

Three Steps to Using the Law of Dissonance

Step One: Get a Commitment

You can create or reveal commitments in your prospects by ensuring that the commitments are public, affirmative, voluntary, and effortful. (PAVE)

a) Public

Make your prospect's stand as public as possible. Get a written commitment and make that written commitment public. Involve friends and neighbors in the proposed action. Engage your customer in a public handshake to seal the deal in front of other employees and customers.

b) Affirmative

You want to get as many "yes" answers as possible because yeses develop consistency within the person that will carry over into your major request. This technique reduces dissonance and makes it easier for prospects to say yes to your final proposal. Even if it is a watered down, easy request, getting a yes to any request makes it easier to evoke the same response down the road.

Close with a series of questions – ideally six – that all end with a yes. Desire increases with each yes, and decreases with each no. Every time we say yes to a benefit, our desire goes up.

c) Voluntary

When getting commitments, start small and build up to larger commitments later. You cannot force commitments. Long-term approval has to feel like it comes from your prospects' will, something they want to do or say. They have to volunteer to test drive the car, write on the contract, or request more information. When they make a commitment, you can make the action more voluntary and solidify the commitment by saying things like, "Are you serious? Do you really mean that? You're not just pulling my leg, are you?"

d) Effortful

The more effortful and public the commitment is, the more commitment it will create down the line. The more effort your prospects exert in making the commitment, the more it seals the deal. You don't want to ask a prospect to do something extreme but you do want them to exert extra effort.

Remember the car dealer example? Car dealers often offer a great deal on a car just to get people in the lot. The prospect then makes a commitment to come in and look at the car only to find that it's already been sold. Already committed to being there, they browse the lot and find another car they like. They then start to fill out the paperwork, talking terms and completing forms. These are all small effortful commitments that later lead to full commitment. Many times, the car dealer will continue obtaining these small commitments only to come back and say he can only give \$2,000 for the trade in instead

of \$2,500 like he promised. At this point, the buyer has exerted so much effort and has created so many small commitments that the extra \$500 dollars won't break the deal.

Step Two: Create Dissonance

Once you have the commitment, you can create the dissonance. You create that dissonance or imbalance by showing your prospects they have not kept or are not keeping their commitment. For example, "You told me you are on a strict diet. Why did you just buy a dozen donuts?" The person's self-image is squeezed from both sides by consistency pressures. The prospect feels great internal pressure to bring self-image in line with action. At the same time, there is pressure from the outside to adjust this image according to the way others perceive us.

Step Three: Offer a Solution

At a Master Persuader, whenever you create dissonance, you always need to offer a way out. You need to show, prove, or explain how your product or service can reduce the dissonance your prospect feels. For example, "If you donate right now, we can continue to feed the homeless children in Africa."

Keep in mind that the final solution or major request is what you ultimately want to accomplish. You prepare your whole persuasive presentation around the moment when you will ask for that major request. Once your prospects accept the solution, they have convinced themselves that they made the right and only choice. As a result, they feel great about their decision. This makes the cognitive dissonance disappear. The decision was their personal choice and they have solved the dilemma in their own minds. They know exactly what to do.

The solution is your call to action.

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