

Cracking the Persuasion Code

Based on seventeen years of study, research, and experience in the field, the Persuasion Institute's Persuasion IQ assessment has cracked the code. Our findings and information will equip you with the essential habits, traits, and skills you need to become an unstoppable power persuader. The intelligence gathering, conceptual organizing, and explaining are all done for you. It is the most comprehensive persuasion resource available today.

Do you think you are already persuasive? Think again. Research shows that most persuaders use only three to four persuasive techniques, over and over again. Even high producers typically use only seven or eight persuasive techniques. What a waste of talent! Did you know that there are over one hundred persuasive tools and techniques that you can have readily available, right at your fingertips?

If you look at persuasion as if it were a piano, then most people only use a few piano keys and are playing "Chopsticks" when they could be using all the keys and playing Mozart.

Understanding that yesterday's persuasion training no longer applies in today's fast-paced, educated environment is the first step to mastering persuasion. Your audience does not want a product pusher, and they don't want to hear those cheesy one-liners. True persuasion is about creating customers and friends for life; it's not about getting that one quick sale that's all too likely to turn into a dissatisfied customer, a return, or a refund. It's not about getting short-term compliance. That type of persuasiveness will generate long-term resentment, rebellion, and frustration.

People aren't won over by tactics and gimmicks. In fact, they're all too weary of them. A *New York Times* poll found that 56 percent of respondents felt you can't be too careful in dealing with most people, and 34 percent said that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance. When asked what they thought about

persuaders or salespeople, only 32 percent of respondents said, "I have a positive attitude toward salespeople."

The challenge is that most persuaders are certain they possess most of the persuasion traits they need, but when you ask the people and prospects they interact with, you get a completely different picture. Whatever your area of persuasion, most of your audience (whether prospects, employees, or clients) will describe you as:

One-sided	Loud	Condescending
Time waster	Exaggerator	Poor listener
Fake friend	Pushy	Deceptive
Greasy	Fast-talking	Manipulative
Dishonest	Devious	Self-centered

Or they'll complain about your:

Poor communication.	Getting personal too fast.
Being misinformed.	Blaming others.
Lack of follow through.	Not really caring.
Overpromising.	Asking offensive questions.
Badmouthing the competition.	Attempts to get their wallet.
Lack of interpersonal skills.	Not understanding their business.
Useless small talk.	Employing obvious closing tactics.

Why all this negativity? First of all, the general public is more educated now than ever before, which means they are more discerning. Secondly, all of us are bombarded by countless persuasive messages every day. We don't have to go looking for them—they find us. By the age of twenty, the average American has been exposed to approximately one million television commercials. With such a constant marketing onslaught, who

wouldn't be sick of it? Everyone starts to go numb with the sheer volume of daily persuasive attempts.

So it's best to know the facts up front. Most people think persuaders talk too much, overpromise, fail to follow through, are only looking out for themselves, and are greedy or manipulative. Sorry, no sugar coating.

What does all this mean for you as a persuader? It means out with the old and in with the new. Forget about the old tactics, clichés, and stereotypes. It's not about having tricks up your sleeve and pulling a fast one. It's not about coercing, nagging, bullying, or begging. These forms of "persuasion" are not really persuasion at all. They may work initially, but their effects are only temporary and your audience quickly becomes desensitized. As a society, we've grown to be more demanding and less patient.

Instead of learning techniques and strategies, think in terms of transforming yourself into a naturally persuasive person. *You* are what's persuasive, not some tactic you employ. You're the real deal. You are persuasive because of the traits, talents, and characteristics you have integrated into your life. Persuasion is the critical skill, and it's transferable in any situation or career. Cultivating your natural persuasiveness will bring you success in any job, setting, or business.

While traveling on an airplane, I remember talking to a gentleman who was faced with a significant, but very common challenge. He had always wanted to be an entrepreneur and to own his own business. He knew that having his own business and being his own boss were the keys to his personal freedom and financial independence. He'd earned his college degree with honors and had done extensive research on his great business idea. He wrote the perfect business plan. Everyone said it was a great idea. It seemed he could not fail. But he made one vital mistake, which was thinking that his

college degree and extensive research were enough to ensure success. As it turns out, studies show that there is no correlation between college grades and lifetime earnings.

Furthermore, this airplane seatmate of mine had forgotten one crucial element—the one thing he had skimmed over in his haste to get to the "good stuff," the nuts and bolts of his business—and it proved to be a major stumbling block. He thought he possessed persuasion and people skills, but that is not what his potential clients thought. He did not have the ability to connect with people. He could not persuade others to believe in his ideas or services. He told me he had suffered huge financial losses because of this one issue. It was extremely frustrating for him, because he'd gotten his degree, done his homework, and wanted to be successful. Every single possible detail was in order, but without persuasion, people skills, or communication skills, none of it mattered. We can be an expert in our field, but still never see great success without these core skills we will be talking about in this book.

This oversight is a common trend in corporate America, and in particular in the entrepreneurial world. Did you know that 96 percent of all business start-ups fail within five years?⁹ Why is this so? The U.S. government's Small Business Administration and the Persuasion Institute (independently) set out to discover why. Both organizations spent considerable time and money trying to uncover the root of the problem, and in the end, they both came to the same conclusion: businesses fail because of lack of sales. Dun and Bradstreet found similar results and called this failure "managerial incompetence," meaning that the individuals running these businesses did not know what they were doing. More specifically, they found that the number-one area of incompetence was sales and marketing.

Those entrepreneurs who had failed did not know how to persuade others to take action and to use their product or service. In other words, sales fixes everything (assuming you have a good product or service). What's more, it is no secret that the

majority of people who are fired or downsized are let go because of their inability to work and communicate with people. In other words, they lose their jobs because they lack people and persuasion skills.

The greatest ability in business is to get along with others and influence their actions.

— JOHN HANCOCK

Ironically, many of the business owners and upper management executives who fire these individuals themselves do not know what would make the situation better. They think they do, but often it is the wrong solution. When asked what the essential attributes of great persuaders are, they name many great skills and qualities, but surprisingly, not the ones that head the list. We hear that it's all about persistence, communication, intelligence, aptitude, people skills, product knowledge, and organization, but these things still don't explain why some people are great persuaders and others are not.