

Persuasion During Your Presentation

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.

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