

Presupposition: Assuming the Sale

Using expectations, we can create immediate reactions to stimuli so the subject doesn't even have to think – they just perform the action. Discounts, closeouts, going out of business sales, and coupons are used to draw traffic to stores. Consumers assume they will receive a reduced purchase price by presenting the coupon by going to a “or going out of business sale.” One tire company made an error in printing their coupon and the misprinted coupon offered no savings to recipients. However, this coupon produced just as much customer response as did the error-free coupon.

Presupposition is often utilized by using words and language that indicate your assumption that your offer has already been accepted. It is a tactic that is used both consciously and subconsciously. Consider the following examples (the assumption is expressed in parentheses):

“When do you want your couch sent?” (You want the couch).

“Should I call you Tuesday or Wednesday?” (You want to talk again).

“Your first class will start next Monday.” (You're signing up for the class).

You'd be amazed how often people will just go along with your proposal! They don't even stop and think about their response because now they're already finishing the deal in their mind!

Another way to use presupposition is to put it in writing. People always think that if something's 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 was pulled when a stop sign was placed on a sidewalk, even though there was no reason to stop there. Even though the sign was in an odd place and there was no danger of oncoming traffic, 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!