always be concerned about the success of your team as a whole rather than how you will professionally benefit. In the long run, you will have both.

Top 10 Attributes of Successful Sales Managers

We've discussed how the ideal situation is for people to act implicitly on what you've requested. The question remains, however, how do you gain this kind of influence? In the previous section, I suggested that this ideal is part of your long-term team relationship building. I'd now like to break that teambuilding effort down even further into specific characteristics and attributes you can seek to cultivate as a sales manager. In my mind, there are two broad influential categories: trust and presence. Under each category are five specific characteristics that every effective sales manager must possess. I call them the Five Cs of Trust and the Five Points of Presence.

The Ten Attributes of Influence

The Five Cs of Trust

Character
Competence
Confidence
Credibility
Congruence

The Five Points of Presence

Charisma
Enthusiasm
Optimism
Empathy
Vision

Why do you suppose that the first major category deals with trust? The ability to gain and keep trust is a vital factor in being able to influence your team. Research has shown, time and time again, that trust is always a contributing factor in the ability to influence others. When a person trusts you, that trust alone can cause them to accept you. On the flip side, if your team doesn't trust you, all the evidence, reasoning, facts or figures in the world won't get them to budge. Character is the foundation of trust. Stephen Covey, the author of the excellent book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, masterfully explains the essence of character and why it is so vital:

If I try to use human influence strategies and tactics of how to get other people to do what I want, to work better, to be more motivated, to like me and each other—while my character is fundamentally flawed, marked by duplicity or insincerity—then, in the long run, I cannot be successful. My duplicity will breed distrust, and everything I do—even using so-called good human relations techniques—will be perceived as manipulative. It simply makes no difference how good the rhetoric is or even how good the intentions are; if there is little or no trust, there is no foundation for permanent success. Only basic goodness gives life to technique.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Covey, Stephen. *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic*. New York. Simon and Schuster. 1989.

I also believe that the teaching of Phillips Brooks, a nineteenth-century clergyman, offers profound wisdom on the nature of character: “Character is made in the small moments in our lives.” Stop and think a moment about those individuals in your life whom you respect most deeply. While you may be able to recall a few momentous occasions, it is likely that it is these people’s quiet example that has most impressed you. It is their very nature and spirit, even when they are not “on stage,” that has garnered your respect.

Competence is your knowledge and ability in a particular subject area and comes from life-long learning and experience. We consider others to be competent when we see them continually learning and advancing their training and education, being successful in what they do or having a strong track record with the various people they have worked with. Obviously, competency is a crucial element to trust. If your team is to trust you, they have to feel like you know what you’re doing. Confidence is also a major factor in gaining trust and influence. You can probably think of a time when it was very apparent that someone you were relying on was not very confident in her/his abilities. In turn, her/his lack of confidence made you feel uneasy. You must exude confidence or else your team will feel like it’s a case of “the blind leading the blind.” They will not trust in you or your abilities; therefore, you will have very little influence over them.

The next attribute under the trust umbrella is credibility. Gerry Spence, perhaps the most famous trial lawyer of all time, explained the importance of credibility the best: “One can stand as the greatest orator the world has known, possess the quickest mind, employ the cleverest psychology and have mastered all the technical devices of argument, but if one is not credible, one might just as well preach to the pelicans.”⁵¹ To boost your credibility with your team, find out who your team knows and respects. See if you can get their mentor’s endorsement, either in person or in writing, to back up your credibility. If you are a known expert in your field, be sure to communicate that you have studied the subject, researched it and met with its other experts. Also, be prepared to drop the names of people your team will recognize. Another way to boost your credibility is to always

⁵¹ Spence, Gerry. *How to Argue and Win Every Time*. St Martins Press. 1995, p.4.

present yourself in a calm, organized and authoritative manner. Being overly emotional or flustered throws your credibility out the window.

The last building block of trust is congruence. Congruence means that your words and actions always match. You are not one who is known to say one thing and then do another. Agreement and harmony in your verbal and nonverbal messages increase trust, and hence your ability to influence. When congruence is lacking, red flags go up in your team members' minds. You can probably think of a manager you've known whose words you always had to take with a grain of salt. Such an individual is not the type of person you are likely to be influenced by.

Now that we've revealed the Five Cs of Trust, let's take a moment to examine the Five Points of Presence. Presence is the ability to influence and empower others. Your presence energizes and inspires other individuals. They are compelled to follow you because of the vision you offer. Charisma heads the list of attributes under the Five Points of Presence and is a big part of motivating others. Who wants to follow someone who is drab and blah? Again, Gerry Spence has some keen insight on this crucial quality:

Charisma is energy from the heart zone. If the speaker has no feeling, there is nothing to transfer. Charisma occurs when the speaker's feelings are transferred in the purest form to another. Charisma is not a diluted feeling. It is not disguised. It is a raw feeling. Charisma is the passing of our pure energy, our pure passion to the other.⁵²

People who are charismatic often hold us in awe. Their energy prods us, motivates us and inspires us. They fulfill our need to have heroes. We feel better for having met them, seen them, listened to them and interacted with them. Charisma is closely related to enthusiasm. If you are passionate about what you do, your enthusiasm will carry over into your interactions with your team. It is quite possibly passion and enthusiasm that most powerfully recruit the hearts and minds of those around you. Others are more likely to

⁵² Spence, Gerry. *How to Argue and Win Every Time*. St Martins Press. 1995, p.155.

jump on board if they can see your conviction. Enthusiasm is a great moving force that we should seek to permeate into all we do. It is the drive that keeps our motivation up until the goal is reached. Emerson said, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” Another great thinker, especially in the area of personal development, Norman Vincent Peale, said, “When one gets enthusiastic, the entire personality lights up. The mind becomes sharper, more intuitive; the entire life force and creative ability are enhanced. Such a person is motivated and will certainly make an impact.”

Another key factor is optimism. Optimism is more than a positive mental attitude. It is not just thinking about positive things and then hoping they will come true. True optimism is a frame of reference that governs how you lead. Optimists don’t just hope for but they actually expect success and goodness. Even when there are setbacks, they are able to quickly bounce back. If you can inspire optimism in your team members, they will be grateful for your positive influence and the difference it makes not only in the workplace, but also in their personal lives. Nobody wants to be around a moody, angry or pessimistic manager. Your optimism will attract others and be contagious. Once your optimism spreads, your team will begin working together with a lot of positive energy.

Now, let’s spend some time on attitude. Remember the old adage “Success in life is 85 percent attitude and 15 percent aptitude”? Harvard University actually conducted a study wherein it was determined that “success” (income, status, prestige, etc.) had significantly more to do with attitude than ability. In fact, attitude appeared to contribute more to lifetime earnings than even a person’s level of education.⁵³ Your attitude reflects what’s going on inside of you and is a strong indicator of what will actually play out on the surface. That’s why, when it comes to teambuilding, an optimistic attitude starts with you. Optimism *is* something you can control, and you can’t expect your team to develop it if you don’t have it yourself.

Empathy is another major part of being an effective leader. When someone feels your empathy, they will be more open to your influence. The world is full of people who are

⁵³ Maxwell, J. & Dornan, J. *Becoming a Person of Influence*. Nashville Dornan International. 1997, p.53.

trying to make us do things for *their* reasons. It is refreshing to find someone who will take the time to pause and seek to understand. As a leader, once you know whom you are dealing with, what s/he is thinking and why s/he is thinking such things, you will be better able to empathize.

Zig Ziglar points out that this kind of focus on others actually helps us meet our own needs: “The best way to get what you want out of life is to help others get what they want.” When you’re trying to work on being more empathetic, you must remember the universal needs of all men and women: approval, attention, praise, encouragement, understanding and acceptance. We can learn a lot about empathy from the ancient classic *Tao-te-Ching* by Lao-tzu. It states: “Evolved leaders win the trust and support of the people through their complete identification with them. The interests of people are naturally promoted because they become the interests of the leader as well.”⁵⁴

Vision is the final attribute of the Five Points of Presence. Influential leaders have a clearly defined vision, which in turn serves as a powerful tool in helping others see the big picture. Most people will embrace their leader’s vision if they know exactly where they fit into it and what they have to do to achieve it. Vision should pull the team together and generate energy, passion and a willingness to work hard. Creating a sound vision begins with focusing on our destination. In other words, you must know where you are going. If you hope to achieve outstanding results, give your team clear direction. Stephen Covey said, “To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where you’re going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.”⁵⁵ Lastly, when you plan and execute your vision, don’t be afraid to dream big. Walt Disney once said,

Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work,

⁵⁴ Wing, R.L. (1986). *The Tao of Power*. New York. Doubleday.

⁵⁵ Covey, Stephen. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Simon and Schuster. 1989, p.98.

remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.

Think of the incredible legacy that has been enjoyed by millions and that will continue to touch generations of people because of this one man's vision. It all started with one man, whose enthusiasm had a ripple effect on all those he worked with. Walt Disney's mark will forever be emblazoned upon the world.

Psychology of the Sales Professional

I mentioned earlier how one's attitude has a lot more to do with the level of her/his success than one's aptitude, ability, IQ, education or other factors do. I'd like to get into the details of a salesperson's psychology so that, when it comes to building your team and individual team members, you are equipped with the knowledge of what's really going on in there. As a holder of a management or other sort of leadership position, you may have already experienced being a salesperson yourself. However, it never hurts to review and be reminded of what it's like to "carry the bag." I also want to emphasize the mental game because so many companies focus on external things, like product knowledge, licensing, etc. And while these things are all important, companies that focus on such externalities often neglect the cultivation of their salespeople's proper mindset. I've always found this selling mentality ironic, because it's what's going on in the inside that will most dramatically affect sales.

A direct relationship exists between self-image and sales performance. If you don't already, try to get a handle on how your reps perceive *themselves*. What kind of self-talk plays in their brains all day long? You and your team will never experience exponential success if it is not something they can mentally conceive of first. And the major precursor to vivid envisioning of success in the workplace is vivid envisioning of success in oneself and one's abilities. How can you, as a sales manager, cultivate healthy, solid self-confidence and self-belief? One of the easiest ways to do so is to offer sincere praise. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Every man is entitled to be valued by his best moments."

There is no need to fear that you will create an egomaniac by giving someone simple but honest praise and appreciation for good, hard work.

Often, it is more effective to praise the specific act rather than the person. This way, your praise is attached to something distinct and concrete. Praise is harder to be interpreted as flattery or favoritism when there is a specific and concrete thing being praised. General compliments may produce a temporary effect, but they can incite jealousy in others and create even more insecurity in the recipient if the specific activity that merited the compliment remains unknown. Then there is a new pressure to live up to this higher standard, even though the praised individual is not sure how s/he set it. Even more insecurity is bred if the praised individual fears you will retract your praise. That's because in not knowing concretely how s/he earned it, s/he doesn't know how to keep it. One single person feeling this kind of anxiety or insecurity can really cause your entire teambuilding effort to backfire. Have you ever witnessed (or experienced) coworkers who huddled together to complain after a "pep rally" with the boss? Instead of feeling inspired and motivated, all they could do was gripe. Unfortunately, it only takes one person's bad attitude to drag down the rest.

We know that when a specific behavior is praised, that behavior will increase. At a small college in Virginia, 24 students in a psychology course decided to see whether they could use compliments to change the way women on campus dressed. For a while, they complimented all the female students who were wearing blue. The percentage of the female student population wearing blue then rose from 25 percent to 38 percent. The researchers then switched to complimenting any woman who wore red. This shift in the color being praised caused the appearance of red on campus to double from 11 percent to 22 percent. Praise is a simple but often overlooked concept. If you want to use this technique to your best advantage, be sure you give honest and sincere praise.

Closely related to praise is acceptance. We all long for acceptance. We want to feel like our actions and contributions help an effort or cause. We all want to be noticed by others. We also all want to be someone of significance who is held in high regard. Knowledge of

this common craving from acceptance can help you motivate your team. If you can make them feel that their help is appreciated, that they are personally accepted and that their contributions are essential, they will be more inspired to perform. When your team members feel accepted unconditionally, with no strings attached, their doubts, fears and inadequacies will go out the window. One way to make your team feel accepted is to offer them genuine thanks. Seek to make a conscientious and deliberate effort to thank people in all aspects of your professional life. Don't assume your team members know you care about and appreciate them. Don't make the mistake of thinking that a paycheck is thanks enough. One of the main reasons why people are dissatisfied with their sales job is because they are never thanked or given any recognition for their efforts.

Often, individuals increase their feelings of acceptance by building their association with certain people, places or things. This sense of identification has been referred to as the Social Identity Theory. For example, a sports fan may enhance his sense of belonging by plastering his walls with his favorite team's sports paraphernalia. Even though no one on that team has any clue who he is, he feels better about himself anyway, just because of the association and identity he has created for himself with that team.

Are there ways in which you can use the Social Identity Theory to your advantage? Think of ways to create strong team association. These methods should be things that are unique to the team and that help team members individually feel like they are "insiders." Maybe your team needs a mascot, a mission statement or even a theme song. I once knew a sales team that played the theme music from *Rocky* over the loud speaker every time someone closed a sale. Things like this might seem silly, but they really build team spirit and morale. If you worry that things like this will be distracting or disruptive to your particular workplace, look for ways to adapt. The energy that grows from each team member feeling accepted is worth the effort.

Goal setting is another powerful way of keeping sales psychology on the up-and-up. We all know that goals dictate future performance by giving team members a sense of purpose and direction. I can think of nothing less motivating than not knowing why I've

been asked to do something. Instill in your team members what the end objective is and explain to them the necessary steps to get there. It is much easier to put forth the effort when we can answer who, what, where, when, why and how. Make sure your goals are realistic and attainable, but lofty enough that they are inspiring.

It is a general rule of thumb that greater or more difficult goals actually increase performance. The reason for this tendency is that loftier goals or objectives set higher expectations, and expectations in turn strongly influence behavior. The power of effective goal setting or setting a target can be seen in the following example: In a particular production plant, workers with little experience were divided into two groups. One group was told to simply observe the experienced workers and try to be able to perform at a skilled level themselves within twelve weeks. The second group received specific weekly goals that were progressively more and more demanding. Needless to say, the second group fared much better.⁵⁶ Similarly, Yale University once conducted a striking twenty-year study that found that the 3 percent of students who put their goals in writing had significantly higher incomes than those who did not—in fact, higher incomes than the other 97 percent of students combined. From these examples, it is obvious that proper goal setting goes a long way toward promoting sound sales psychology amongst your team members.

Years of observation and study have produced personality profiles of what are considered to be outstanding salespeople. Perhaps the most recognized of these profiles is the model that was developed by Gallup Management Consulting Group. Gallup has spent more than two decades interviewing hundreds of thousands of top salespeople to help corporate clients form and develop their own sales teams. Its findings suggest that the top four qualities of top-tier producers are: 1) solid persuasion and closing skills; 2) self-motivation; 3) strong work ethic and 4) excellent people and relationship skills.

Why do I highlight these findings? It is likely that as a sales manager, you already look for these skills when you hire someone anyway. But how do you enhance these essential

⁵⁶ Mortimer, R. Feinberg. *Effective Psychology for Managers*. Prentice Hall. 1986.

sales characteristics after your recruits are on board so that your team can become even better? My hope is that by giving you four key concentration areas, you can streamline your efforts into getting the greatest results with the most focused effort. When you are trying to draw out any one of these characteristics, or *any* characteristic for that matter, it is helpful to assess the kind of personalities you're dealing with. For some, a strong drive to close a sale exists just because they possess a need to "win." Whether that "win" translates into financial rewards, recognition, the glory of being at the top or whatever, some individuals just have an almost instinctive need to win. This need is compelling enough that they are not deterred by long hours, rejection or time away from their family.

For others, it is not just about winning in and of itself. Beyond that, some individuals have a competitive edge that relishes the defeat of others—even their own colleagues. Half of the victory for these types of people is seeing others left in the dust. I believe that some competition can be a good thing, but you've got to be on your toes to buffer this type of personality. If you think pitting your team members against each other might actually create unhealthy rivalries and negative feelings, then you've got to have a way to counteract those negative effects.

Next, there are those personalities who are very ego-driven. They aren't motivated by a need to conquer others. Rather, they want success solely for their own personal satisfaction. This is the type of person who is constantly out to beat her/his own previous records. In other words, these types of individuals compete with themselves. Moreover, they are very focused on being experts. While this competitive orientation has significant strong points, its main downside is that it is too self-focused—even in a well-intended way—and not conscious enough of the team element. The self-motivated person is the one you want to be sure you can draw into the team so you have the best that both approaches have to offer.

Then you have those individuals who seem to get the most satisfaction out of seeing their customers happy. They don't really have the burning desire to win or compete, but they are very much into relationship building. These people are naturally gifted at being

empathetic, caring and good listeners. They are the ones who are much more inclined to stay in touch with clients after the sale has come and gone.

As you step back and evaluate what kind of team member mix you have, realize that no one is purely one temperament or another. We tend to be a combination of at least two of these different types of producers. However, we are usually dominated much more by one area than the others. Your job is to get a grip on what you have to work with and figure out how to make all the pieces of the puzzle fit together so your team solidly represents all of the best qualities of top sales producers.

In closing this section, I wanted to touch on the topic of working with a rep who has hit a plateau. Why? Because it's a very real obstacle that sometimes happens even to the very best. The most typical cause for a plateau is simply feeling burned out. In this case, a very obvious solution would be to lighten the stalled rep's responsibilities or even give her/him some time off. On the other hand, it may be that the rep is burned out with doing the "same old thing." If that's the case, simply changing her/his responsibilities would provide the necessary stimulation to get her/him moving again. New responsibilities could be things like training, forecasting or recruiting. Even performing the same tasks with new prospects or in a different community may alleviate boredom and present exciting, new challenges.

Sometimes it works to have reps come up with their own solutions. They may be more apt to pursue something they feel they've come up with on their own than something that is imposed. Furthermore, this way they really know what's at the heart of the issue and would, therefore, likely know the best remedy better than anyone else. Lastly, review the possibility of how bonuses and other forms of recognition might spur renewed motivation. This approach is especially effective when your team members' financial needs are already being met and they're looking for reward and acknowledgment in other forms. In the next section, we'll discuss what kinds of rewards and incentives work the best.

Effective Rewards and Incentives

The first place to start when developing an incentive program is to identify exactly what you want to accomplish. You can't just spend money and then hope you see results. You've got to have a game plan. As you've read through this chapter, you've probably gotten a pretty solid feel for the personality types that formulate your team. You've probably also uncovered what your team's strengths and weaknesses are. Based on where your team is at, you can start designing rewards and incentives to produce exactly what you're striving for. When doing so, there are some general rules that are helpful to keep in mind.

First of all, always remember that what is considered a great reward can vary according to the individual and the particular circumstances. Many successful managers suggest mixing individual incentives with team rewards. This way, you are meeting individual needs while still fostering cooperation and maintaining attention on company goals. Incentives that are based on group performance also help salespeople become better team players and feel a sense of ownership in company goals. This way, they can feel some internal motivation and personal satisfaction in seeing the job done well instead of always depending on some external, temporary factor to motivate them.

Fair warning, however, that incentives often lead to a warning of the diminishing returns trap. What I mean by this is that a certain reward will lose its impact over time if it is used too much. That is, instead of feeling rewarded, people will come to expect the incentive as an automatic return for their efforts. The other side of this issue is that when the reward is taken away, the good behavior will also disappear. Motivation based on rewards is an external influence instead an internal one. It is worth pointing out here that the big, tangible rewards can definitely give your salespeople something to keep their eyes on the whole year long, but don't neglect the smaller incentives. Saying thank you, noticing a rep's extra effort, helping a rep through a slump and just day-to-day acknowledgements can count big and will contribute to your teambuilding efforts just as much as huge year-end bonuses will.

With any great incentive program, you have to devote time to promoting it. Obviously, a big, year-long incentive program is going to flop if you only mention it one time. If you want an incentive program to produce maximum return, you've got to promote it by giving your team members weekly updates, newsletter blurbs, short-term incentives, etc. Find ways to keep the momentum going to make sure the program pays off. Anything creative, fun or different that you can do will make your program more effective. It's also very helpful if there is prominent visual reminder whereby the team can see the countdown to the program's end.

Below is an extensive list of reward ideas you can incorporate into your motivational efforts. Some can be applied short term, others long term. Some are team rewards; others can be adapted to individuals. Some will work great for your team; others will not. See what fits your team's situation best. Often, it is just a matter of finding something fun that will break the tedium of the sales cycle. In terms of physical merchandise, remember that the *value* in the salesperson's eyes will be much more than the actual price tag. Cash disappears, but your customer will always remember that her/his laptop, TV or whatever it is came from your company.

Just a few more basic guidelines: 1) Be sure your salespeople understand what's expected of them, whether any reward is given or not. It is not wise to reward a salesperson for bare-minimum work. Once base requirements are consistently being met, then you have a starting point from which you can set higher goals. 2) Make the incentive program's timeline is clear so everyone knows exactly when it starts and ends and exactly what's required in the interim. 3) Establish the reward up front so people have a clear vision in their minds of what they are working toward. Remember that while cash is exciting, often other incentives can be more powerful. The actual dollar amount of an item and the value placed on that item by the recipient are two different things. If money were enough, why wouldn't a salesperson working on commission already be excited and motivated enough every day? 4) Whenever possible, use rewards that can be shared with friends or family. For example, such a reward could be a free dinner for two at a nice restaurant. If the rep

can share the results of her/his efforts with others, the incentive will be more exciting and will drive them to do better.

101 Ways to Motivate, Energize and Inspire Your Team

Group Building

1. Movie day—bring popcorn
2. Water-skiing/Lake trip
3. Join the city softball team
4. Go watch a professional team sport
5. Miniature golf
6. Volunteer opportunities
7. Cold-calling contest
8. Work-at-home week
9. Have the CEO address the sales staff
10. Racecar contest
11. Bring in a comedian for sales training
12. Fun, harmless practical jokes
13. Joke of the day to start a meeting
14. Bring in take-out for reps staying late
15. Laser tag
16. Ropes course
17. Bowling
18. Free lunch for the first sale of the day
19. VM broadcast about someone's personal success
20. Company Olympics

Company Socials

21. Luau
22. Fiesta
23. Ice cream social

24. Barbeque
25. Pizza party
26. Customer appreciation day
27. Four-day weekend
28. Bring in donuts
29. Company newsletter about the success of the week
30. Dress up like Santa and hand out gifts
31. Thanksgiving or other holiday party

Esteem Building/Awards

32. Best phone demeanor
33. Best dresser
34. Most creative close
35. Best sales week
36. Most improved
37. Best team player
38. Most cold calls
39. Most new clients
40. Best customer service
41. Top attitude
42. Special note or email
43. Telegram
44. FedEx special note
45. Thank-you card
46. Personal pat on back
47. Lead part of a training meeting
48. Personal goal-setting meeting
49. Suggestion box
50. Personal call from CEO

Simple compliments like...

51. You're incredible.
52. You're a good...
53. I believe in you.
54. Great job!
55. You made my day.
56. Hug.
57. Thank you for ...
58. I'm proud of you.
59. Perfect.
60. You're awesome!
61. Well Done.
62. Great!
63. Excellent!
64. I knew you could do it.
65. I trust you.
66. Spectacular!
67. Outstanding!
68. I'm your biggest fan.

Friendly gestures like...

69. Smile
70. Warm handshake
71. Pat on the back

Individual Building

72. Daily contact with praise
73. Let them off to take their children to school on the first day
74. Free calls on company cell phones
75. Motivational plaque
76. Health club membership

- 77. Lotto wheel
- 78. Drive CEO's car for the week
- 79. Shirt/Hat with logo
- 80. Special parking spot
- 81. Photo with CEO
- 82. Remodel office
- 83. Disneyland trip
- 84. Porsche for weekend

Personal Development

85. Books

<i>As a Man Thinketh</i>	<i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i>
<i>Swim With the Sharks</i>	<i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i>
<i>Maximum Influence</i>	<i>The Power of Your Subconscious Mind</i>
<i>Think and Grow Rich</i>	<i>Psycho-Cybernetics</i>
<i>The Magic of Thinking Big</i>	<i>Learned Optimism</i>

86. Videos

<i>Remember the Titans</i>	<i>Miracle</i>
<i>Rocky</i>	<i>Chariots of Fire</i>
<i>Apollo 13</i>	<i>Field of Dreams</i>
<i>Mr. Holland's Opus</i>	<i>Seabiscuit</i>
<i>The Right Stuff</i>	<i>The Rookie</i>

87. Audios

- The Secrets to Manifesting Your Destiny*
- Lead the Field*
- Unleash the Power Within*
- The Psychology of Selling*
- Magnetic Persuasion*
- Present with Power*

The Strangest Secret
Exponential Success
The Science of Personal Achievement
The Psychology of Winning

88. Travel Incentives

Hawaii	Upgrade to first class
Local hotel with dinner	Limo to airport
Las Vegas	Bermuda
Cancun	Caribbean cruise
Free miles to fly	Tahiti
Hotel suite upgrade	Australia

Monetary Rewards

89. Large-screen TV
90. Computer
91. DVD player
92. \$100 bill
93. Lottery tickets
94. Restaurant gift certificates
95. Cashews
96. Take the rep's family to dinner
97. Department store gift certificate
98. Movie rental gift certificate
99. Costco certificate
100. Bookstore gift certificate
101. New suit

At the conclusion of an incentive program, it is important to assess how successful it was. Did you get the results you wanted? One of the best ways to judge the program's effectiveness, besides considering your own observations, is to get feedback from the

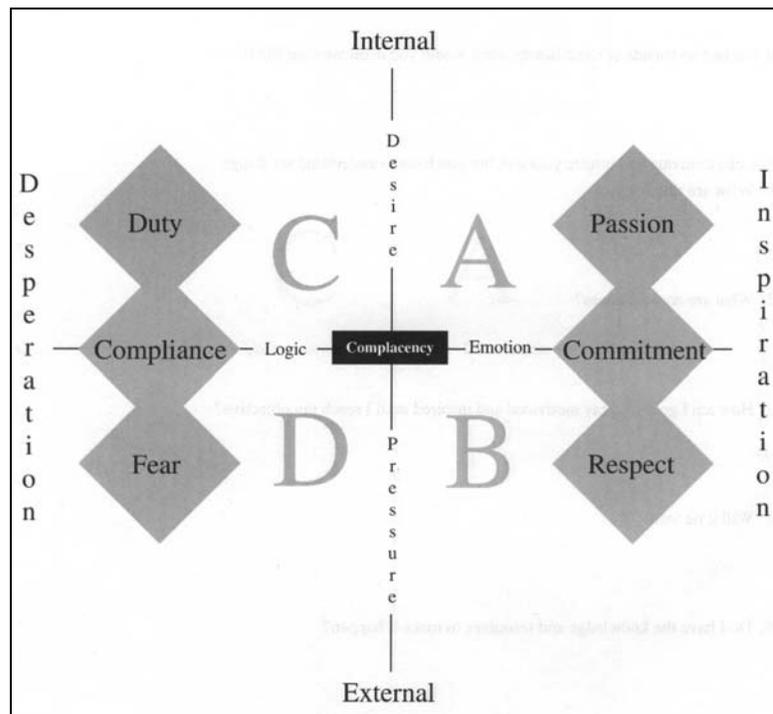
reps and administrators involved. You want to be sure that your directions were communicated clearly and at the right intervals, that the rewards were appealing and sparked interest and drive, that your team members felt supported and prepared to take on the challenges being presented, that the program boosted morale, team effort, energy and creativity, etc.

What were the weaknesses, if any? Did the program meet or fall short of participants' expectations? And of course, you must consider the bottom line impact on sales. Another important thing that cannot be overlooked is whether there may have been any outside influence that you did not have any control over. For example, has the industry experienced an increase in pricing? Was the product or service *new*, or has there been longstanding consumer awareness and recognition of it? Have there been any fluctuations in the company's marketing campaigns? All of these questions can basically be broken down into different areas, such as goals, budget or administration. In each area, identify what worked and what didn't so you have concrete information to help you develop your next incentive program.

Motivation Equation

When we break motivation down to its most fundamental level, it's either inspiration-oriented or desperation-oriented. Whatever action we take, we are moving either toward something we favor or away from something we disfavor. The majority of the world uses desperation as a motivator. Desperation is like a cattle prod forcing you to move forward and take action. You can motivate anyone on your team with desperation. The problem is that motivation spurred by desperation does not last. When desperation is the motivator, sales reps are in an "away from" mentality. This kind of motivation is fleeting, arising only when threat, fear or discomfort is present. If you want motivation to last, you need to rely on inspiration. When your team is motivated by inspiration, they're moving of their own initiative because they *want* to and are *excited* to, rather than because they are being forced to. Motivation becomes long term when it taps into a person's inner recesses.

While the inspiration approach is certainly the more appealing of the two motivational methods, sometimes there has to be an element of “desperation.” I don’t mean that you want to cause your team members to feel despair, but sometimes things that push us away have to be present just as much as things that draw us near. The main reason for this recommendation is that if inspiration isn’t quite enough, your prospects may just simply fall into inactivity. That is, they fall into a comfort zone. I’ve developed a grid that maps out the different motivators, their varying degrees and the effects they have on others. Notice that motivation does not exist in the middle of the grid. This central region is the comfort zone, where we experience complacency. How do you get someone on your team to move outside the middle? Let’s start with the short-term, easy form of motivation, quadrant D, where we find external desperation. You apply an external pressure to force someone into action. In other words, your team members must do what you say or they’re fired. “Hit these numbers or pack your bags.” Sure, it will work temporarily, but long-term consequences will result.



The next area of the Motivation Equation is quadrant C, where we find internal desperation. Desperation motivation can be made internal if you can use your prospects’ sense of duty or obligation to get them to move. Internal motivation works something like

this: “I’m getting paid, so I guess I have to do this. If I don’t do this, the team will miss its quota.” You can see that in both of these examples, the person is acting of her/his own initiative but only out of obligation or to avoid a worse consequence.

So, is there a place for either of these latter two motivational approaches? Yes, but use them sparingly. Most teams will not put up with this treatment unless they know it is tough love. Every once in a while, when other things have failed, you can use these types of motivation. You have to let your team know not only that there are positive consequences for their actions, but if they don’t perform, there may be negative consequences as well. There has to be a baseline or a standard from which to evaluate the situation. Your team members can’t think that no matter what they will always have a job. Let’s face it—sometimes we all need a kick in the pants. When we do resort to this approach, it’s usually a negative circumstance based on desperation. Just don’t go overboard or take it to the extreme. Make sure before you use any negative reinforcement that your sales rep has the tools s/he needs to get the job done. Does s/he need more training? Does s/he know exactly what you expect and how to do it?

The next quadrant is quadrant B, where we find external inspiration. Here, it is still external factors that influence you, but this time in a positive way. You are inspired and energized rather than acting simply to avoid pain. External inspiration is getting on the right motivational track because it can grow into internal inspiration. Sometimes, this quadrant is referred to as “borrowed light.” It’s OK to be guided and inspired by borrowed light until you’ve lit your own flame. At least this kind of motivation keeps you progressing in a positive way. Even with external influences, this type of motivation can produce long-term effects because it is inspiring and thus begins to tap into your inner emotions.

The best type of motivation is internal motivation, as shown in quadrant A. This quadrant is what we call passion. There’s no stopping the person who has found inspiration that is purely internally driven. You can wind her/him up and s/he’ll go on forever.

Hopefully, this chapter has given you lots of ideas on how to help individual team members as well as your team as a whole feel more motivated. As I said earlier, this material will apply to certain people in certain situations and will help them learn to find the right tools. The point is, you possess the knowledge and are equipped to take on any situation. Review this chapter anytime you need to give your team a boost, or even just to keep current momentum going. Of course, any of these suggestions may be adapted to suit your team's specific needs.

Perfect The Art of Closing

Did you know that you sell for a living? In fact, *everyone* sells for a living. Whether you're a sales rep, a parent, a leader, a manager or a coach, on a daily basis we all find ourselves in situations where we must sell others on our way of thinking. In sales, this process is referred to as "closing." Since "closing skills" derive themselves directly from the sales industry, I'm going to discuss them within a sales context, but bear in mind that these skills are universal in their application and value. As you read through this chapter, keep in mind that I will provide questions at the end to help you reflect on how closing skills fit into your daily life.

It is typical for a novice persuader to encounter resistance. There are as many different reasons for resistance as there are personalities, so the trick lies in knowing which closing skill to use for which person. The more closing skills you have under your belt, the better equipped you will be to land a sale. A crucial closing concept to learn as soon as possible is that you should actually employ closing strategies throughout your entire presentation. Most people think of the close as the final wrap-up. While this is the sales point where the deal is formally and openly acknowledged as "let's do it" or "thanks, but no thanks," the masterful persuader builds the close in stages throughout the entire sales process. The last phase of the selling exchange is only the culminating step of several deliberate but less evident steps that have taken place beforehand. It is crucial, not only for your own good but also for your prospects' good, to help them through this process. Incrementally moving them closer and closer to agreement is much more effective than springing it on them at the end. There is nothing worse than seeing a shocked prospect with her/his mouth wide open following the close. Waiting to lunge with your close until the very end of your sales presentation could be compared to plunging unprepared into the deep end of the pool versus wading comfortably from the shallow end to the deep end only as you feel well prepared, well informed and well instructed to do so.

The incremental close helps avoid the old hard-close approach of the past. Remember the hard close? Old tactics used such strategies as bullying, pressuring or forcing your

prospect into a decision. We've all experienced the hard close at one time or another. Unfortunately, some "persuaders" still employ the hard-close strategy, but when they do, they're really not persuading at all. Even if a prospect succumbs to one of these sales tactics, it is likely with resentment, buyer's remorse and discontinued business in the future. What's more, you can rest assured that unbeknownst to the offending salesperson, a prospect who is bullied into a sale will deter all her/his friends and family from patronizing the business where s/he endured such treatment.

Since studies show that how you open a sale is more important than how you close it, think of starting your close earlier on in the persuasive process. Let's call this "collecting yeses." We'll discuss this concept more in-depth later on, but for the time being, what it basically means is that you concern yourself with drawing in your prospects early on. That is, you warm them up in stages until the ultimate conclusion is obvious to them and they decide for themselves exactly what you were hoping they'd decide in the first place.

Because you're going to focus on closing as a process that begins early on in your presentation, it is important to consider the messages you are broadcasting right from the beginning. Superficial or not, people are going to draw conclusions from their earliest interactions with you, and those first impressions tend to be the longest lasting, too. It is said that the first and most lasting impression is made in about the first four minutes of a first encounter. Hence, be sure those first four minutes are positive ones because the cement dries fast! It is extremely difficult to overcome a bad first impression. Even if you try to make up for it later on, that first impression will linger. The most obvious advice is to be sure you look professional and well groomed in any persuasive situation. In other words, dress appropriately for the setting. Next, exude confidence that is not arrogant but rather is upbeat, positive and encouraging. This positivity in your demeanor will allow your prospects, who hardly know you, to take comfort in your ability to educate them about the product or service they are investigating. Direct eye contact and a sincere smile accompanied by a firm handshake and addressing your prospects by name always help.

I have identified what I call the “Three Rs” for solid closing. After the first impression, your next focus is to effectively weave your close throughout the entire presentation. That is, the three Rs are at work throughout your presentation, aiding your prospect in becoming more and more inclined to buy. These three Rs are reason, resources and representative. Let’s look at the first R. “Reason” must be viewed from two different angles—first, from your prospect’s and then from your own. Early on in the persuasive setting, seek to understand exactly what your prospects’ needs are. That is, determine what their reason is for coming to you or listening to you in the first place. Then, you have to give them the *reason* to buy. Essentially, their problem and your solution match. Do not fall into the trap that many rookie salesmen do of spouting off a laundry list of features, benefits or all the reasons why *you* think they should buy. This sales strategy is useless because your prospects have come to you with their *own* reasons for buying already in mind. If you talk too much about what *you* think the reasons are to buy, you’re going to talk your bewildered prospects right out of the sale. When the sales representative talks too much, s/he sucks the emotion right out of the sale. It is draining and frustrating for prospects to hear a salesperson’s incessant babble about all of a product’s bells and whistles when they just want their own key questions answered.

There is a great story that illustrates the importance of your reason to buy ringing true with your prospects’ reasons to buy. A gentleman by the name of Airman Jones was assigned to the induction center, where he advised new recruits about their governmental benefits, especially their GI insurance. It wasn’t long before Captain Smith noticed that Airman Jones had an extremely high success rate, selling insurance to nearly 100 percent of the recruits he advised. Rather than asking him about his successful track record, the Captain stood at the back of the room during one of Jones’s presentations and listened to Jones’s sales pitch. As he presented, Jones explained the basics of GI insurance to the new recruits and then said, “If you are killed in a battle and have GI insurance, the government has to pay \$200,000 to your beneficiaries. But if you don’t have GI insurance and get killed on the battlefield, the government only has to pay a maximum of \$6,000. Now,” he concluded, “which group do *you* think they are going to send into battle first?”

The resounding secret to his sales success was that Airman Jones gave the new recruits a compelling reason to buy.

The second R of solid closing is “resources.” Resources cover all those things that factor in to whether or not your product is appropriate for your prospect. Resources would include time availability, financial backing, support from family, physical ability, etc. For example, investing vast amounts of time and energy into selling annual ski passes to nursing home residents would not really be giving wise consideration to such prospects’ resources.

The third R of solid closing is the “representative.” This is where you, as a person, factor into the selling equation. How readily can your prospect feel a strong rapport with you? Is there an instinctive sense of trust? Does your style rub this person the wrong way? Whether you realize it or not, you are a part of the selling package. There have been many times when a prospect walked away from a sale, not because of the product—in fact, the product might have been just what s/he was looking for—but because of the rep s/he had to deal with. Be sure you conduct yourself in such a way that your prospect can *like* you. People buy from people they like. They don’t buy from people they don’t like. It’s that simple.

The Psychology of Closing

So far I’ve taken you through some of the basics, some of the beginning steps in the closing process. Notice how these steps have all been *outward* expressions of your salesmanship. In reality, the very sophisticated psychology of closing has stood behind every slam-dunk sale. Even the sales transaction that seems so natural, so easy-going and so positive is actually very deliberately driven. Throughout the next several paragraphs, I’m going to share with you what I believe are some of the key components of sound closing psychology. One of the most crucial of these components is conscientious and undeviating attention to getting your prospects to open up and reveal *their* psychology, if you will. What’s really going on in their minds? This psychological technique is

absolutely fundamental to a successful close. The more you hone your persuasion skills, the more you will discover that your success is directly related to your ability to empathetically and personably respond to the people in front of you. What is one of the most obvious ways to get inside your prospects' minds? It is actually a twofold process: a) Don't talk too much; and b) Ask lots of questions so *they* are the ones doing all the talking.

When we ask lots of questions, particularly if they are open-ended (the most effective type), we experience several positive byproducts. First, our prospects have the opportunity to tell us exactly what their needs are. That is, they can inform us of what they are looking for and why. In sales, using questions to acquire this kind of information is often called "uncovering the hot button." How can you solve your prospects' problems if you don't know what their "hot buttons" are? This is key information if you are to turn your prospects into long-term raving fans.

Second, keeping your own mouth closed avoids the fatal but common error of jabbering away about all of a product's perks and pluses. The truth is, most people only have one or two key reasons for buying, and the more you talk, the more you diffuse the transaction's energy. The more you talk, the more wind you also take out of your sales. Your prospects really just wanted to come get a good deal; they didn't come to hear your discourse on the whole product line. They may listen politely, but as you monopolize the conversation, spouting off about all kinds of sparkles and pizzazz that have nothing to do with their "hot button," their minds begin wandering to where they're going to go next. Then, the sale is lost before you've even asked for it. Just remember, talk little, and when you do, keep it simple. Information overload is just going to overwhelm and confuse your prospects, and as the old sales adage goes, "A confused mind says 'NO'!"

The third reason for asking open-ended questions is that it gives you better control over the conversation and where it's heading. As soon as your prospects are the ones grilling you, the tables have turned. You lost control. Consider the following question/answer scenarios and you'll see clearly that the individual *asking* the questions has control,

while, perhaps surprisingly, the one doing all the *talking* does not have control: an employer interviewing for a job opening, a doctor preparing to diagnose a patient and an attorney questioning a witness. Note that in each of these examples, the individual asking the questions is in some sort of authoritative and/or advisory role. It is not so different when someone comes to you looking for a particular product or service to fit her/his needs. When you are the “interviewer,” you will glean all the information you need to best guide your prospects while still maintaining control over the course the conversation takes, including, most importantly, the sought-after final conclusion where they’ll enthusiastically buy from you.

The fourth reason for asking open-ended questions of your prospects is that as you let them express their feelings and concerns, it is clearly communicated, albeit in an unspoken manner, that you are sincerely interested in them—always a very important selling technique. Your prospects want to feel that you have their best interest at heart and that you are mindful of their needs. Genuine interest will explode your ability to develop a relationship of trust and solidifying rapport.

The fifth reason for using questions in your selling strategy is that in discussing the issues that are important to your prospects, they are drawn more proactively into the conversation and thus become emotionally involved. Consider the fact that every purchasing action under any circumstance is an attempt to improve or enhance the current status of a person, place or situation. Why do I consider an emotionally engaged prospect a positive, even necessary, thing? Emotions drive actions; they are the catalysts to closed deals. This is not to say that logic doesn’t play a part in the persuasion process as well, because it most certainly does. Emotions, however, provide the initial ignition. They incite action. Meanwhile, logic is the tinder that continues to burn after the initial energy and excitement end. It keeps the commitment intact because there is still something concrete to point to. Some buying personalities will be more logically inclined, but as a general rule, an emotionally engaged individual is much more compelled to purchase. This is not a statement of one’s intellectual prowess or lack thereof; it is simply a

statement of human nature. In a nutshell, all buying decisions are emotional, while logic rationalizes the purchasing decision.

Another key component of successful closing psychology is the importance of acting with authority. This does not mean that you are arrogant or condescending toward your prospects. It *does* mean that your prospects have a certain expectation that you will be an expert in your field and that you will have the ability to advise them. Your prospects have a need and they want it fulfilled competently. Think of a time when you were faced with an important buying decision. Do you think that an apologetic and insecure salesperson, one who was constantly wringing his hands, would have made you feel more positive and confident about your purchase? Probably not—in fact, you probably would have found it annoying, maybe even disturbing. With this tendency in mind, when in a persuasive setting, do not be afraid to demonstrate your expertise. You could even look at the seller–buyer relationship as a student–teacher relationship. Think of yourself as a consultant or an advisor. You are the doctor of sales. That is, you are diagnosing your prospects’ condition and recommending a cure. When you look at the selling scenario that way, you are practically under obligation to conduct yourself as an authority figure.

Hand in hand with the need to act with authority is the need to be assumptive. What do I mean by this? Assumption relates especially to the final stage of your close, when you’re waiting to hear your prospect’s final decision. Many salespeople hate this part of the selling transaction. They build rapport and shoot the breeze just fine, but then when it comes down to closing the deal, their whole demeanor changes. They suddenly become tense as they ask their prospect what s/he wants to do. They then cringe as they wait on pins and needles for the prospect’s answer. How do you think this type of demeanor makes your prospects feel? If it hasn’t happened to you before, I can tell you—it freaks them out. They may not be able to pinpoint it exactly, but they sense that something isn’t right and then walk away from the deal based on that one moment alone. Such a backing-down response could be a conscious or subconscious reaction. Everything else could have gone perfectly. Remember, a confused mind says “no.”

If you're this type of salesperson, you've got to talk yourself through the process. Prospective buyers clearly *want* to buy; after all the time and energy they spend on trying to make a decision, they *want* you to confirm that their decision to purchase is a good one. How do you make them feel that way? You have to *assume the sale*. In other words, in your mind, it's already a done deal. By acting assumptive, you yourself will feel confident and more at ease, and consequently, you'll make your prospect feel much more comfortable, too. As you implement this tool, you'll quickly discover that the more assumptive you are, the easier people close—in fact, they'll often close themselves. You'll just have been the vehicle that assisted them to the obvious conclusion. Conversely, you'll discover that buyer resistance usually only emerges as your own uneasiness is apparent.

There is a story of an old man who goes to a dentist because he has a tooth that is killing him. He has been putting it off for months and finally he has to get the tooth taken care of. Once there, the dentist agrees that the tooth needs to come out. The man asks the dentist how much it will cost. The dentist replies that it will be about \$250. The old man yelps and yells, “Two hundred fifty dollars to pull out a tooth?!” Then he asks how long the procedure will take. He is told that it will take about five minutes. “Two hundred fifty dollars for five minutes of work? That's highway robbery!” the old man protests. He then asks the dentist how he can live with himself charging people that kind of money. The dentist smiles and says, “If it's the time you are worried about, I can take as long as you want.” When planning and preparing your call to action, remember that the process does not have to be long and painful. Be short, be brief and be to the point.

The final component of successful closing psychology that I'm going to discuss here is the need for persistence. Calvin Coolidge said,

Successful people always have high levels of persistence, and don't give up until they have reached their objective. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not. Nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not. Un-rewarded genius is

almost a proverb. Education will not. The world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence, determination and hard work make the difference.

I love this quote because it's so easy for us to get bogged down in all the "I'm not smart enough, talented enough, experienced enough" mindset. Successful closing comes down to numbers. Plain and simple, it's a numbers game. Only by sifting and sorting through X number of prospects will you secure Y number of deals. There is no other way around it. In the sales industry, even amongst the most seasoned professionals, a 20 percent close rate is considered very successful. The question is, are most people persistent enough to make ten calls to get two winners? Or, if they're not yet "seasoned" in the art of sales and persuasion, are they persistent enough to make one hundred calls to get one winner? The answer is no, most people are not. Their first prospect falls through and they are distraught. That just isn't how the sales game works, however. So, the first part of persistence is just realizing how many "nos" you have to go through before getting a "yes." The second part of persistence is not giving up prematurely.

Another facet of persistence is that many of those very same prospects who told you "no" would have said yes if you just hadn't accepted their first answer as their final one. You would be surprised how many sales come through because a rep approaches the prospect *one more time*. In light of this, it is more surprising still that over 70 percent of salespeople don't re-approach their prospect after the initial rejection. Did you know that the average person has to be asked five to six times before a sale actually takes place? A lot of times when we get that initial "no," we just accept it because we assume the prospect has thought it through and come to an educated conclusion. Well, the truth is, s/he often hasn't. People forget or get distracted. The demands of daily living crowd out even the best of intentions. That's why repetition and persistence are worthwhile in a sales scenario. It's often not that people are putting you off as much as they just haven't taken the time to really sort it all through. As you practice your closing skills, you'll become more and more adept at discerning the fine line between persistence and annoyance. My general rule of thumb is that if you detect even the remotest hint of interest, keep up your persistence.

My last plug along the persistence vein is that, as you sift and sort through what will sometimes feel like an awful lot of “nos,” you should never allow yourself to feel desperate. Prospects can detect this nuance in your behavior, and nothing makes them run faster. It kind of has to do with the confidence issue I was discussing earlier. Anytime a prospect senses your uneasiness, they will become equally uneasy, even if they are not sure why. In the sales industry, desperation showing through in your game is called “selling hungry.” To help you understand exactly how desperation comes across to your prospects, think of the age-old reference to “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” As soon as the wolf is found out, not only do the sheep run, but they bleat and talk to all their other sheep friends. So, even during those times when you are feeling pretty hungry, you’re much better off playing it cool. Natural, positive and assumptive are your best bets in a persuasive situation.

Major Obstacles to Selling

In this next section, I’d like to discuss some of the major obstacles that inhibit a sale from happening. If you are aware of these common offenders, then you won’t be caught off guard when they pop up. What’s more, when you encounter them, you’ll know exactly what’s going on. The very first obstacle that many persuaders experience is prejudging a prospect. They set up an appointment, hang up the phone and then immediately say, “Oh, great. This lady’s looking for a product we don’t even have. She’ll never buy.” It could be for any number of reasons, but basically the salesperson decides, based on one scrap of information, that the lead isn’t going to go anywhere before s/he has even met or spoken with the prospect. This is a common but huge selling mistake.

There are countless numbers of sales that have been made even when it may not have seemed like a good match at the outset. Why? Let’s go back to closing psychology again. We talked about how every buying action is an effort to make some improvement or enhancement to an existing situation. The core issue is an emotional need. The actual product itself is just a means to an end; it is not in and of itself *the* solution. The emotional satisfaction that the product provides, however, *is*. It is foolish to ever make a

judgment call about a prospect's intentions before you've had a chance to ask her/him all the open-ended questions and to uncover her/his hot buttons (i.e., what's *really* driving the prospect). The potential buyer wants such-and-such product, but *why* does s/he want it? *That* information is really what you need to know. The truth is, you can often offer your prospect a product or service that provides the exact same thing—or better—s/he is seeking, even if it's not exactly what s/he happened to mention to you on the phone.

The next common obstacle that persuaders run into when trying to close a sale is coming across as insincere. We spoke earlier of the infamous hard close approach. Even if you don't resort to such drastic tactics, nothing irritates a prospect more than when you're obviously looking out for a hefty commission. This tendency once again underscores the importance of asking your prospects lots of questions. It is very important that your prospects feel like you are sincerely interested in helping them. How can you best make this clear?

Another obstacle we sometimes run into is when your and your prospect's personalities conflict. If you're on different wavelengths, it's more difficult to build and maintain rapport. There are two key remedies for this type of conflicting situation. The first is to keep in mind the importance of balancing an emotion-dominated approach versus a logic-dominated approach. There will be the occasional person who doesn't want to answer all your questions—"just cut to the chase and give her/him the facts." It is best not to resist these personalities because they already tend to be a bit on edge in the first place. When you encounter this type of prospect, just go with the flow, even if it means making an exception to the "stay in control of the conversation by being the one asking all the questions" rule. Clearly, such prospects want to be in control more than they want to be guided by you, and if you rub them the wrong way, the sale is gone anyway. Instead, adapt to the situation to keep the odds in your favor. Remember, people buy from those they like; they do not buy from people they don't like. A second remedy you can use if you just can't seem to "click" with your prospect is to use a tag-team sales approach. Essentially, this tactic is when you pass off the baton. Don't let your ego get in the way of securing the sale if someone else will have an easier time closing your prospect up for

you. You'll be glad you swallowed your pride and passed the baton when your paycheck comes. Besides, what goes around comes around, and that very same colleague will need your help sometime down the road for the exact same reason.

Another major obstacle to closing the deal is making promises you can't keep. You've probably experienced the tremendous frustration that comes when something has been dramatically built up and then turns out to be a bunch of garbage. Imperfections are annoying, but it's much worse when your salesperson has trumped up a product and gotten you all excited about it being something it's not. Building up false hopes and expectations is *never* worth getting a sale. You're rewarded in the moment, but that sales strategy will crash later on when you have an angry client banging on your door with buyer's remorse. Or, even if you never hear from them again, not only do you lose that person's trust and future business, but then s/he will talk to others and you'll have a damaged reputation that's impossible to fix. For these reasons, *never* claim that a product can do something that it can't. Also be very careful that you don't over-promise or oversell. There is an adage in sales that states, "Under-promise, over-deliver." If you think about what that maxim is saying, you can see how it is going to create very, very happy customers. That's because they're not only getting exactly what they were hoping for, but they're getting even above and beyond their expectations. Inherent in that saying is also a statement that warns of its opposite: "Over-promise, under-deliver." This type of selling strategy is why salespeople often get a bad reputation. All too often, over-promising is the normal course of things. As I've already stated, such a selling strategy may reap sales in the short term, but it will burn you in the end.

This next obstacle to a successful close is fairly obvious, and yet, in spite of this, it is still common enough that it's worth discussing. Sometimes persuaders are so bent on making their point that they actually argue with their prospects. Instead of hearing their prospects out, they are too consumed with their own need to be "right." Obviously, this tactic is a bad idea and will likely defeat the whole point of working with your prospects in the first place. You will not persuade them by demonstrating that they are wrong, misinformed or uneducated. Doing so will just make them angry, embarrassed and defensive. It doesn't

matter how “right” you are—if you upset your prospect, you’re wrong! It has been said, “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.”

People buy from people they *like*; they *don’t* buy from people they don’t like. It doesn’t have to be arguing, either, that turns your prospects away; it could be anything that arouses negativity. Another common example of negativity arousal includes knocking the competition. Few things cause you to lose credibility as much as this tactic does. The thing that speaks more loudly than what you’re actually saying is the strong biases you have. When you exhibit bias toward your competition, your prospects then have to weigh everything coming out of your mouth with even greater caution. A safer bet, if you have to discuss the competition at all, is to present a balanced view of both sides. Mentioning some of the competition’s strong points along with the areas in which you feel your company is stronger will not lose your sale but will more likely increase your mileage in terms of believability. It’s just easier for your prospect not to feel suspicious of you if you can answer her/him fairly and directly.

Another obstacle to closing sales is not building up the dream. Remember earlier how we discussed that the product itself is not the ultimate reward as much as what it *does* for the prospect? The product is just a means to an end. That is, there is something the prospect is “dreaming of” that s/he believes this product will help her/him achieve. *This dream* is their hot button; *this* is really what you must uncover. A big mistake salespeople make is not building up the dream enough. Uncovering it is the first step, but the process doesn’t stop there. You really have to walk your prospect through the steps of how your product will move them from point A to point B (i.e., from present situation to “dream fulfilled”). The more vividly you can help your prospects visualize their success, the more they will want to invest in the solution you are offering them. Be sure you are speaking to their emotional needs. Highlight how the product answers the fundamental “Why?” and “WIIFM?” (What’s in it for me?) motivators. If you can achieve this aim, you’re going to have yourself a sale!

The final major obstacle in closing sales is simply giving up too soon. You'd be amazed at how many sales are lost just because the rep was afraid to ask one more time. As a general rule of thumb, I advise utilizing several "trial closes" throughout the sales presentation—at *least* five attempts are recommended. By trial closes, I'm referring to starting your closing strategy earlier in your presentation. In this way, throughout the process, you are "collecting yeses" so that by the end of your exchange, it is the prospect who is itching to close the sale. Trial closes are less overt, yet with them you are in essence asking for the sale. Trial closes are effective because people do not feel put on the defensive by them. They can let their guard down and really be open to acknowledging all the ways in which your product is going to help them. Collecting yeses is when you ask questions of your prospects that simultaneously answer *their* own questions and yield "yes" answers. Consider the following example...

"Now you mentioned earlier that it's really important to you that you have more time with your family. Do you see how this product is going to save you a lot of time?" (*Oh, yes, I do.*) "Do you think this added spare time will contribute to your goal of having more time together as a family?" (*Yes, it certainly will.*) By putting their questions and concerns first, and walking them through the answers to those questions, you will help your prospects come to the obvious conclusion that your product is exactly what they're looking for. You won't have to talk them into it because they'll already have convinced themselves. If in the unusual circumstance that your prospect still isn't convinced, then don't be afraid to present yet another closing question, perhaps this time one that is not a "trial close," but one that is more direct: "Mrs. Smith, both of us can see clearly how this is going to help you leave your present situation and get to where you want to go. Are you ready to get started?" In an upcoming section of this chapter, I will outline several sample closes so you can see the many different options you have for all the different prospects you will likely encounter in your persuasive efforts. No matter what technique you use, though, don't be afraid to ask for the sale and to be persistent!

Overcoming Objections

We've talked a lot about gradually closing a prospect throughout the sales presentation so that the experience is very natural and seamless from start to finish. But what about when you get a prospect who has concerns s/he just can't seem to get past? The first thing is to be aware of what the most likely objections will be so you can handle them before they even arise. What are the most common objections to your product or service? No matter what you're selling, all objections can fit into one or more of the following categories:

1. Fear of failure—"Can I do this? Will this really work?"
2. Lack of support—spouse, parents or friends unsupportive
3. Can't make the commitment—don't have time, conflicts with existing obligations, childcare concerns, etc.
4. Not enough motivation—the discomfort of the prospect's current situation is not great enough that s/he wants to make changes
5. Financial concerns—fear that the prospect can't afford it or will be extremely stretched trying to. Is it worth the investment?

Notice that I listed financial concerns last. Cost is often the first objection that is put up, but usually it's not the true reason, deep down, for rejecting a product or service. I'll explain more about this topic later. With an idea of where objections stem from, let's talk about *when* the optimal time is to handle them. As I already mentioned, the ideal scenario is for all your prospect's questions and concerns to be answered as a natural course of your exchange—*not* after you've gone through your entire presentation. Nothing de-energizes your persuasive efforts more than lingering doubts and concerns that remain unresolved in your prospect's mind. When you are "interviewing" your prospects, use your open-ended questions to help them open up and shed light on any possible areas of concern. With this approach, you are opening the door to bring up and cover such issues on *your* terms. This persuasive strategy is not a matter of manipulation; by virtue of the roles you each play—you as the one offering a solution and the prospect as the one seeking a solution—it is more practical and effective for both parties to get what they want.

There are two challenges at play when, *after* you've gone through your presentation, a prospect still voices concerns. First of all, you did not discover enough information to accurately anticipate and diffuse concerns while they were still seeds in your prospect's mind rather than rooted plants. Secondly, if *the prospect* has to bring it up and begins questioning *you*, merely by nature of the dialogue, you are now on the *defensive*. This flipping of roles will never place you in a strong persuasive position. Worse, if you *do* project even a hint of defensiveness or insecurity toward your prospect or product, that in and of itself can breed more doubt in the prospect's mind than perhaps the original concern did. How awful to lose a sale based on mistaken perceptions! And yet, these details make or break sales all the time.

Let's talk about price for a moment. It seems to be everyone's top concern, doesn't it? Independent researchers found that 68 percent of prospects admitted that price was not the determining factor, but they also admitted that they knew by experience that stating that the price is too high is the best way to get rid of a salesperson. Price, in fact, is seldom the sole reason for buying or not buying something. When asked the reasons why they *did* buy something, 94 percent of interviewed customers mentioned non-price issues as being the most important factor for their purchase. If you think about it, it doesn't make sense to buy something *just because* the price is good. What if it's not something desirable, useful or necessary? Would you buy it just because of its price? When you do a good job of helping people see how your product will improve their lives, change their lives or move them from their current situation to their desired situation, price is usually the least of their concerns. It all goes back to the emotions—the pain of their current situation sharply contrasts with what they want and hope for in the future and is thus the *true* motivator. At that point, you could name almost any price and they would buy. I say this not to suggest in any way that you should take advantage of that psychological tendency but simply to underscore that price is not the issue.

Now, let's look at the worst-case scenario: Even after the best presentation you could muster, your prospect still has issues. If you ever find yourself in this situation, there are

a number of considerations to bear in mind. First and foremost, ask yourself if this is a conflict you can even resolve. Suppose you find out the *real* reason why your prospect is hung up on the price is that s/he just declared bankruptcy. In that case, obviously, no matter what you do or say, you have no control over the situation. If it is an issue that is solvable, however, then let your prospect talk. Just hearing her/him out will diminish her/his need to contend over price. Conversely, if you become upset, impatient or condescending, you will just make your prospect cling to the price issue.

Always remain calm and empathetic in the face of resistance. This behavioral strategy will come across as more professional, credible and trustworthy. A calm and caring demeanor also gives your prospect room to save face if s/he changes her/his mind. Never back your prospects into a corner. It's a good idea to start out at square one and review with your resistant prospects the many different ways in which your product meets their needs. Help your prospects step back again and see how your product will move them from their current situation to their ideal situation. If, in the end, they remain adamant, never close the door. Extend to them the opportunity and invitation to come talk to you again should they ever change their mind or have further questions. And lastly, don't beat yourself up. There are those people who are just going to resist, even if you said and did everything perfectly. This rejection is usually based on their own past experiences and perceptions, so don't take it personally.

How do we handle those common put-offs like "I need to think this over," "I need to sleep on it," "I have to talk to my wife first"? If your prospects are insistent, respect their wishes, but be sure you're following up again within twenty-four hours—forty-eight hours at the absolute most. If you let too much time lapse between your initial encounter and your follow-up, you communicate to your prospects that it's not important. Then they feel like they're off the hook. If you're not the one calling them, it is very likely you'll never hear from your prospects again. A key thing you have to remember when following up is that the emotion of the original dialogue has dissipated. You must bring it back in order to close the deal. This is why sales that aren't closed at the first meeting are harder to close down the road. It's somewhat of an irony, but the shorter the sales time, the

better. The longer a prospect has to “think about it,” the less likely it is that you’ll have a deal. So remember that, when following up by phone, you’re going to have to exert that persuasive energy all over again to recapture your prospect’s excitement and enthusiasm. Moreover, you will no longer have the advantage of being able to do so in person. Also, you have less time to do so since your conversation by phone will generally be shorter.

One effective way to minimize the likelihood of sending someone home who still hasn’t made a decision is to make a very clear “qualifying statement” right up front. A qualifying statement occurs when you define at the outset exactly how you are going to spend your time together. Additionally, you define what your expectations are for each other and what you hope to get out of the meeting. In essence, you are “qualifying” your time together and how it will be spent. An example of a qualifying statement would be: “Mrs. Smith, what I’d like for us to do today is find out exactly what you’re looking for, get all of your questions answered and see if this is a good fit. If we both feel good about it, we’ll get the ball rolling for you. If it’s not a good fit, we’ll be up front about that, too, and maybe I can make some other recommendations for you.”

Qualification is an excellent approach because it disarms your prospects. You’ve told them exactly what to expect, so they can relax. They won’t be caught off guard when you begin asking lots of questions because they’ll understand why you’re asking them. Also, using the word “we” is often helpful instead of “I” and “you” so that your prospects feel like you’re collaborating together. By using the “we” voice, you will come across as more of an advisor than someone who is trying to sell your prospects something. Most importantly of all, this approach is designed to give you an answer, one way or the other, in that very same meeting. In other words, there won’t be any loose ends remaining when you and your prospect walk away from each other. Here is another example of a qualifying statement: “Let’s make an agreement, Mr. Jones. I’m not a high-pressure consultant, so you don’t have worry about me trying to get you involved with anything you don’t want. All I want to do today is show you how to increase your income in your business and how it will work for you. Please do me a favor and let me know today if this is a good fit. Fair enough?”

Power Tools of Power Closers

In this section, I'd like to outline five different powerful tools that are used by all power closers. Anyone who masters these skills who does not possess them already will surely see profound results. The first concept is that power closers are intensely goal-oriented. Talk about goals and goal-setting these days seems to have become very cliché. In spite of this tendency, super-successful individuals who are driven to accomplish well-planned and clearly defined goals are distinguished from those who are mediocre. They know exactly what the bottom line is and exactly what they have to do to meet it. Not only this, but successful sales people typically push the bottom line so they increasingly out-produce previous records. The only reason they are successful in pushing the limits is because they are measuring. If you don't know the facts, figures or standards, you're trying to shoot a target in the fog. Then, not only do your prospects know the figures, but they also visualize their success. They can see themselves clearly in their mind's eye accomplishing their goals. "Pre-programming" their success helps them fuel their ambition, desire and commitment. As a result, they have given themselves "permission to win."

Another key tool of power closers is responsibility. No matter what happens, they accept 100 percent responsibility for their results. When challenges present themselves, power closers deal with them rather than make excuses. Nothing weakens your position more than when you're always shifting the blame to someone else. It takes a bigger person to own up to the results, whether good or bad. I remember a sales representative who was just getting started in a full commission sales job. He had been given a draw to help him learn the business. He thought he would be on the draw for most of the year. When the sales manager told him the draw was done, he told the rep, "It's time to start selling like you mean it." The rep was floored. He thought he had more time to get his ducks in a row, but now he had to take full responsibility for his income and his success. At the time, he was very upset with his sales manager. Six months later, he said it was the best thing that had ever happened to him.

Power closers believe in themselves and in their product. You cannot get a customer to believe in your product more than you do. Top salespeople love what they are selling. Before taking on a sales task, ask yourself: Can I really put my heart into this? Remember, engaging your prospects' emotions is crucial to closing the sale, and if you're not enthusiastic, they're certainly not going to be. Your prospects have to feel good about the product in order to purchase it, and *you* have a major impact on how they're going to feel about the product. Whether you like it or not, *you* are part of the package. They may not be taking you home with them, but your prospects will take home the attitude you project and instill in them. Enthusiasm alone will close deals. I have seen the belief and enthusiasm of closers work wonders in the time-share industry. The energy time-share sellers create and the belief in their product they exhibit puts many prospects into a vacation home.

Power closers are always honest with themselves and with other people. The average person can pick up on insincerity and falsehood. A power closer will always conduct her/himself with honesty and integrity just as a matter of principle. Power closers will not try to sell something that they know is not in their customers' best interest. Coupled with this integrity is the fact that power closers sincerely care about their customers. They are attentive to their customers' needs and concerns and respond to them with empathy. When dealing with a power closer, a prospect is never uncertain about where s/he stands. The power sales rep is also the prospect's friend, advisor and advocate. I have seen real estate agents triple their business based on honesty and integrity. They tell prospects about the pros and cons of each house, each neighborhood and each pricing structure. Not only do these power agents get customers for life, but they also receive countless referrals.

Closing Techniques

In the last section of this chapter, I would like to simply outline several of the many different types of closes that can be employed in your persuasive settings. By cataloging them here, you will have a ready, quick reference for any situation. I have not included many of the old, outdated, offensive, repackaged closes you often hear or read about. The

following recommended closes can always be tailored and adapted to fit the style and approach that works best for you. Remember that you should only have to resort to these last-minute closing strategies if you have not completely closed your prospect throughout the presentation. Your goal should be to never have to use these tactics, but in the event that you do, these strategies sure will help.

1. **Direct close**—Simply ask for the sale. “Shall we get the process going for you?” “Sounds like a great fit! Are you ready to move forward?” “Let’s get the ball rolling, OK?”
2. **Assumption close**—Rather than ask if your prospect wants to move forward or not, assume the sale and give her/him a choice of one option or another. This closing technique solidifies the sale. For example, “Would you like the blue or the green?” “Do you want it delivered, or will you be picking it up?” “Will that be cash or charge?”
3. **Take-away close**—When your prospect hesitates, say, “Just a minute—let me make sure we have this in your size.” “Let me see if we have this item in stock.” “Let me check with my manager.” “This product is not appropriate for you.” Closing strategies like these create the impulse to move ahead with the purchase so your prospects don’t forfeit their opportunity.
4. **Summary close**—Restate the list of benefits your prospects have cited as important to them and list them in order of priority. This closing strategy confirms and validates in your prospect’s mind all the valid reasons for the purchase. It also shows your prospect that you have been attentive and understand her/his needs.
5. **Puppy-dog close**—Let your prospects touch, taste, feel and experience the product or service as much as possible. Put them in the actual situation, either literally or through helping them create a vivid imaginary experience. This closing strategy helps the prospect become attached.

6. **Pro-con close**—Walk the prospect through the thinking process. On a piece of paper, draw a line down the middle and write down factors that help your prospects compare and contrast how many more pros your product has than cons. This closing strategy is excellent for analytical personalities.
7. **Order-sheet close**—Fill in the order sheet from the start of the conversation. This closing strategy reinforces a subconscious commitment on your prospects' part. If they hesitate, explain that the form just helps you get all the details. In completing the form, be clear on what your prospects are looking for. Assure them that if they aren't ready to make a decision, the order form will not be processed.
8. **The relevant-story close**—People think in terms of stories. Relate to your prospects the experience of another client in a similar situation who moved forward and was very happy with her/his decision. This closing strategy also works in the reverse: someone who did not purchase and later regretted it.
9. **Ascending close**—Pose a series of questions to your prospects that will all elicit a “yes” response and lead to the point of purchase as the obvious step to take. This closing strategy reinforces subconscious affirmation of the product's benefits and ability to meet your prospects' needs. “Yeses” increase desire, while “nos” decrease desire.
10. **Reduce-to-the-ridiculous close**—Break down your product's costs into minute units: “For a mere 22 cents a day, you can enjoy the benefits of our product.” “You can change your life by investing only 50 cents a day.”
11. **Real-reason close**—After you have tried everything, thank your prospects for their time. They will then sense that the exchange is ending, so their resistance will subside. Ask your prospect something like this: “Mr. Smith, I tried to present the

information the best I knew how. What is the real reason you did not buy today?”
After receiving an answer, see if you can address the concern and re-close.

Conclusion

Closing skills will be a great persuasive tool to get under your belt, and the sooner you do so the better. Remember, as the salesperson—whether you’re selling a product or trying to get your teenager to understand your point of view—you are in an advisory role. You are your prospect’s *advocate*. The more you can operate in her/his best interest, the more s/he will sense this and agree to your input. The closing skills you have learned in this chapter will help you to persuade more effectively. Now, knowing the process, you will understand what is happening each step of the way and you will intuitively recognize where to guide your prospect. When you get these skills down, you will be pleasantly surprised that effective persuasion is an easy, fun and natural process.

In the beginning, you will experience moments of awkwardness when you forget exactly what to say or do. There will also be times when your prospects will throw you for a loop and you won’t remember how to respond. When this happens, don’t be too hard on yourself. As time goes on, you’ll experience a natural learning curve. Just make note of areas you’d like to strengthen and work on them along the way. This kind of conscientious attention will soon help you hone and polish your selling abilities. After every sales attempt, take the time to analyze the situation. What did you do well? What could you have done better?

Last but not least, remember that in this process, everyone wins. Salespeople are what make the world turn. You will often be the one who nudges a person just enough so that s/he’ll take action. There are countless things that would remain undone if it were not for a sales rep’s guidance and instruction. In the end, your prospect is happy because you gave her/him the courage to act, and you’re happy because you know you’ve made a difference.

Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) Strategies

Introduction

You have probably heard the adage, “If you are a hammer, everyone is a nail.” That’s what we often find in the sales world today—most people have only one, two or maybe three tools that they use over and over again in almost all persuasive situations. Certainly the basics will always pertain in any persuasive situation, but the danger lies in ending up treating everyone the exact same way. How do you customize and adapt to each particular person you’re working with? Many camps on this issue are out there. On the one end, you have the NLP camp, those who believe that neuro-linguistic programming is the key to success. Others believe that persuasive success is all about the closing tactics they learn from expert sales trainers like Brian Tracy, Tom Hopkins or Zig Zigler. Still others feel that Dale Carnegie’s people skills are the way to go. You hear of people using fear. Some just focus on understanding personality styles. All these camps are great and each has much to offer, but individually, they each represent only a small part of the persuasion pie. To be the most powerfully persuasive individual, at all times and in any situation, you have to have *all* of the available tools under your belt. NLP is one of those fundamental pieces to the persuasion pie that many times gets overlooked. So, let’s now focus on the basics of NLP so you can add it to your persuasive toolbox.

What is NLP?

Neuro-linguistic programming, or “NLP” as it is called today, is a very interesting science. NLP was first developed by UC Santa Cruz professor John Grinder and graduate student Richard Bandler. Its basic premise is that one’s thought patterns, beliefs and attitudes can be used to “preprogram” actual experiences that are yet to happen. NLP is very focused on *how* we think, what influences the way we think, and how we structure what we think. Subscribers to the science are encouraged to closely study and then model those individuals who do things well. When studying them, you don’t ask them *how* they did it—just what they were *thinking* when they did it. For example, if you asked Michael Jordan how to play basketball, he could give you a big list of dos and don’ts. He might outline a series of necessary drills, but that is not what NLP is about. Instead, you would

find out how Michael Jordan perceives basketball in his mind. What are his beliefs and attitudes about basketball? When he makes a decision on the court, what is he thinking?

NLP is made up of several different models, each then having different techniques associated with it. Let's break NLP down further and take a basic look at some of its major models.

Sub-modalities: The Five Senses

Perhaps the foundation is, simply enough, our five senses. Each of us takes in the world around us through our five senses: seeing, hearing, feeling (both tangible and emotional), tasting and smelling. Everything and anything we think about in life, and the resulting beliefs and attitudes we form, can be based on what we receive and then interpret through these sub-modalities. Taking it a step further, with the entirety of our life experiences encapsulated in our memories as we experienced them through our senses, we can *recreate* those experiences in our minds, alter them if need be and thus gain tremendous power over our thought patterns, beliefs and ultimately the outward manifestation of such through our capabilities and achievements. The way you structure these representations in your mind determines how you will respond.

Try a basic experiment. Picture someone in your mind you hold very dear to your heart. Now, in your mind's eye, enhance and intensify the colors of the image and observe how you respond. What happens when you turn up the volume of what has been said? What about if you visualize the image in shades of gray instead of color? For most people, "turning up" the colors or sounds also intensifies feelings, while turning them down diminishes those feelings. Cultivating your ability to fine-tune the way you perceive things, or the way your mind represents things, can be used to make powerful changes in your life. Once you realize that you can, in essence, create your world, you also realize that you also have the power to change it.

Meta-Model

A meta-model is a set of questions that are developed for the specific purpose of finding the *exact* meaning in a person's communication. For example, often when we communicate, we generalize, or we may even distort information or leave it out altogether—intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or subconsciously. Individuals who use meta-models are able to systematically verify and clarify both verbal and written communication in order to communicate even more clearly and precisely.

Sensory Acuity

Our thought processes are very closely tied to our physiology. For example, people can sense that you're happy, scared or angry without you even saying anything. Body language sends out strong cues about how we're feeling. That is, our posture, our eyes, our head position, etc. all say a lot about us. Most body language is fairly obvious, but sensory acuity takes these observations beyond the obvious and uses physical feedback in addition to verbal communication to be as discerning as possible. Verbal cues even give some suggestion of which sensory modality a person operates from most strongly. For example, if someone says, "I hear what you're saying" versus "I see what you mean," it suggests that his or her auditory sense is more dominant than his or her visual one. It is helpful to give this concept consideration since miscommunication can often simply result from two people trying to talk about the exact same thing, only in different ways. Some experts argue that if certain thought processes are reinforced enough, over a long enough period of time, they can actually alter a person's physiological state.

Milton-Model

The Milton-Model, named after Milton Erickson, the father of modern hypnotherapy, is a set of linguistic patterns that are designed to guide an individual without actually disrupting the way s/he is experiencing the particular activity internally. For example, the command "Recall a time when you were crying" doesn't dictate whether the person was sobbing uncontrollably or weeping softly in the memory. This skill of describing feelings, places, events and activities in a manner that is specific and yet still universal allows the

user to develop rapport with his or her subject. It also helps move the subject into a trancelike state. As a result, the Milton-Model is commonly used to induce hypnosis.

Meta-Programs

Meta-programs are essentially the “looking glasses” through which we view the world. The classic “Is the glass half full or half empty?” is a perfect meta-program example. Meta-programs control our personality and therefore how we behave. For instance, do you tend to be more of an active or passive person? Do you focus more internally or externally on the world around you? Is your orientation more focused on the past, the future or the here and now? Two people may regard the exact same thing from totally different angles, to the extent that that “exact same thing” may actually become a very different thing altogether. For example, do you move *towards* your goals, or do you move *away* from the things that are *not* your goals? One may simply seem like an inverted restatement of the other, but each has its own distinct nuance.

Embedded Commands

An embedded command is a suggestion that is hidden within written or spoken language. It is used to communicate to the conscious mind while also sending a message to the subconscious mind. The intent is to actually *bypass* the conscious mind and communicate directly to the *subconscious* mind. Since embedded commands usually remain undetected by the conscious mind, they are very commonly used in marketing and advertising. It is in this covert way that marketers can create expectations and desires within their audiences without encountering resistance. Often, the embedded commands are small fragments that fit into a full sentence. For example, Pepsi used to have the slogan that encouraged, “Have a Pepsi Day.” The embedded command was “Have a Pepsi.”

The most effective embedded commands are short and concise. In fact, ideally they should be no longer than two to four words. It is much easier to use these commands in persuasive writing than persuasive speaking because you can visually highlight the command with boldface or italic font, for example. When using this persuasive technique, first determine what exactly you are trying to say to your audience. Then

create the sentences where the embedded words and phrase will logically and contextually fit. Finally, set the embedded commands apart in some visual way: italicize them, boldface them, underline them, highlight them or use a different color.

While harder to emphasize, embedded commands are also a powerful tool in persuasive speaking. Certain phrases have specific command forms that follow the “two to four words” rule. Effective phrases can include word associations, cause and effect statements, presuppositions, questions, hidden suggestions or analogies. Essentially, when incorporating embedded commands into our spoken presentations, we are looking for phrases that jump out at us. Consider the following examples:

Become wealthy	Buy now
Use this material	How good it feels
Going to happen	Read each word
Feel good	Follow my lead
Act now	Change your life
Become really interested	You will understand
Learn this material easily	Invite you to notice
Use this process	Learn quickly
Enjoy life	Use this skill
Learn how	Improve your results

Studies show that embedded commands can actually change our attitudes or beliefs, even if we are totally unaware that they have. Embedded commands are effective simply because the conscious mind has no opportunity to analyze or evaluate them. Because of this, we can create expectations of behavioral changes with embedded commands as well as with and direct and indirect suggestions. The subconscious mind will create an internal reality to match the commands being received.

Pacing and Leading

Pacing involves establishing rapport and making persuasive communication easier, while leading involves steering your prospects towards your point of view. Pacing and leading enable you to direct people's thoughts so they tend to move in your direction.

When you pace, you validate your prospects either verbally or nonverbally; that is, your prospects perceive you to be in agreement with them. Consequently, they feel comfortable with both you and the situation. Pacing entails using statements everyone accepts as true (i.e., they cannot be argued with). By eliminating disagreement, resistance and defensiveness are low, placing you in a good position to begin leading. While everyone is in agreement, you gradually and incrementally introduce your stance's key points. This is how leading is different from pacing: You are not setting forth statements that are unequivocally true as in pacing. Rather, when leading, you are setting forth what you *want* your prospect to accept. The key difference between the two concepts is that one sets the stage for the other to work effectively.

Presuppositions

Using expectations, we can create immediate reactions to stimuli so that the prospects don't even have to think—they just perform the requested action. Discounts, closeouts, going out of business sales and coupons are used to draw traffic to stores. Consumers receiving such offers assume they will receive a reduced purchase price by presenting the coupon or by going to a “going out of business sale” and act accordingly, whether or not they really will receive a better price. One company made an error in printing their coupon so that the misprinted coupon offered no savings whatsoever to its recipients. However, despite its lack of savings, the coupon produced just as much customer response as did the error-free coupon. Presupposition uses words and language to indicate the assumption that your offer has already been accepted. It is a technique that your prospect may or may not process, but it is still effective either way. Consider the following examples:

Spoken

“When do you want your furniture delivered?”

“Should I call you Tuesday or Wednesday?”

“Your first class will start next Monday.”

Implied

You want the furniture.

You want to receive the phone call.

You’re signing up for the class.

It’s amazing how often people will go along with your proposal, even if it’s quite far from what they were originally thinking. They often don’t even stop to think about responding to you because their subconscious has already processed the deal as being finished.

Another way to use presupposition is to put it in writing. People always think that if something is in writing then it must be true. We often go along with something we see without questioning it, just because it’s what the directions say to do. For example, a particular *Candid Camera* stunt involved a stop sign placed on a sidewalk, even though there was no reason to stop there. The sign was in an odd place and there was no danger of oncoming traffic, but everyone obediently stopped and waited at the sign just because it said to do so. In another spoof, a sign reading “Delaware Closed” actually made people start asking how long Delaware was going to be closed for!

Mirroring and Matching

John Grinder and Richard Bandler developed the concept of “mirror and matching.” The idea is to match your prospect’s demeanor—not actually mimic their every move but match their mood and tone. You can safely mirror things such as language, posture, gestures and mood, without seeming phony. The whole point of this strategy is to develop rapport with your prospects and help them feel more comfortable. Because of your similar demeanors, they will feel a connection with you. Remember that people are inclined to follow those they perceive as similar to themselves. If your prospects shift in their posture, you should eventually do so, too. If they cross their legs, you should cross your legs as well. If they smile, you smile, too. When you mirror your prospects, they will subconsciously feel that you have much more in common with them than may actually be the case.

We often subconsciously mirror others, without even realizing we're doing it. It is just a natural thing that we do. Have you ever noticed at social gatherings how people tend to match each other in their body language and their attitudes? For example, when two people greet each other, they tend to use the same postures and to behave similarly. When you are a Master Persuader, you will make skillful and conscientious use of mirroring.

Mirroring Language

You will be amazed at the effectiveness of using the same vocabulary or “lingo” your prospects use. To increase your persuasiveness, pick up on and use some of the words or phrases that your prospects use. You may also find it helpful to mirror your prospect's rate of speech. For example, if he speaks in a slower and more relaxed tone, you can do the same. (Be sure to still keep the enthusiasm high, though.) Likewise, if he speaks quickly, feel free to do the same.

Matching Voice

This is different from matching language. Voice matching refers to mirroring the actual tone or inflection of your prospect's voice. Be very careful, however, that you do not come across as mimicking. The “mirrored” voice should never be so different or foreign from your own that you arouse suspicion. Just minor and subtle adjustments in tone are all that are necessary to get the desired results.

Mirroring Moods

When you reflect your prospect's mood, you give validation to what s/he is saying and feeling. We often verbally mirror another's mood by restating what s/he just said: “So, what I hear you saying is...” or “I think I would feel that way, too, if I'd been through that....” When you mirror your prospect's mood, be sure that your tone is very sincere. When you sincerely acknowledge your prospect's comments, concerns and feelings, your persuasive power increases.

Matching Energy Level

Some people always seem to be relaxed and mellow. Others seem to be constantly active or vivacious. Seek to mirror your prospect's energy level. This will just be another subtle way in which you are in sync with your prospect. This technique is also effective when giving a group presentation. Match the overall energy level present in the room, or adopt the level of energy emanating from the group.

Breaking the Mirror

There are occasions when you may *not* want to mirror someone else. For example, a lawyer will often seek to create anxiety or uneasiness in a witness. To accomplish this, one key thing the lawyer needs to do is NOT mirror. While the witness may be slumped back in her seat, looking at the ground, the lawyer may be hovering or standing rigidly and looking intensely at the witness's face. Have you ever noticed or felt the uneasiness when someone suddenly stood in the middle of a conversation where everyone else was seated? Have you ever experienced the awkwardness of glancing at your watch when you're in the middle of a conversation with someone and s/he notices? "Breaking the mirror" breaks the synchronization that makes everyone feel calm and comfortable. If you need to break the mirror, simply stop mirroring and sit, speak or gesture differently from the person you're dealing with. You can create even further distance by altering your demeanor abruptly or suddenly.

Securing your prospect's trust and interest is one thing, but keeping the energy level high and maintaining the connection is another. Many persuaders don't know how to keep the rapport with their prospects going. You see people in sales break the ice, find similarities with their prospects, build rapport for the first five minutes and then launch into their presentation. All of a sudden, they get serious and change their demeanor. What is the prospect going to think when this transformation takes place? The person he has been talking to for the past five minutes has now unexpectedly changed. Which one is the real person? The two were getting along, having fun, and all of a sudden, without warning, the salesperson became serious and dove into a sales pitch. This shift in demeanor breaks rapport and seems incongruent to the prospect. You both know why you are there and

what the ultimate goal will be, so continue to build on that rapport. Connectivity takes time, research and practice to master.

Anchors

Anchoring is a technique that captures the feelings, memories and emotions of certain events, places or things. The psychology behind the anchoring technique's success lies in the use of elements from a previous situation or circumstance to replay that experience's emotions and feelings in the mind. An anchor can be anything that brings up a thought or feeling and reminds you of something you have previously experienced. It will usually reproduce the exact same emotion or feeling you experienced in the past. Remember the experiment of Pavlov's dog? Anchoring is the same idea: You use a certain stimulus to create a mental association that will bring about a particular response.

An anchor can be produced either externally or internally. Anchors don't have to be conditioned over a period of several years to be established. They can be learned in a single event. The more powerful the experience, the stronger the anchor will be. Phobias are an excellent example of effective anchors. Most phobias are established after one single, intense experience. Here, we'll talk about three different sets of anchors: smells, music and symbols. There are other elements (sights and tastes) that can be used as anchors, but these three types of anchors are the most powerful stimuli in evoking memories.

Smells: The Aroma of Persuasion

Our sense of smell is so powerful that it can quickly trigger associations with memories and emotions. Our olfactory system is a primitive sense that is wired directly to the center of our brain. By four to six weeks of age, infants can tell the difference between their own mother's scent and that of a stranger. Almost everyone has experienced situations in which a smell evoked a nostalgic memory. Think of the smells that take you back to your childhood. For some it is the smell of fresh baked bread, of freshly cut grass or of the neighborhood swimming pool. You can go back fifty years in a matter of seconds with the sense of smell.

Fragrances, aromas and odors trigger memories, feelings and attitudes in our minds. Smell can enhance or reinforce desired responses as well as positive and negative moods. There are multiple examples of this scent triggering. Supermarkets with bakeries fill the air with the warm aroma of breads and coffee. Some children's stores send baby powder through their air ducts. When you walk through the mall, the food merchants will make sure you smell their cookies, cinnamon rolls and Chinese food. Real estate agents are famous for having homeowners bake bread before they have interested buyers tour the house. Large amusement parks will pipe in certain scents at certain times of the day to trigger responses and get immediate reaction. The use of smell in these instances is an attempt to link the seller's products and services with a positive attitude, thereby inducing the shopper to buy. In the same way, you can link positive smells with your message to create a positive attitude in your prospects.

There have been numerous studies conducted on the bearing scent has on association. A 1983 study conducted among undergraduate students found that female students wearing perfume were rated as more attractive by male students. Scents were even found to improve scores on job evaluations in a study published by the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. Of course, offensive odors can also be used (and actually have been used) to evoke a negative response. This offensive-odor tactic was once used while campaign committees were rating and appraising political slogans. Not surprisingly, ratings for the slogans went down.

Music: Feel the Beat

Music is much like smells in that our brains link music with attitudes and experiences from our past. Music is closely tied to our emotions. Think of the theme music from *Rocky* and then think of *Jaws*; the two movie themes evoke different emotions, don't they? Local gyms pipe upbeat music outside to get passersby to associate it with high energy and good times inside. In one case, a local convenience store had problems with teenagers loitering outside. The store wanted the teenagers' business, but didn't want the drugs and fights that seemed to go with it. To that end, they decided to play a Frank

Sinatra song outside the store and soon found that the teenagers voluntarily stopped loitering. On a personal level, you may still remember that particular song played during the dance with your high school flame. Music has a powerful pull on all of us and triggers instant memories.

Because music is so powerful, persuaders need to carefully select the songs they're going to use. Advertisers often use a popular song or a catchy jingle. Notice the next time you watch television how many songs you recognize from all the commercials—you will probably be surprised. Every time the ad is played, the tune reinforces the product's appeal. Music is universal because it has the power to evoke the emotions shared by all of humanity.

The Might of Symbols

We live in an especially symbolic world. Symbols bypass our thoughts and our logic and they affect our perceptions and behaviors. Take gold, for example. As one of the world's most precious metals, gold is very symbolic of wealth and success. Countless stories are told of the search for gold. But if you stop and think about it, there are other precious metals that are harder to find and far more precious. Gold just holds a certain symbolism; it denotes success and wealth.

Symbols can also help us understand and feel a message without actually having to undergo the experience. For example, a skull and crossbones on poison says it all—we don't have to ingest the poison to understand the fatal experience it can cause. The simple symbol of a red stop sign triggers an automatic response. For many, the sight of a police car on the highway will also trigger the automatic braking response.

Think of these symbols as you read the list. Pay attention to the feelings, memories, attitudes and experiences they trigger in your mind:

Crucifix

Star of David

Statue of Liberty
World Trade Center
American flag
Swastika
Military uniform
Olympics
Wedding dress
Christmas tree

When you are trying to mold attitude as a persuader, it is useful to know how symbols shape the attitudes of your audience. Make careful study and research of the symbols you want to use before you employ them. If used well, they will influence your audience's feelings and behavior to your benefit. Marketing and advertising executives use symbols in a very sophisticated way to manipulate consumers. For example, did you know that the average child recognizes McDonald's arches before s/he is even twenty months old? There are symbols of freedom, symbols of success and symbols of poverty. Find and use the symbols you need to create the proper association with your prospect.

Engaging the Five Senses

We were all born with five senses, each one helping us to make generalizations about the world. You should engage all five sensations when trying to persuade an audience. However, keep in mind that there are three dominating senses we gravitate toward. They are sight, hearing and feeling, or, visual, auditory and kinesthetic. When we learn, 75 percent of knowledge comes to us visually, 13 percent comes through hearing and 12 percent comes through smell, taste and touch. Most people tend to favor one of these perceptions over the others. As a Master Persuader, you need to identify and use your prospect's dominant perspective on the world. Granted, we generally make use of all five senses, but the point is to find the dominant perception. As you determine the dominant learning mode, consider the size of your audience. If you were speaking to one person, for example, you would want to pinpoint her/his one dominant perception. If you have an

audience of one hundred, on the other hand, you would need to employ all three learning styles.

If you were to ask an auditory person to be an eyewitness to a robbery, he would describe the situation in this manner: “I was walking down First Avenue, listening to the singing birds, when I heard a scream for help. The yelling got louder. There was another scream, and then the thief ran off.” A visual person might describe the same situation this way: “I was walking down First Avenue, watching the birds playing in the air, when I noticed a large man coming around the corner. I saw him attack the other man, take his wallet and run from the scene.” The kinesthetic person would use this description: “I was walking down First Avenue and I felt a lump in my throat because I had a feeling something bad was going to happen. There was a scream then there was tension, and I knew that a man was getting robbed. I felt helpless to do anything.”

The most commonly prevalent of the senses is sight, or visual perception. One study showed that those who used visual presentation tools (slides, overheads, etc.) were 43 percent more persuasive than subjects who didn't. Also, those using a computer to present their visual aids were considered more professional, interesting and effective. Visually oriented people understand the world according to how it looks to them. They notice the details, like an object's shape, color, size and texture. They say things like, “I see what you mean,” “From your point of view ...,” “How does that look to you?” “I can't picture it,” and “Do you see what I mean?” They tend to use words like “see,” “show,” “view,” “look,” “watch” and “observe.”

Auditory people perceive everything according to sound and rhythm. Phrases you would commonly hear would be, “I hear you,” “That sounds good to me,” “Can you hear what I'm saying?” “It doesn't ring a bell” and “Let's talk about it.” They use words such as “hear,” “listen,” “sounds,” “debate,” “silence,” “harmony,” “rings,” “say,” “speak,” “discuss” and “verbalize.”

Kinesthetic people go with what they feel, not only in a tactile way, but also internally. They are very into feelings and emotions. A kinesthetic person would say things like, “That feels right to me,” “I will be in touch with you,” “Do you feel that?” “I understand how you feel” and “I can sense it.” They use words such as “feel,” “touch,” “hold,” “connect,” “reach,” “unite,” “grasp,” “tension,” “sense,” “lift” and “understand.”

One last word on visual, auditory and kinesthetic sensations: A general way to tell which type describes a particular person is to watch the movement of her/ his eyes when s/he has to think about a question. Ask her/him a question, watch her/his eyes and make sure the question is difficult enough that s/he has to ponder for a moment. Generally, but not 100 percent of the time, if the person looks up when s/he thinks, s/he is visual. When s/he looks to either side, s/he is usually auditory. When s/he looks down, s/he is kinesthetic. I am simplifying a complicated science, but if you try it, you will be amazed at the accuracy of this technique.

Offer Choices

There is a strange human psychological phenomenon in regards to drawing conclusions. If someone tells us exactly what to do, our natural human tendency is to reject it simply because it has been dictated. The solution is to offer your prospects a few options so they can make the choice for themselves. People feel the need to have freedom and make their own choices. If forced to choose something against their will, they experience psychological resistance and feel a need to restore their freedom. We all need options. Recently, while I was vacationing at a national park, I saw a moose get surrounded by people who wanted a picture of it. Feeling trapped, the moose charged at the people in an attempt to escape. This same scenario can crop up in your persuasive efforts. If you don't offer options to your audience, they could attempt to charge and escape.

The way in which this technique still gives you an advantage is that it gives you control over your prospects' options. As a Master Persuader, you only give them options that will satisfy your situation. We have all done this type of option control with children: “Do you want to finish your dinner or go to bed early?” In sales, they call this strategy the

alternative close. For example, have you heard the line “Do you want regular or deluxe?” Or what about “Do you want it in blue or green?” or “Do you want to meet Monday afternoon or Tuesday evening?” The prospect is presented with options, but both options are pleasing to the persuader.

Even if it is just something simple, people need to have options. I heard a story about one lady who desperately needed to take her medication or she would die. Her doctor, nurse, son and husband all tried to get her to take her medication but to no avail. The doctor insisted she take her medicine first thing when she arose in the morning, but she just wouldn't do it. Distraught, the family took her to a new doctor. This doctor immediately saw the situation and talked to the patient. He explained the benefits of taking the drugs and how it could help her. Then, he gave her an option. He said, “You need to take this once a day. Would you like to take it with your breakfast or your dinner?” The patient smiled and said she would like to take it with her dinner. After she made that decision, she no longer gave people a hard time about taking her medication. The key was that both options the doctor gave her accomplished the same thing.

If you absolutely have to limit your audience's choice to one thing, you must explain to them why there are limitations on their options. If the audience understands why a limit has been put on their freedom, they are more likely to accept it without feeling undermined. On the flip side, try not to give your prospects more than two or three choices. If you offer too many alternatives, your audience will be less likely to choose any of them. Structured choices give the audience the impression of control. As a result, they increase cooperation and commitment.

Offering choices is also called “binds.” Each option offered gives the persuader what s/he wants without making her/him appear as if s/he is restricting freedom. When you use the word “or” in your persuasive efforts, the very opposite is implied, so try to structure your prospects' choices with the word “or.” For example, “Would you like to make an appointment now, or should we meet next week?”

Conclusion

This is a basic overview of the broad world of NLP. Study these concepts carefully to enhance your persuasive ability. Used correctly, NLP can definitely enhance your persuasive abilities. Unfortunately, there are many NLP practitioners who have given it a bad name. As with anything you study, learn to be a student, not a just a follower. What I mean by this is, don't accept everything you learn at face value. Try it, practice it and see if it works for you.

Marketing and Advertising Designs

Reprinted by Permission

Ask most small business owners the best way to improve sales of their products or services, and you will probably hear a wide range of responses: “Reduce the prices,” “Increase your advertising,” “Improve service” and so on. One unlikely reply, however, would be: “Conduct some marketing research.” While marketing research has been a driving force in large companies for years, small businesses have been reluctant to use it. Marketing research can be the key to future success for many small businesses if the buyer or user of the research understands its parameters, strengths and limitations. Failure to conduct and use marketing research correctly, on the other hand, can result in useless, or even worse, damaging information.

What Is Marketing Research?

Businesses of all sizes are constantly seeking information about their customers, their competitors and the market environment in which they operate. Marketing research is basically the gathering of this data. However, all “gathering of information” does not qualify as marketing research. The American Marketing Association defines marketing research as the “systematic and objective approach to gathering marketing information which—when processed, analyzed and interpreted—will help identify problems and opportunities that allow for better-informed, lower-risk decisions.” The key to this definition is that the information is gathered, processed, analyzed and interpreted in a systematic and objective fashion. Marketing research stresses how the information is obtained and evaluated as much as what is actually gathered.

At first thought, it might not seem too difficult to obtain marketing information. For example, the owner of a video store might ask some customers whether they would rent more movies if the price were reduced by one dollar. Using this feedback, the owner might decide to reduce the price, thereby increasing the number of rentals and, overall, making more money. Unfortunately, the people queried may not be typical of all

customers. Even if the owner were lucky enough to talk to a representative sample, how does s/he know that the customers are telling the truth or that they will, in fact, rent more movies? This instance of collecting marketing information lacks the objectivity and uniformity necessary to be classified as marketing research. The owner in this case may actually lose money by acting upon it.

How Is Marketing Research Used?

Marketing research can be used to meet nearly all the marketing information needs of the small businessperson. Every area from developing a business plan to designing an effective advertising program can benefit from the use of carefully planned and executed research. Let's take the example of developing a business plan. When you first sit down with that blank piece of paper and dream of owning your own business, you should be asking yourself questions such as: What am I going to sell? Will people buy what I sell? How much should I charge? Where should I locate? How much competition is there and who are they? Questions such as these should be at the heart of any effective business plan, and marketing research can help you answer them.

Let's say, for example, you've decided to turn your passion for fishing into your livelihood, and you open your own tackle and equipment store. You feel there is a need for such a service and are ready, willing and able to jump at the opportunity. One of your first steps might be finding out how many other tackle shops are in your area to get a feel for the level of competition. A quick glance through your local Yellow Pages would readily supply you with this information. Congratulations! You've just completed your first marketing research project. As the questions become more difficult to answer, however, the marketing research must become more sophisticated. For example, although you might be able to partially determine the demand for a fishing tackle shop by talking to your neighbors and "fishing buddies," their interest won't tell you how all the people in your area feel (and you know how those fisherman lie!). A better approach would be to commission or conduct a scientific survey of a representative sample of all local consumers. Much of the background information necessary for a useful, working

business plan can be collected using marketing research. Consider the following other examples of where marketing research can be of benefit:

New Product or Offering

Many new product lines or special offers (“10% Off!”) are the results of careful marketing research, which can determine customer needs and wants and allow you to supply your customers with just the “right” product or service. Research can be used to determine the impact of special sales programs or discount offers and can even be used to introduce a new product before the expense of fully doing so is incurred.

Pricing

Pricing is a crucial marketing element in all businesses, whether large or small, and marketing research can supply precise information for pricing decisions. Well-designed research can determine the true trade-off between price and the amount of sales before committing to a specific sales program.

Advertising

Many small business owners are very concerned with the promotion and advertising of their businesses. Considering the cost of advertising today, their concerns are well founded. One of the most frequently asked questions is: “How effective is my advertising?” The answer can be determined with many types of formal and informal research techniques. For example, a separate telephone line with a number that appears only in your Yellow Pages ad can be installed. By placing a tally sheet next to the phone, a count can be recorded every time a call comes in on that line. By the end of the month, you will be able to tabulate exactly how many calls are generated by your Yellow Pages ad and then determine its effectiveness. These strategies are just a few of the many possible applications marketing research has for small businesses.

What Are the Various Types of Marketing Research?

All marketing research falls into two basic categories: secondary and primary. Secondary research involves literature searches, article reviews and analysis of existing, available data. While secondary research is limited to the information you have on hand, it is usually much cheaper than primary research and can be conducted by small businesses themselves.

There are two general types of primary research: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative research is used for developing new ideas or to get a “gut feeling” for a given subject or problem. Quantitative research primarily involves surveys based on representative samples, where data is collected using mail, telephone or personal interviews. Results from quantitative studies can be projected to entire populations and therefore used in predicting.

Qualitative Research

Nearly all qualitative research is done using focus groups. These groups consist of eight to ten carefully selected and recruited individuals who participate in a directed discussion concerning some issue. The specifications for recruiting these participants are based on the objectives of the study. For example, the owner of a gardening service who is interested in expanding into a new geographic territory might want to explore the demand for these services beforehand by conducting focus groups among homeowners living in the area where the expansion is planned.

The discussion itself is designed and led by a professional researcher called a focus group moderator. The moderator follows a specially prepared script known as a moderator’s guide, which is developed with assistance from the client and outlines the issues to be covered. It is important that an independent, professional moderator be used to ensure objectivity, and that all the relevant issues are covered.

Focus groups are often conducted in special facilities that are equipped with one-way mirrors and observation rooms so the client can observe the discussions firsthand without disturbing the participants. The discussions are either audio or videotape recorded so the moderator does not have to take notes. After conducting the groups, the moderator will listen to the tapes, summarize the key points and present the client with a final report on the findings. In most cases, three focus groups are conducted for a single research project. It would be too risky to arrive at any conclusions based on the results of just a single group, since the chances of only one group being representative of the population are quite slim. While two groups are better than one, many times the findings from the second group vary greatly from those of the first. A third group strikes a balance between the first and second and allows the client a better perspective.

While focus groups are a legitimate form of marketing research, they are also the most misused and incorrectly applied of all existing techniques. They should only be used for exploration and generation of new ideas, and should never be considered as representative of the opinions of the entire population. The results from focus groups cannot be projected in any way. On the other hand, focus groups are an excellent method of flushing out key issues regarding a new idea or potential product or service. They can also serve as the first stage of the research process by identifying key points to be addressed in subsequent, quantitative surveys.

Quantitative Research

When people speak of marketing research, they are usually referring to quantitative research. Quantitative research involves a survey of a selected sample of a specific group using mail, telephone or in-person interviews. Data is collected by means of a carefully constructed questionnaire that is pre-tested before the actual survey. Completed questionnaires are edited, and verbatim responses to open-ended questions are coded using pre-developed categories. The data from the questionnaires is entered into a computer for tabulation of results. Final computer outputs, or “tables,” are then ready for analysis. It is important for both research buyers and users to understand the strengths

and weaknesses of each of the various research approaches so they can select the technique that best meets their needs at a cost within their budgets.

Mail Surveys

Mail Surveys were extremely popular during the 1950s and 60s when the costs of telephone interviewing were prohibitively high. Mail surveys are still widely used today, although the advent of the WATS telephone service has made telephone surveys much more cost competitive. The major strength of mail surveys is still their relatively low price. For the price of postage, materials and printing, a small business can conduct a very cost-effective research study. In addition, since the respondent actually receives materials from the researcher, illustrative or test documents can be included in the mail-out.

The major drawback to mail surveys is their very low rate of return, or response rate. Even with incentives such as money and second mailings, most end up with only about a 5 to 15 percent response rate. This means you do not know the opinions of 85 to 95 percent of the people you wish to study. In addition, those individuals who do not respond to a mail survey are often different from those who do. For example, older retirees are more likely to have the time and inclination to fill out and return a questionnaire while single people between the ages of 25 and 35 are much less likely to do so.

Different research techniques such as incentives and telephone reminders can boost the response rate to as much as 50 percent, but all these methods add to the price of the study, thereby defeating the purpose of selecting this technique in the first place.

In-Person Interviews

Many of us are familiar with in-person interviews. Every ten years, the U.S. Census Department knocks on doors to conduct in-person interviews and find out how

the population has changed. In-person, or personal interviews, involve a face-to-face meeting between an interviewer and a respondent. Using a prepared questionnaire, the interviewer asks the respondent a series of questions and carefully records the answers. These interviews take place either at the respondent's home or place of business or at a well-traveled location, such as a shopping mall.

Unlike mail surveys, personal interviews usually result in a very high completion rate. Response rates as high as 95 percent are not unheard of. In addition, in-person interviews allow the respondent to physically come in contact with proposed products, services or advertising under the guidance of the interviewer. This one-on-one interaction is why in-person interviews are often used in researching advertising copy or packaging designs.

The biggest problem with in-person interviews, however, is their extremely high price. Since an interviewer is required to either visit the respondents at their homes or businesses or track them down in shopping malls, a great deal of interviewing time is required. Even at low hourly rates for interviewers, an in-person interview currently costs at least \$100. Considering that most surveys use a sample size of at least 100 people, this approach can get very expensive.

Telephone Surveys

Computers have been introduced into the telephone interviewing process. Interviewers now sit in front of a computer screen and read from a pre-programmed questionnaire that appears in front of them. Respondents' replies are recorded directly into the computer system using a keyboard, which saves time in data entry and coding. Results are immediately available at any point during the survey. These "Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing," or CATI, systems are becoming widely used by research companies and allow for faster, cheaper and more reliable interviewing.

While telephone surveys are much less expensive than in-person interviews, they are usually slightly higher in price than a straight mail survey. Response rates with telephone surveys are much better than mail, usually 50 percent and higher, which makes them the ideal choice for most research applications.

A Quick Survey of Surveys

Surveys can be conducted in numerous ways: directly, by mail, by fax or by phone. Generally, you will have a better response if you ask customers to complete surveys while on your premises. Follow the guidelines below and, above all, let your customers know how you have implemented their suggestions. Eight out of ten will come back to see if you have followed their advice.

Keep surveys simple and easy to read. Do not get too technical or make the survey long and boring.

Ask close-ended or direct questions as much as possible. Instead of asking, for example, “What products would you like to see us add to our product line?” ask, “Of the following list, which products would you like to see in the store?”

1. Get a large sample before you tabulate results. Ten surveys won't give you an accurate representation. Depending on your business, 500 or more respondents may be necessary.
2. Put yourself in the place of the customer. Can the customer furnish all the information you are asking for?
3. Leave plenty of room if you ask open-ended questions or if one of your answers is “other.”

4. Give respondents some kind of reward or incentive for filling out your survey. Examples include a coupon redeemable on their next visit, a grand prize or a drawing from amongst the finished surveys. (Be wary, however, of those who fill out more than one survey to increase their chances of winning.)
5. Construct the survey so that the results can be utilized in as many ways as possible. For example, names and addresses can be used to develop mailing lists. (Note: Surveys that ask questions about income or general demographics should not request the respondent's name and address.)

Marketing Research: To Buy or Not to Buy?

In some cases, such as reviewing the Yellow Pages to determine the level of competition for a specific geographic area, marketing research can easily be accomplished by small business owners themselves. However, as the research becomes more complicated, the small businessperson may wish to turn to an expert in the field. Numerous research firms exist throughout the U.S. Some conduct millions of dollars of research each month, such as A.C. Nielsen and its monitoring of television audiences. Others are smaller, independent firms that serve specific geographic areas.

Although marketing research can be considered a bargain, especially if the results of a study greatly increase revenues or cut costs, good marketing research is not cheap. Marketing researchers are trained, experienced professionals, not unlike attorneys or architects. Accordingly, the first-time research buyer may be startled by the prices for research services. For example, focus groups run about \$3,000 each, and a telephone survey could range anywhere from \$5,000 to \$25,000 or more, depending on the number of interviews and length of the questionnaire.

Because costs of this size represent a substantial investment for most small businesses, owners should ask themselves the following questions before ever contacting a research firm:

1. Is the research really necessary? In some cases, maybe a “best guess” would prove just as effective as a well-designed research project. In other cases, however, research may be absolutely necessary. For example, many lending institutions require a feasibility study of a proposed business idea, using marketing research, before they make any loans.
2. Is the research worth doing? Will the outcome of the research result in a benefit exceeding the cost of the research itself? Spending \$20,000 on a research project to realize an increase in company revenues of \$1,000 a year simply doesn't make sense.
3. Can I do the research myself? This is probably the hardest question to answer. You must be able to determine the complexity of the research problem and the risk involved if the research were not done. To strike an analogy, several companies offer do-it-yourself legal guides that allow the small business owner to create contracts, incorporate and so forth. If you feel comfortable with this type of approach, fine; if not, see an attorney. The same holds true for marketing research.

Marketing and Today

The homogeneous mass market, which has dictated the offerings of U.S. producers since the dawn of the industrial revolution, is confronting its demise. At least, that's the word from advertising and marketing experts as we transition into a new millennium. If you don't believe it, look no further than the assembly-line hamburger maker, Burger King, which was a forerunner in realizing that customers want it “their way” and their way is not necessarily everyone else's. As touted in its advertising, Burger King offered “customized” burgers based on a patron's preferences, down to the ketchup, a far cry from the typical one-way-suits-all quarter-pounder. Because the mass market is splintering into fragments, now is an opportune time to figure out which fragments are

yours. Writes prophetess of trends Faith Popcorn in her latest version of The Popcorn Report: “Markets are becoming niches and niches are growing smaller. As this market miniaturization occurs, customers gain more stature—and they know it.” Reaching those customers requires a new strategy. The scattershot advertising approach, which wasn’t necessarily all that effective in the past, will be even less so in the 21st century. The most obvious alternative, shifting to narrower and more specialized markets, is already being tried by many small firms with substantial success.

Advertising

What Is Advertising and How Can I Profit from It?

Advertising, defined as “the action of attracting public attention to a product or business,” is one of many marketing tools you can use to draw more customers with greater frequency. Also falling under the broad umbrella of marketing are public relations and promotional programs, signage, premiums and incentives, newsletters, trade shows and word of mouth—in short, everything you do to help attain your company’s overall goals. Ideally, your firm should invest in an ongoing, consistent marketing program using a combination of these tools for maximum impact.

What Advertising Can Do for Your Business

- Remind customers and prospects about the benefits of your product or service.
- Establish and maintain your distinct identity or “personality.”
- Enhance your reputation.
- Encourage existing customers to buy more of what you sell.
- Attract new customers and replace lost ones.
- Slowly build sales to boost your bottom line.

What Advertising Cannot Do for Your Business

- Create an instant avalanche of customers.
- Cause an immediate sharp increase in sales.
- Solve cash flow or profit problems.
- Substitute for poor or indifferent customer service.

Advertising's Two Important Virtues

You have complete control. Unlike public relations efforts, you have final word in determining where, when and how often your message will appear, how it will look and what it will say. You can target your audience more readily (working mothers, new home purchasers, small truck owners) and aim at very specific geographic areas. You can be consistent through advertising that presents your company's image and sales message over time to build awareness and trust. Similar to McDonald's golden arches, a distinctive identity can eventually become clearly associated with your company. People will recognize you quickly and easily—whether in ads, mailers, packaging or signage—if you present yourself consistently through all the promotional vehicles at your disposal.

What Are Advertising's Drawbacks?

It takes planning. Advertising works best and costs least when it's planned and prepared in advance. For example, you'll pay less per ad in newspapers and magazines by agreeing to run several ads over time rather than deciding issue by issue. Likewise, you can achieve certain economies by preparing a number of ads at once. It takes time and persistence. The effectiveness of your advertising is measured over the long run. That's because people don't see every one of your ads. They only see some of them some of the time. You must repeatedly remind prospects and customers about the benefits of doing business with you. It's this constant repetition and the cumulative effect that win the day. It is also the long-term effort that triggers recognition and helps special offers or direct marketing really pay off.

Ready, Set, Advertise!

Most of us are impatient; we want our advertising to spark an immediate sales increase. That's equivalent to giving a builder one week to construct a three-bedroom home without a blueprint. Think of the planning process as drawing a blueprint for your advertising campaign structure. First you design the framework, next you fill in the details, and finally you begin to build.

I. Design the Framework

What is the purpose of your advertising program?

Start by defining your company's long-range goals then map out how marketing can help you attain them. Next, zero in on possible advertising routes that are complementary to your marketing efforts, and be specific. Set measurable goals so you can evaluate the success of your advertising campaign. For example, do you want to increase overall sales by 20 percent this year? Do you want to boost sales to existing customers by 10 percent during each of the next three years? Do you want to appeal to younger or older buyers? Do you want to sell off old products to free resources for new ones?

How much can you afford to invest?

Keep in mind that whatever amount you allocate is never enough. Even corporate giants such as Proctor & Gamble and Pepsi always feel they could augment their advertising budgets. But given your income, expenses and sales projections, simple addition and subtraction can help you determine how much you can afford to invest. Some companies spend a full 10 percent of their gross income on advertising, others just 1 percent. Sorry, there is no fixed rule.

II. Fill in the Details

What are the features and benefits of your product or service?

In first determining the features, think of automobile brochures that list engine, body and performance specifications or food products that detail ingredients. Another example would be accountants whose services include tax return preparation and cash flow consultation. Now the hard part: What are the benefits of those features to your customers? How does your product or service actually help them? For example, a powerful engine helps you accelerate quickly to get onto busy freeways. Certain food ingredients are cholesterol free or low in fat to aid in staying healthy.

Who is your audience?

Create a profile of your best customer. Be as specific as possible. This answer will be the primary guidepost in creating your ads and choosing appropriate media.

Examples: A restaurant may target adults who dine out frequently in the nearby city or suburban area. A computer software manufacturer may aim at information managers in companies with 10-100 employees. A bottled water company may try to appeal to athletes or people over 25 who are concerned about their health.

Who is your competition?

It's important to identify who your competitors are as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Knowing what your competition offers that you don't—and vice versa—helps you show prospects why your product or service is special, or why they should do business with you instead of someone else. Knowing your competition will also help you find a niche in the marketplace and establish a particular positioning in your customers' minds. For example, is your product perceived as the most or least expensive? Are you

regarded as a large or small company within your industry? Is your service seen as prestigious or utilitarian?

III. Arm Yourself with Information

What do you know about your industry, market and audience?

Many sources of information can help you keep in touch with industry, market and buying trends—without conducting expensive market research. Examples include U.S. Government materials from the Census Bureau and the Department of Commerce. Public, business or university libraries are also a good option, as are industry associations, trade publications and professional organizations. You can quickly and easily learn more about your customers by simply asking them about themselves, their buying preferences and their media habits. Another alternative is to hire a professional market research firm to conduct your research.

IV. Build Your Action Plan—Evaluating Media Choices

Your next steps are to select the advertising vehicles you will use to carry your message and to establish an advertising schedule. In most cases, knowing who your audience is will guide you toward the type of media that will deliver your sales message most effectively. Use as many of the tools as are appropriate and affordable. Remember that you can stretch your media budget by taking advantage of co-op advertising programs that are offered by manufacturers to encourage you to advertise their products. Although programs vary, generally the manufacturer will pay for a portion of media space and time costs, or mailer production charges, up to a fixed amount per year. The total amount contributed is usually based on the quantity of merchandise you purchase.

When developing your advertising schedule, be sure to take advantage of any special editorial or promotional coverage planned in the media you select. Newspapers, for example, often run special sections featuring real estate, investing, home and garden

improvement and tax advice. Magazines also often focus on specific themes in each issue.

V. Using Other Promotional Avenues

Advertising doesn't start or stop with the media described above. Other options include imprinting your company name (and graphic identity) on pens, paper, clocks, calendars and other giveaway items for your customers. Put your message on billboards, inside buses and subways, on vehicle and building signs, on point-of-sale displays and on shopping bags. You can co-sponsor events with nonprofit organizations and advertise your participation. Attend or display at consumer or business trade shows. Create tie-in promotions with allied businesses. Send a newsletter. Conduct seminars. Undertake contests or sweepstakes.

In addition, you can send advertising flyers along with billing statements. Use telemarketing to generate leads for salespeople. Develop sales kits with brochures, product samples or application ideas. In short, the number of promotional tools used to deliver your message and repeat your name is limited only by your imagination and the parameters of your budget.

Fifteen Promotional Ideas

Every successful company uses some sort of promotion to influence certain audiences, usually customers or prospects, by informing or persuading them. Reasons for promoting a business include: increasing visibility; adding credibility to you or your company; enhancing or improving your image and bringing in new business. The following cost-effective, easy-to-execute ideas have the power to increase sales in a way that conventional advertising cannot. The key is to find the methods that are appropriate for your business, marketplace and professional style.

1. Contests

As one example, a cookware store decided to sponsor cooking contests. After sending out a press release announcing a competition for the best cookie or chocolate cake, a mailing went out to the store's customers soliciting entries. Food editors, professional chefs and cooking teachers were invited to be judges. Both the winners and the winning recipes were publicized. Essay and design contests are also possibilities, such as a furniture store establishing a prize for student furniture design. Pie-eating, pancake-flipping, oyster-shucking and grape-stomping contests make sense for restaurants. Dentists can hold smile contests, while video rental stores can stage movie trivia quizzes.

2. Newsletters

Another good way to promote, particularly for brokers, banks and business consultants, is through newsletters. Newsletter articles demonstrate how much you know about your field and do so in a low-key, informative way. They also help keep your company high in the consciousness of your prospects.

3. Demonstrations

Demonstrations are an option to attract people to your place of business, to show them how to best use your product and to establish your credibility. A retail-wholesale fish outlet holds cooking demonstrations twice a week, featuring a different restaurant chef each time and attracting substantial crowds. Recipe cards are even given out. Wallpaper demonstrations, fashion shows, gift wrapping, refinishing and computer demonstrations have all worked well for retailers who were selling products associated with them.

4. Seminars

Often more appropriate for business-to-business marketing, seminars are the commercial side of demonstrations. If you hold a seminar, follow these rules for success:

- a. Schedule the event at a time that is convenient to most attendees.
- b. Be specific in the invitation about when the event begins and ends, who will be there and what the agenda is.
- c. Follow up the invitations with personal phone calls.
- d. Charge for seminar entrance to give it a higher perceived value.
- e. Follow up after the event to get people's reactions.

5. Premiums

Also called an advertising specialty, a premium is a gift of some kind that reminds your customer of you and your service. There are thousands of premiums from which you can choose: key chains, coffee mugs, refrigerator magnets, baseball caps, paperweights—just about anything that can be engraved, imprinted, silk-screened or embroidered with your company name and phone number.

6. Speeches

Depending on your topic and your market, you might want to speak before chambers of commerce, trade associations, parent groups, senior citizens or other local organizations.

7. Articles

Another possibility is to write an article for a trade journal, reprint it and mail it off to your friends, customers and prospects. Well-crafted articles position you as an expert and are a particularly good way to promote a consulting business.

8. Bonuses

If you have a restaurant, give away a glass of wine with dinner to introduce a new menu. If you sell to retailers, give them a display fixture with the order of a gross. If you sell office supplies, give away a new pen with a sizeable purchase. If you're in the cosmetics business, offer customers a free sample blusher when they buy mascara and lipstick.

9. Coupons

For best results, the price break should be significant—at least 15 percent. Coupons are one of the least expensive ways to develop new trade and are an excellent tool for evaluating advertising. However, one theory holds that coupons draw people who only buy discount and never become regular customers, so be sure to monitor the results.

10. Donations

Donating your product or service to a charitable cause often results in positive exposure to community leaders, charity board members, PTAs and civic groups. While consumer products are desired most, many organizations also look for donations of professional service time. If you have a restaurant or a large meeting facility, consider hosting an event for a charitable organization. This strategy works best if volunteers for that charity are potential customers.

11. Samples

No matter what you do to promote your business, giving potential customers a sample is an excellent way to attract attention and make a positive impression. In many cases, it makes just as much sense to spend your marketing and advertising dollars on giving out your own products instead of buying advertisements—especially if cash is tight. The key is to give samples to the audience you want to reach (i.e., software packages to computer user groups or nutritious snacks to health-oriented consumers). In the food arena, where one taste is worth a thousand words, firms now exist that test market new products for large and small companies alike through in-store demonstrations. A good demonstration company not only keeps track of how much of your product was given away but also submits detailed reports on what people said about the product and how much of it was purchased.

12. Free Trials

If your product is too big or expensive to give away outright, why not offer a free trial to qualified customers? Try shipping it out to prospects with no strings attached. Most people will appreciate the opportunity to try the product, and many will like it enough to buy it.

13. Free Services

If you can't afford to give away products, offering your services as a way of generating new business can also pay off. For example, if you own a retail clothing business, send out a flyer offering customers a free fashion consultation to draw them into the store.

14. Special Benefits, Rates or Notices

Smart organizations go out of their way to make customers feel important and appreciated. Frequent flyer clubs are the most pervasive example of loyalty-building

benefits for customers only that are now being adapted by many kinds of businesses. Most software companies sell program updates to customers at discounted prices. And advance notices about sales or other changes or opportunities can help cement customer ties.

15. Say “Thanks”

One of the best ways to let customers know you value their business, and to simultaneously encourage their continued patronage, is also one of the easiest. It boils down to saying “thank you” in letters, mailers, surveys, statement stuffers, receipts and invoices, and in person.

VI. The Advertising Campaign

Armed with knowledge of your industry, market and audience, a media plan and schedule, your product or service’s most important benefits and measurable goals in terms of sales volume (number of units sold), revenue generated or other criteria, you are ready for action. The first step is to establish the theme and, if appropriate, the specific tagline that identifies your product or service in all of your advertising. The theme of your advertising reflects your special identity or personality as well as the particular benefits of your product or service. For example, cosmetics ads almost always rely on a glamorous theme. Many food products opt for healthy, all-American-family campaigns. Automobile advertising frequently concentrates on how the car makes you feel about owning or driving it rather than its performance attributes.

Likewise, a tagline rests on the single most important reason for buying your product or service. “Nothing Runs Like a Deere” (John Deere farm vehicles) conveys performance and endurance with a nice twist on the word “deer.” “Ideas at Work” (Black & Decker tools and appliances) again signifies performance but adds reliability and imagination to the statement. “How the Smart Money Gets that Way” (Barron’s financial publication) clearly connotes prosperity, intelligence and success.

Preparing the Ads

The initial design of your advertising, the creation of the tagline and the tone of voice you'll use to establish your personality are so critical that it almost always pays to have professional help. Hire the best designer and copywriter you can afford at the start. Later, you can ask newspapers, radio stations or magazines to follow your guidelines in preparing specific ads if you can't afford to continue relying on professionals. How do you know a good ad when you read, write, design or evaluate one? Most importantly, a good ad focuses on one message: the single idea you want this ad to convey. That idea may revolve around price, features, convenience, quality, enhanced technology or a time-limited offer. Support that idea with as much copy or illustration as time or space allows. Good ads rely on "The Three Is": **Involve, Inform and Illustrate.**

Involve the audience: A good ad arouses curiosity, lures in prospects and invites them to participate. It does that with words, images or sounds that are compelling and with information that aims at their strongest interests. Example: "Please Your Client & Your Accountant" appeals to the reader's desire to be doubly successful by giving good service and making money.

Inform the buyer: Your prospect wants the answer to one question: "What's in it for me?" This may be a faster, easier or less expensive way to attain a specific objective, "TransEuropa Express: The Fast Track to the Time of Your Life," for example. It may also be something less tangible: stylishness, prestige, praise or the admiration of friends and colleagues. Look at clothing, soft drink and health club ads for good examples of this appeal.

Illustrate the benefit: Even people who aren't paying much attention while turning the channel or the page can see your message in a micro-second if it's well illustrated. Effective display means illustrating not only the product or service but the benefit as well. Example: Campbell Soup Company's advertising shows mom and her kids in a

traditional kitchen setting with a loving atmosphere and hot soup. Nordic Track ads portray a slim young man or woman exercising. Both imply that the customer will also look or feel that way by using the products being advertised. You can even illustrate radio and television ads with your choice of music and background sound effects.

What's in an Ad?

Print ads generally have four written parts: headline, support copy, call to action, company name and a visual. Visuals are usually more important than copy because they're more effective in attracting readers' attention and can instantly present your product or service in a dramatic and motivating way. Unless you're commissioning your own original artwork or photography, the visuals you'll use will probably be either drawings and photographs from your suppliers or non-copyrighted artwork (clip art) found in clip-art books and scrap-art computer programs. Choose the strongest visual among them, the one that best draws the eye and explains what you're selling, and then move on to copy.

The most prominent piece of copy, your headline, must not only work with your visual, amplifying its meaning, but also attract attention with a word, phrase or sentence announcing a benefit that appeals to your target market. One expert wrote that a headline is that final, mind-changing, sales-clinching comment you'd make when leaving the office of a prospect that, until then, had responded with nothing but negatives. Others point to the enduring effectiveness of the standard headlines "Sale," "Free" and "Buy now and save." Collect ideas that are right for you from your salespeople, from the ads in your file and from advertising books. And remember it is not so much the words, but the ideas they express, that sell. Determine your message then find words to convey it.

Below the headline, support copy explains the headline's premise and adds secondary benefits or any assurance readers might need to dispel suspicions that have been raised by the headline, such as the assurance of "same great quality" when you're offering a "new low price." Following this copy, as a sign-off, is a call to action urging

the reader to respond—“Call for an appointment today,” or “Remember, sale ends March 21.”. Your company name, traditionally at the bottom of the ad, should include your address and phone number. Make your phone number larger to help stimulate response by phone. Add a cross street to your address (e.g., “5730 Sheridan, at La Monte”) if you’re a new business or if, for other reasons, people might have difficulty finding you.

The next step is to combine all these visual and copy elements into an eye-catching, easy-to-read ad that is formatted to the dimensions stipulated by the publication. It’s best to study the ads in that publication in advance and consider what your ad might look like in order to stand out on the page. Experiment with different layout ideas rendered in thumbnail sketches and then fine-tune your ad to fit the layout you prefer. Obviously, it’s highly advisable, if not imperative, when you’re doing ads in-house, that the person composing your ad has design experience. Not only is skill required to make an ad look right, but the quality of your ad must compete favorably with others appearing in the publication.

It’s also a good idea to prepare your ad well ahead of the deadline. This way, you can put it aside for a few days and then review the ad with a fresh perspective while there’s still time to make revisions. As a final check, lay your ad on a page of the publication where it will appear and make sure it stands out from the articles and other ads on the page.

Avoid These Pitfalls

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to good advertising is excess. Ads can end up so crammed with ideas and features that they appear dense and uninviting. If over-designed, they can become more artistic than motivational, obscuring the sales message. If over-written, they can become over-subtle or over-cute. Certainly, some of the best ads ever created are clever and visually arresting; but good ads must also sell. Similarly, selling points may over-promise. Use “largest,” “best” and other superlatives only if you can back them up. Avoid any claim that could be construed as deceptive. In addition,

make sure the overall tone of your ad is upbeat and appealing. Emphasize the solutions you provide, not the problems you address. And get outside opinions on your new advertising concepts to be certain they carry the personality and message you intend.

Fundamentals of Headlines, Copy and Design

While there are many opinions about what constitutes good headlines, copy and design, most professionals agree that these individual elements of the ad must work together. In combination, they must grab attention, convey a persuasive message and portray a consistent identity. An ad that's too cluttered can't convey a message quickly enough to engage the reader or viewer. One that's out of character with the product or service will be confusing rather than convincing. An effective headline (or a broadcast ad's opening moments) must immediately capture the audience's interest and pull them into the ad. A good rule of thumb is to look for the inherent "drama" in what you are offering and capitalize on that to create an alluring ad.

Examples: "We're Losing Our Minds"—a university ad appealing for funds. And "You Don't Have to Be Jewish to Love Levy's"—a bread company ad featuring a Chinese man biting into a whopping pastrami sandwich.

Next, the photo or illustration amplifies the message. A recent ad for Bull Worldwide Information Systems, for example, showed a satellite photo of the earth with the headline "GloBull."

Once the headline and illustration have drawn the customer into your ad, the copy convinces them to buy. So make it believable, full of information and bolstered with words and style that complement your identity. Almost any Mercedes Benz print ad exemplifies convincing copy in a style that suits the product perfectly.

Broadcast advertising will also involve selecting music, sound effects, actors or announcers and perhaps a theme song. All these elements enhance your message and

reinforce your identity but, for the most part, the copy and what it conveys actually do the selling.

Measuring and Tracking Your Results

Now that you've advertised regularly and consistently with dramatic ads full of information and impact, it's time to look at the bottom line to measure results. In the short term, results are often difficult to ascertain because advertising is not a knee-jerk instrument. It is an ongoing process that is designed for sustainable results over time. However, when your ad contains a coupon, a special time-limited offer or other inducement to act immediately, you can get measurable results almost at once—provided your offer, timing and media selection were right and you had already established a rapport with your audience.

Remember that a single ad does not an advertising program make! Each individual advertising exposure, whatever response it generates, contributes to a residual result that will eventually show up at your bottom line: name recognition, reputation and trust. Establish a method to determine how customers found you and keep track of the results. Some companies routinely ask, "How did you hear about us?" of every new customer who phones or visits. Others have a "Referred by" box filled in on each invoice. Whatever system you use, unless you've done a coupon promotion and can simply count the number of coupons redeemed, tracking is the only way you can assess how effectively your advertising is working. Tracking tells you which ads or media bring inquiries and which bring sales—a key distinction. If you track by invoice, you can also determine how much revenue each ad dollar is producing.

Most important, tracking helps you decide how to readjust your advertising program periodically to make your budget work its hardest. You'll know when to discontinue certain media and publications and when to pump more money into others. You'll also be able to see which Yellow Pages directories and headings pull hardest for you. And you'll know when results are dropping off from previously good sources,

signaling that it's time to give them a rest. In the end, advertising is a trial-and-error process. You may need to spend several years trying out various advertising options and assessing results to know the target markets and media mix that work best for you.

To gauge long-term results, go back to your original benchmark. Were you successful in attaining the goals you set up? Now look at the specific advertising vehicles you employed. Which media were most effective in a quantifiable way—not for a specific ad but during your overall campaign—in terms of response versus cost expended? Which offers worked best? What pricing levels brought in the biggest sales? Did you see steeper upward curves during certain times of the year? Armed with this analysis, you can fine-tune your overall advertising program, and its individual components, for the next year or years. The value of advertising—as a complement to other promotional efforts—justifies it as an integral part of your marketing strategy. And yes, it does get easier as you test, refine, re-evaluate and measure over time.

Drawing the Advertising Blueprint

- What are your organization's overall goals?
- Which marketing tools will help you achieve them?
- What is the purpose of your advertising program? (Be specific.)
- What is your advertising budget?
- What are the most important features and benefits of your product/service?
- Who is your target audience? (Create a profile of your best customer.)
- Who is your competition?
- How are you perceived relative to your competition?
- What identity or personality do you want to project?
- What is the single most important benefit you want to convey about your product/service?
- What other benefits set you apart from the competition?

- What advertising tools will you use?

Yellow Pages	Newspapers	Magazines
Radio/TV	Direct Mail	Telemarketing
Billboards	Signage	Other
- How will you measure the effectiveness of your advertising program?

The 12-Question Customer Quiz

1. How did you first hear about our product/service?
2. Have you seen any of our advertising? If so, where?
3. What do you like best/find most useful about our product/service?
4. How could our product/service be improved?
5. What other products/services would you like us to offer?
6. What was the single most compelling reason for choosing our product/service?
7. What other reasons were important?
8. What friends, family members or colleagues, if any, influenced your buying decision?
9. What newspapers and magazines do you read regularly?
10. Which radio and television stations do you tune in to most frequently?
11. Please indicate your age and sex:

	Male	Female	
18-34	35-49	50-65	66+
12. Please indicate your annual household income:

Under \$15,000	\$16-24,000	\$25-49,000
\$50-100,000	\$100,000+	

(For businesses, omit #11 and instead ask something to indicate size, such as number of employees. Rather than #12, ask for annual sales volume.)

Six Ad Program Guidelines

If you are new to advertising, or if you're using media or publications you haven't tried before, it's important to assign your ads to outside specialists rather than try to create them yourself. These specialists may be the creative group at an advertising agency, a freelance writer and designer or the ad department of the newspaper, magazine, TV channel or radio station where you plan to advertise. Such people are experienced in translating information about a product or service, target market, U.S.P. (unique selling position) and advertising goals into advertising that suits each medium and conveys an effective image and sales message. Moreover, it's extremely helpful to work with and learn from specialists for several years before you consider doing advertising in-house.

Whether you work with specialists or create advertising on your own, here are six guidelines to follow in the development of an ad program:

1. Do your homework. Start compiling your own ad file. Collect ads you like, to give you ideas, as well as ads run by your competitors, so you can monitor what they're doing. Read books on advertising, including anthologies of the best ads of the year, and how-tos by advertising greats.
2. "Sell the sizzle, not the steak." The old rule about selling products based on the benefits and excitement they provide has proved true time and time again. So focus on your U.S.P.—and on those intangibles that motivate human behavior and generate sales. This rule does not apply to Yellow Pages ads, which do sell steak, but it remains the essence of all other advertising you do.
3. Stick to your own image and personality. Stay with the basics of who you are. Make sure that the personality and images projected in your entire advertising ring true.
4. Work as a team with your ad rep or ad agency. The best advertising results from a synergy between your business expertise and your ad specialists' advertising

expertise. Carefully explain your product, market and goals, and let the ad people go from there to develop their ideas. Advertising is a give-and-take process, and both sides need to communicate and work together, without dictating, until the outcome feels right.

5. Give each advertising medium you choose a fair test. Advertising rarely brings sales overnight. Run your ad at least five times—or at least two months in weekly publications—to test out the market properly. Often, consumers need to get used to seeing your ad before they'll act on it. Results take time.
6. Don't overlook current customers. Nobody sells you better than a satisfied customer. So in your efforts to gain sales from new prospects, remember that you can build sales equally well through customer referrals and repeat purchases of existing clientele. Maintain a mailing list and, at your earliest opportunity, start producing sales notices, newsletters, catalogues or other goodwill and sales-generating materials for the customers you already have. Some of these items lend themselves to a direct mail campaign that is targeted at new prospects as well.

Cost-Effective Advertising

If you think advertising is a high-stakes gamble, one that is full of risks and gimmicks at expensive prices, think again. Advertising follows, in fact, some very logical rules. The first is that good advertising is based on market research. Before you advertise, you need to understand the customers you're trying to reach. What are their needs? What factors influence their decisions to buy? What features of your products or services offer what they truly want? And what weaknesses in your competitors could bring these target customers to you?

The second rule is that when you are advertising, particularly with different media, you must always measure your advertising results. Only through consistent, systematic evaluation can you determine the percent of return you're getting for each ad

dollar spent. Moreover, by pinpointing which advertising is working and which is not, you can capitalize on your successes, cut your losses and revise your program by trying a different sales approach or different media.

Track your advertising religiously. Always ask new customers how they heard about you. Put a dedicated phone number in your Yellow Pages ad; the number of calls coming in on this line will quantify the effect the ad is having. If you advertise with coupons, count the coupons redeemed. If your advertising spotlights a certain product or service, monitor its sales.

A third rule is that like anything new entering the public environment, advertising takes time to catch on. Although some famous print ads and television commercials have had immediate impact, most advertising builds slowly through consistency and repetition. Thus your advertising must appear frequently enough to become a familiar presence; think of it as something that customers must see three or four times before noticing it's there.

Besides being logical, advertising can also be inexpensive—even free. So after you've identified your target customer and defined your strategic sales message—the prerequisites to all forms of advertising—explore the following cost-saving advertising alternatives.

Advertising Your Business

Advertising is an investment in your business and is similar to other investments that are designed to improve and expand your business. The return you receive depends on the planning and thought that precede the actual commitment and expenditure of advertising dollars. By first developing an effective advertising plan, you increase the likelihood of a positive return on your advertising investment, regardless of the amount of money you spend.

Four Basic Questions

The basic premise of an advertising plan requires you to thoroughly analyze the answers to key questions before you can make effective advertising decisions. There are four key questions to ask yourself:

1. What do I want my advertising to accomplish?
2. Who should my advertising speak to?
3. What should my advertising say?
4. What advertising medium should I use?

In a specific business situation, each question has any number of potential answers. As you think about each question, do not accept any answer until you have considered and explored the full range of possibilities.

What Do I Want My Advertising To Accomplish?

The first step in developing your advertising plan is to specify your advertising goals. Be as precise as you can as to why you are advertising and what you want to achieve. Everyone wants advertising to increase business, but for your advertising plan to work, it requires you to be more precise. Some possible goals for your advertising are:

- To increase awareness of your business.
- To attract competitors' customers.
- To increase the likelihood of keeping current customers and developing their loyalty.
- To generate immediate sales or sales leads.

It is possible that you may want your advertising to achieve all of these goals plus some others. What is important is that you prioritize your goals. Advertising works best when it is developed to meet one specific goal at a time.

Who Should My Advertising Speak To?

Once you determine your advertising goals, you can then select the target audience for your message. Keep in mind that advertising that tries to reach “everyone” rarely succeeds. Successful advertising is written with a specific customer in mind. Try to picture the person you must reach in order to achieve your advertising goals. Try to describe your target consumers in each of the following:

- Demographics: such as gender, age, income, location of residence or business, etc.
- Behaviors: such as current awareness of your business; the products, services or vendors they currently use; loyalty to either you or your competitor’s business, etc.
- Needs or desires: such as what benefits consumers look for, the basis on which they will decide whether to use your product or service, how your business can fulfill those needs, etc.

What Should My Advertising Say?

Once you know who your target audience is and what they are looking for in terms of the product or service you offer, you can decide what your advertising will say. Advertising should always be written to communicate a message that will be seen as important by your target customer. Your advertising should clearly and convincingly “speak” to your target audience, explaining the important benefits your product or service offers. In deciding how to discuss the major benefits of your product or service in your advertising, keep “AIDA” in mind: attract Attention, hold Interest, arouse Desire and motivate Action.

Where Should I Place My Advertising?

Every month, new advertising options become available. Beyond “traditional” media you can place ads in airports, on ski lifts and on television monitors in the front of grocery carts. Where you place your advertising should be guided by a simple principle: Go where your target audience will have the highest likelihood of seeing or hearing it. Many advertising media work well to reach a diverse range of target consumers. There is no single medium that is inherently good or bad. In fact, a good medium for one product or service may be a poor medium for another. As you consider media choices, look for one that fits your advertising goals, reaches your target efficiently and cost effectively and is within your advertising budget. Based on these considerations, the following summarizes the relative advantages and disadvantages of the advertising media most frequently used by small businesses:

Television

Television provides a means for reaching a great number of people in a short period of time. Small businesses will typically use either spot television or cable television. A spot television ad is placed on one station in one market. The number of target audience members who see your ad depends upon how many viewers are tuned into the television station at a specific time. Cable advertising is placed either on a local cable television channel or on a cable network. The number of people reached by cable advertising depends upon the cable penetration and the cable channel/program viewership in a given market. Beyond television’s reach, an additional advantage is its ability to convey your message with sight, sound and motion. The disadvantages of television advertising are its relatively higher cost—both the terms of airtime and production, its limited length of exposure, its short airtime (making it difficult to present a complex or detailed message) and the clutter of many other ads. Television ads may require multiple exposures to achieve message retention and consumer action. Also, many commercials are considered intrusive, prompting viewers to switch channels to avoid them.

Beware of stations that nobody watches. Before making a commitment, do a quick informal survey of your customers and staff to learn what percentage of them watch the channel you're considering. What is true of advertising in general is also true for television: Advertising can work for you only if it's seen, heard or read.

Radio

Radio, like television, has the capability of quickly reaching a large number of consumers. The major advantage of radio lies in its ability to efficiently target narrowly defined segments of consumers. The vast array of radio program formats allows an advertiser to gear ads to almost any target audience. Beyond this advantage, radio is commonly used by small businesses because it is relatively inexpensive (both in terms of airtime and production costs) and because deadlines for placing radio advertising are relatively short, thereby providing an advertiser with increased flexibility. The disadvantages of radio are: 1) an advertiser is limited to an audio message so there is no visual product or service identification, 2) ad clutter can be high and 3) exposure to the message is short and fleeting. Similar to television, multiple exposures may be required for message retention and consumer action. Also, listeners may change stations to avoid commercials.

If you can find a station whose listenership matches your customer profile, radio can indeed boost sales. Bear in mind, however, that radio's effectiveness is tied directly to the time of day when commercials air and to their frequency of repetition. Opt for the time slots when your prospects are most likely to be listening and then purchase the greatest amount of airtime you can afford. If you need to economize, use shorter spots; three 10-second spots may be more effective than a single spot that runs for 30 seconds.

Newspapers

Newspapers permit an advertiser to reach a large number of people within a specified geographic area. Newspaper advertising has several advantages for the small

business. First, an advertiser has flexibility in terms of ad size and placement within the newspaper. Second, exposure to the ad is not limited, so readers can take their time with your message. Finally, short deadlines permit quick response to changing market conditions. Disadvantages of newspaper advertising include: 1) declining readership and market penetration, 2) ad space can be expensive, 3) clutter of competitive advertising and 4) a relatively short lifespan (newspapers are typically read once then discarded), thus requiring multiple insertions.

Check with the advertising department of your local and regional newspapers. Get their demographics, rates and a rundown on the scope of advertising services they provide. Some newspapers, especially smaller ones, can serve as your advertising agency and consultant at no extra charge. They can usually write and design your advertising and can advise you about co-op arrangements, through which your suppliers share the cost of ads that include their name, logo or both. Some may even help you with merchandising or arrange tie-in advertising with other businesses or in other media. What's more, they can tell you from experience which of their editions and sections deliver the demographics best suited to your product or service.

Magazines

Magazines provide an advertiser with the means to reach highly targeted audiences. Specific groups can be reached by placing an ad in a magazine whose editorial content specializes in topics of interest to that target. This is true of both consumer and business publications. Placing ads in magazines that have well-defined geographic, demographic or lifestyle foci can reach audiences. Beyond their ability to reach specific audiences, the advantages of magazines include a relatively long ad life and repeated ad exposure (magazines are typically looked through several times before being discarded), excellent reproduction quality and pass-along value. The disadvantages of magazines include long lead time, limited flexibility in terms of ad placement and format and the potential for high costs in production and placement.

Public Relations and Goodwill

One highly effective type of advertising costs virtually nothing: public relations. With public relations, the newsworthiness of some aspect of your business or business activities can earn you free publicity in newspapers or magazines, or even on radio or television. However, it must truly be newsworthy. You might publicize, for example, a lecture, a demonstration or a workshop being presented at your business site—an event that news outlets could list in their community calendars or possibly even send a reporter to cover. Find out who at a station or publication handles such local events and send that person a news release. Alternatively, prepare an article for a newspaper or trade magazine in which you offer information of value to its readers. The point of such articles is to establish you as an authority in your industry. It's for this reason that a stockbroker might write a biweekly column on personal finance or a nursery write a column giving gardening advice.

A further source of publicity is goodwill efforts. Team sponsorships, for example, keep your name in front of the public. Lectures given by you or your staff to civic groups or other businesses also enhance your company's visibility. Get a list of clubs and associations from your local Chamber of Commerce. Another course of action, one that must be heartfelt and genuine, is to spearhead a campaign to solve a community problem that is related to your business. A pharmacist, for example, might lead an effort to keep poison detection centers open.

Writing a News Release

If you keep in mind the person at the newspaper, magazine or station who'll receive your news release—a person buried under stacks of releases and eager to find some newsworthy information – you'll automatically write the best kind of release: short, crisp and simple.

In the first paragraph, tell who, what, why, where and when—starting with a description of the event itself. For example:

A free slide talk on family hikes in the Bay Area will be given by writer–photographer Jane Doe on Thursday, October 18, 7:30 P.M., at Jackson’s Shoes in Berkeley.

In the following one or more paragraphs, add information that rounds out the first paragraph or answers questions the first paragraph may evoke. For example:

Doe, author of *A Walk in the Park*, will recommend nature walks for families with children aged seven and older. Most walks are in regional parks, and Doe will not only show what various trails have to offer but also the trails for difficulty. Parents and their children are invited to attend. Jackson’s Shoes is located at 1234 First Street in Berkeley. For more information, call (510) 555-3271.

Finally, on either the top or bottom of the news release—which can be written on letterhead with the words NEWS RELEASE above the text—write the name and telephone number of your contact person. For example:

For more information, contact Jim Brewster at (510) 555-3271.

To give newspapers further encouragement to publicize your event, enclose a glossy black-and-white photo that illustrates the subject of your release. Type a caption and paste it on the back. For example, if you are using a nature photograph:

Family hikes in the Bay Area will be the subject of a free slide talk by author Jane Doe on Thursday, October 18, 7:30 P.M., at Jackson’s Shoes in Berkeley.

Overall, the virtue of a clear, well-organized news release and captioned photo is that they give newspapers—your most likely recipients—several ways to respond. They

can print your entire release and captioned picture, they can use only the captioned photograph, or they can insert just the first paragraph into a community calendar. As a result, your chances of getting something into print are greatly enhanced.

Outdoor (Billboards)

Outdoor advertising is typically used to reinforce or remind the consumer of the advertising messages communicated through other media. The advantages of outdoor advertising are the ability to completely cover a market and the high levels of viewing frequency. The disadvantages of outdoor advertising are related to viewing time. Because target consumers are typically moving, an outdoor advertisement must communicate with a minimum of words. Billboard messages must be simple, direct and easily understood.

Direct Mail

Direct mail advertisers use targeted mailing lists to reach highly specialized audiences. In addition to low waste in ad exposure, direct mail provides an advertiser with great flexibility in the message presentation. The disadvantages of direct mail include the relatively high cost per contact, the trouble involved with obtaining updated, accurate mailing lists and the difficulty in getting the audience's attention. (Direct mail is often considered "junk mail.")

Yellow Pages

The Yellow Pages are an advertising medium that shares many of the strengths of other advertising media while, at the same time, avoids some of its competition's limitations or disadvantages. As such, the Yellow Pages are best used to complement or extend the effects of advertising placed in other media. Like other media, the Yellow Pages permit an advertiser to select a well-defined geographic area, ranging from a neighborhood to an entire metropolitan area. Once the geography is defined, a Yellow

Pages ad has permanence; Yellow Pages are kept as a regular reference. In addition, Yellow Pages support your other advertising by providing a convenient way for consumers to contact sources and obtain information on the products or services they desire at the precise time they are ready to “take action.” Studies on this form of “directive” advertising have shown it works so well that of the people who turn to the Yellow Pages, 83 percent then take action. Also, the Yellow Pages are relatively low in cost in terms of both ad production and placement. The disadvantages of the Yellow Pages include their lack of timeliness (ads can be changed only once per year and, as a result, there is no opportunity for “price advertising”), the potential clutter in some classifications and less creative flexibility than other print media offer.

Yellow Pages ads resemble no other kind of advertising. They’re not aimed at motivating consumers to buy a product. Rather, their goal is to convince consumers to buy a desired product from a particular company. Because companies attract business by showing they’ve got whatever consumers may want, Yellow Pages ads also tend to be full of brand names and information.

The first thing your ad must do is get itself read. Here, your success depends in part on which Yellow Pages directory (or directories) in which you choose to place your ad. The bottom line is to get the greatest amount of exposure. So, compare competing directories on the basis of their usage figures—not their distribution figures, but the number of actual consumer uses per year. If you then divide directories’ uses-per-year figures by their charge for the same size ad, you’ll see which directory provides the highest number of uses per dollar. That’s the directory that delivers the best value for your money.

Another key factor in determining whether your ad will be read is the size of the ad you decide to buy. Obviously, the larger the ad, the more attention it gets. Once you select the heading or headings under which your ad will appear—and they should be headings for the products and services that give you the greatest profitability—open to those headings and see what ad sizes your competitors have. You can then choose ad

sizes larger than theirs, on par with theirs or smaller than theirs, depending on budget constraints and the competitive stance you want to take.

Once you've decided on directories, headings and ad sizes, concentrate on creating an ad that both attracts attention and stimulates customer response. Experts such as Jeffrey Price, author of *Yellow Pages Advertising: How to Get the Greatest Return on Your Investment*, say you can achieve those results by including the following in your ad:

Attention-getting artwork. Artwork is the greatest eye-catcher for an ad, after size. You can use visuals from your suppliers or even non-copyrighted artwork you locate in out-of-town or out-of-state Yellow Pages. Stick with illustrations whenever possible, since photographs may reproduce poorly. And keep areas of blank space around your artwork, and throughout your ad as well, so your ad is uncluttered-looking and easy to read.

A headline that says what makes you special. Identify the special or unique characteristic that, for your target customer, puts you ahead of the competition. Write a short, to-the-point headline stating that advantage. If your headline must focus on just one of your products or services, choose the one that is most profitable.

Include the complete information buyers need to make a purchase decision. Your ad must convince buyers that you're the best source for what they need. So support your headline with information, usually presented in list form, about your:

1. Reliability (e.g., years in business).
2. Authorized products and services.
3. Full range of products.
4. Location (with maps, when helpful).
5. Business hours.
6. Special features such as parking, credit cards honored, discounts, licenses, guarantees, delivery policies and emergency services.

Lastly, try to get your ad placed in the most prominent position possible under each heading. Since positions are assigned on a first-come-first-served basis, it's advantageous to finalize your contracts with Yellow Pages publishers as rapidly as possible.

As is the case with newspapers, Yellow Pages sales representatives can help write and design your ad at no charge. They can also advise you on co-op advertising to maximize your promotional dollars. Some can serve as your full-service ad agency and consultant. Unlike other mediums, where your ad only appears or airs periodically, Yellow Pages gives constant advertising exposure—24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Co-op Advertising

Recent industry studies have revealed that billions of dollars aimed at helping businesses stretch their advertising budgets are going unclaimed each year because many owners don't know about co-op advertising. A relatively unknown form of advertising, co-op is a cost-sharing arrangement in which manufacturers and suppliers provide financial assistance for customers' advertising programs. It can often make the difference in whether or not a small business can afford to advertise at all. Co-op advertising works in a number of ways. For example, a retailer can buy goods from a manufacturer and accrue co-op funds based on the amount of purchase. Those funds can be returned in the form of a cash rebate, a credit to the retailer's account or in products.

Promotions

Promotions can create excitement and new business when they provide solid value to your customers. One perennially successful promotion is to declare yourself a tax-free zone (i.e., don't charge your customers any sales tax). Another is to offer a free service with the purchase of an item, such as free alterations, free installation or any other type of giveaway, such as free lawn mowing with the purchase of a new lawn mower.

Still another traditional success is to run a contest in your store for free merchandise or simply have weekly drawings of customers' business cards for free services or goods.

Specialty Items

Consider using specialty items in your promotional efforts: pens, tote bags, calendars, T-shirts, refrigerator magnets and a host of other wares imprinted with your name, logo or a message. Some may be giveaways; some may carry a nominal charge. Each makes your name accessible not only to customers who use, wear or carry the item but also to prospects who see customers with it. The key to specialty items is tastefulness. You must select an item and look that customers would choose to buy for themselves and one that matches the overall message you are trying to communicate about your business and its products or services.

Merchandising

When people hear the term merchandising, many think of window displays or perhaps the mass proliferation of Disney memorabilia. However, merchandising is a much broader concept, encompassing everything a company does to package and present its products or services. For some businesses, merchandising means creating visual displays that draw customers to a tangible product. For others, such as consulting or law firms, it is the presentations they conduct to show prospective clients what they have to offer. In either case, effective merchandising demonstrates expertise and style and gives both potential and existing customers the chance to see products or services in action.

Traditional Techniques

Many of the merchandising techniques retailers have traditionally used can be adapted for wholesalers, manufacturers and service companies to frame a product. Window displays are the first thing people notice about a company, other than the front of the building, and can be a very powerful advertising vehicle. In addition to spotlighting

specific products, windows can reflect a specific atmosphere, ambiance and business philosophy. Props, an integral component of window displays, can create a theme, add impact, demonstrate usage and allow products to be displayed in a cohesive, well-blended manner. For example, a retailer who sells hand-woven sweaters and shawls might place an authentic weaver's loom in the middle of the sales area as a focal point. Likewise, a store selling dolls could use baby doll furniture as props.

To enhance your own creativity, make a point of visiting the nearest regional shopping mall once a month to look at the display windows and temporary exhibits. Make notes on how props are used by window and store display designers. Signs can also stimulate interest and project a clear identity to the public. Because of their high visibility, however, unless you are a graphic artist, have them produced by a professional sign company. In addition to incorporating a logo or company name to reinforce your identity, think about the sizes of your signs and lettering—this aspect will determine how easy the signs are to read. Three-inch lettering can be read from 70 to 80 feet away; one-inch lettering from 10 to 30 feet. In addition, colors and styles should be coordinated with your decor and overall image. Are your signs bright and stylized, or subdued and unobtrusive? The former may be appropriate for a candy store, while the latter is a better choice for a law firm.

Lighting can be used to both create a certain atmosphere and highlight merchandise. Because lighting fixtures can be expensive, however, determine how essential lighting is to your overall product presentation. For example, retailers selling fine art or intricate items may decide they need spotlights to illuminate their work and help customers appreciate the quality of their craftsmanship or artistry. If your lighting needs are extensive, also consider seeking professional design advice. Once you decide on the necessary fixtures, invest in the best ones you can afford.

Counters and shelves offer an array of merchandising opportunities. For example, “facing”—a technique many retailers use—involves keeping all the stock pulled to the front of the shelves to give the appearance of a full inventory and create a more positive

image of the store. Retailers can also set up counters and shelves to guide people through the store or to create special display areas. Of primary importance is that the store layout be reflective of customer needs. For example, people tend to stay longer in bookstores that have nooks that provide an “escape” from pedestrian traffic. On the other hand, customers in a hardware store are likely to prefer straight aisles with clearly labeled products that are within easy reach.

Although manufacturers and service companies often do not have counters and shelves, per se, they still have places where “products” can be displayed. Many businesses underestimate the merchandising opportunities of the waiting room, for example. Are the tables in your reception area covered with old magazines and newspapers, or brochures and newsletters that detail your various services? Has your company won any awards that can be displayed? Anything that educates the customer about your business and what it offers should be incorporated into your merchandising program.

End caps and power islands are frequently used for special displays. End caps (the end of a shelf or gondola in a store) can promote new products and services, sell higher-profit impulse items, call attention to key areas of the store or feature educational information about products and services. Power islands are attention-getting, free-standing displays that can be used in the same way as end caps. If they are eye-catching and colorful enough, they can also help direct people through the store or to certain areas of it.

Cross-organization, when products from different departments are displayed together, can create an effective merchandising opportunity. The most obvious example of this technique is furniture showrooms. Rather than displaying all the sofas, lamps and tables in separate areas, successful retailers put them together to create model rooms. Similarly, manufacturers and service firms can group products together in brochures and presentations.

Product demonstrations offer another way to gain attention and show customers what they can do with the product after purchasing it. For example, hand-woven baskets can be filled with fruit, letters, condiments or bath products. Similarly, vases can be filled with flowers, potpourri or colored marbles. Demonstrating how shoppers will benefit from the purchase of a product can also dramatically increase sales. One department store ran a video in the accessory department that demonstrated how to tie silk scarves. Sales increased 50 percent as a result.

The key to merchandising is simplicity and imagination. Entrepreneurs should develop a merchandising plan appropriate to their specific business and re-evaluate it on a regular basis. It is important to keep up with new merchandising ideas and to update your image periodically. For example, the olive-green office furniture that looked good in the 1970s may be less appealing to your 21st century client. Similarly, it's no longer wise to assume that men make the majority of purchase decisions and therefore cater exclusively to masculine sensibilities. While merchandising does involve time and energy, a good program is an integral component of presenting a coordinated and attractive image in the marketplace.

Advertising in a Nutshell

The bottom line of all advertising efforts is an obvious one: to attract customers and bolster sales. But often, small business advertising is wasted on a shotgun approach that doesn't focus on the company's best prospects: those who are ready, willing and able to purchase the product or service. In an attempt to reach "everybody," these advertisers either miss their true market or spend far more than necessary to reach it.

Once you've targeted your market and know exactly who and where your prospects are, it's important to clearly identify what you want your advertising to accomplish. Specific advertising objectives include:

- Creating new customers
- Increasing usage

- Increasing order size
- Promoting replacement of functional but outdated products with technologically superior ones
- Improving brand name recognition
- Generating customer inquiries
- Creating sales leads through the use of response ads, coupons or toll-free “800” numbers
- Promoting special events such as sales, business openings or the introduction of new products or services
- Enhancing the overall image of the business

Generally, the most effective ads focus on customer needs or wants and emphasize the most desirable benefits of the product or service, such as convenience, style or durability. Other tactics include comparisons with competitive products, two-for-one sales, special one-day discounts and offers of free information.

The techniques you choose in your advertising will help determine the media you select and the exact message you communicate. One of the best ways to become familiar with the tactics in your field is to collect your competitors’ advertising materials and use them to stimulate your thinking.

The most important things to take into consideration in any ad are the audience and the offer. Who is the ad trying to reach? If the ad isn’t presented to the right audience and addressed to them in their own language, then it isn’t going to get noticed. And if the offer isn’t something that interests them and gets them excited, then they’re not going to take any action even if they do notice it.

Finally, make it easy for customers to respond to your ad. Tell them what action to take and include (depending on the advertising medium) coupons, an “800” number or business reply envelopes. And be sure to stand behind what you sell.

Deciding Where to Advertise

The mediums in which you choose to advertise will depend on the audience you're trying to reach, the geographical range of your business, where your product or service can be most effectively presented and your budget. In deciding where to advertise, keep the following considerations in mind:

- When and how often your message needs to be sent.
- How effectively the medium communicates your main selling points. Make sure any medium you choose allows you to present all the information customers need to make a buying decision or to request additional information.
- How much a particular medium costs, relative to the number of people it reaches.
- How many of the people seeing the ad fall within your target customer group. Getting your message in front of those who are interested in what you have to sell is pivotal to advertising success.

A final point is that advertising does not need to be brilliant or highly creative to be effective. The secret of successful advertising lies in its continuity—sending an informative, consistent message over time that motivates existing customers and prospects to turn to you when they are ready to buy.