

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.

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