

## **The handout**

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### **Tailor-made arguments as the basis of persuasion**

According to Williams and Miller (2002), the focus in persuasion should be on the message delivery instead of the content of the argument. Wrong decisions are too often made because of presenting information ineffectively. Therefore, the success of an proposal relies heavily on tailoring the arguments based on individual's decision-making style.

As Williams and Miller (2002) state, the five different but most typical decision-making styles offer wide range of characteristics and behaviors which need to be taken in account before making an argument. The understanding of these different styles helps in tailoring the argument in the most suitable format and sequence. These five decision-makers, charismatics, thinkers, sceptics, followers and controllers, are presented more broadly in the next part.

#### **Charismatics as talkative enthusiasts**

- personality: talkative & dominant
- attitude towards risk: risk-seeking
- decisions based on details regarding implementation

Persuasion tactics:

- starting point: the most critical information
- result-orientation
- critical factor: quiet perseverance

#### **Thinkers as toughest to persuade**

- personality: intelligent & logical
- attitude towards risk: strongly risk-averse
- decisions based on comparative data

Persuasion tactics:

- starting point: all information available
- quantitative-orientation
- critical factor: a methodology for getting from point A to B

### **Sceptics as highly suspicious individuals**

- personality: demanding & disagreeable
- attitude towards risk: depends on the relationship between negotiators
- decisions based on feelings

#### Persuasion tactics:

- starting point: information related to the similarity between negotiators
- relationship-orientation
- critical factor: credibility

### **Followers as responsible decision makers**

- personality: empathic & cautious
- attitude towards risk: risk-averse
- decisions based on proven methods and references

#### Persuasion tactics:

- starting point: information related to past success stories
- past-orientation
- critical factor: a strong track record of success

### **Controllers as risk-averse analysts**

- personality: analytical & objective
- attitude towards risk: risk-averse
- decisions based on accuracy and facts

#### Persuasion tactics:

- starting point: structured and credible information
- detail-orientation
- critical factor: overcoming controllers' internal fears

### **Persuasion as a two-way learning process**

Whatever decision-making style a person you want to persuade has, you should keep in mind some essential steps that are critical in almost every persuasion situation.

According to Conger (1998), persuasion requires careful preparation, the proper framing of arguments, the presentation of vivid supporting evidence, and the effort to find the correct emotional match with your audience. Persuasion is a process of discovery, preparation and dialogue.

Good persuaders have traits in common: they are usually open-minded, never dogmatic. They are ready for a compromise, to adjust their viewpoints and incorporate others' ideas. Usually, they have a compromise already prepared.

#### **Four essential steps to persuade:**

1. **Establish credibility.**

How? Build a relationship with people, be consistent, spend time exploring the company, find support in co-workers, hire a credible expert to prove your ideas.

2. **Frame the common ground.**

In other words, find out why the other party is interested in your proposal, what is the benefit for them.

3. **Provide evidence.**

It means not only a numerical one. Good persuaders supplement data with examples, stories, metaphors and analogies.

4. **Connect emotionally.**

A good persuader connects emotionally with the other party who they're trying to persuade. It's essential part of the relationship building between those different parties.

#### **Four persuasion mistakes:**

1. **Bad persuaders attempt to make their case with an up-front, hard sell.** It makes the audience resist and fight back. Better not to set a target from the very beginning.
2. **They resist compromise.** Compromises can often lead to better, more sustainable shared solutions.
3. **They think the secret of persuasion lies in presenting great arguments.** In reality, not only arguments matter but also the persuader's interaction skills.
4. **They assume persuasion is a one-shot effort.** But in fact, it's a process.

**The main idea: persuasion is not convincing and selling but learning and negotiating.**

## **Becoming a better persuader**

According to Cialdini (2001), persuasion skills are necessary for any business situations, and the most talented ones seem to have it as natural talent. How can company executives acquire them if the most talented ones cannot pass them along?

**There are tactics in persuasion, and therefore it is wise to consider using the following 6 techniques when you are trying to persuade someone.**

### **1. The principle of liking**

*"People like those who like them."*

- uncover similarities and offer genuine praise
- similarity establishes the bond early (trust and goodwill)
- praise

### **2. The principle of Reciprocity**

*"People repay in kind."*

- give what you want to receive
- give a sample gift to increase the likelihood of purchase

### **3. The principle of Social Proof**

*"People follow the lead of similar others."*

- use peer power whenever possible
- donation case (if you see your friends name on it, you are more likely to donate)
- customer testimonials make a big impact
- when igniting change to sceptics, use an old-timer employee to speak up for it at a meeting

### **4. The Principle of Consistency**

*"People align with their clear commitments."*

- make their commitments active, public, and voluntary
- donating case, signing a petition BEFORE going around asking for money is useful
- written statements are powerful, and even more so when they are announced public

### **5. The principle of Authority**

*"People defer to experts."*

- expose your expertise, and do not assume it is self-evident

## **6. The principle of Scarcity**

*"People want more of what they can have less of."*

- highlight unique benefits and exclusive information
- the gain vs loss experiment (loss ignites more action)
- exclusive information is more persuasive than widely available data

## **Conclusions**

1. Combine the above 6 principles for maximum impact.
2. Be ethical.

## **References**

Cialdini, R.B. (2001). *Harnessing the Science of Persuasion*. Harvard Business Review.

Conger, J.A. (1998). *The Necessary Art of Persuasion*. Harvard Business Review.

Williams, G.A. & Miller, R.B. (2002). *Change the way you persuade*. Harvard Business Review.