

POWERS OF **PERSUASION**





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Persuasion is the single most important business leadership and personal skill. Without the skill of persuasion, leaders would be unable to lead; salespeople would be unable to sell. Persuasion is the key to success in every facet of life. Most people do not understand the key elements of persuasion and fewer still apply the process.

Current neurological brain research shows how the mind reacts to logic and emotion. By integrating age-old knowledge with modern science we can help people make quick, non-analytical decisions using their own built-in shortcuts to making decisions.

The more skilled leaders are at the art and science of using the power of persuasion, the more likely the goals of the organization will be met successfully without frustration or resistance. Persuasion is not the same as manipulation. While persuasion can be used as a tool to manipulate, ill intent and self-serving motives are the hallmark of manipulation.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF PERSUASION

Leading through persuasion is a skill that must be learned. It's not about swaying people against their will; persuasion is offering others a chance to see things from a new light. As the initiator, you must find a delivery style that allows you to communicate your conviction in a compelling way. Taking part in the act of persuading others and sweeping them up into a mutual vision is a wonderful experience for High Performance Leaders.

Persuasion is defined as a process that changes attitudes, beliefs, opinions or behaviors. It's the single most powerful skill a leader may possess. Persuasion provides the ability to shift and transform employees and, ultimately, the culture of an organization. Leaders who practice the skill of persuasion are more engaged and trusted by their employees than those who adhere to the old 'command and control' way of management.

There are three key building blocks that support the persuasion process. Plato and Aristotle defined this process thousands of years ago, but they still remain valid today.



The three building blocks are:

1. Logos—Logic

2. Pathos—Emotion

3. Ethos—Authority, Credibility

Every persuasion process involves one or more of these building blocks. To decide which tool to use, logic or emotion, it's essential to understand whether an individual responds in an analytical or automatic way.

SECRET LIFE OF THE BRAIN

The **analytical thinker** is thinking logically, systematically working out the decision with analysis, judgment, evaluation, concentration and a huge cognitive.

The **automatic thinker** operates on “gut feelings”, basing decisions on their automatic, built-in psychological reactions. Our brains are hard wired to respond to stimuli that help us make easy, quick, correct decisions. We respond to these “powers” of non-analytical compliance with what feels like gut reactions. These reactions are a composite of prior situations and experiences we draw on. Powers are our built-in navigational aids. They are essential parts of our very being. Leaders who learn to help others make quick, automatic, non-analytical decisions using their own inborn powers have incredible power over others.



THE POWERS OF PERSUASION

The Friendship Power

This power encompasses all elements that create the feelings of positive relations. The goal of the friendship power is to bond with others by finding common ground, common interests and common goals. The strongest element in the friendship equation is similarity.

The Authority Power

Authority is a critical emotional power, a prerequisite for other powers. Authority is usually defined as a position such as a lawyer, manager, teacher or policeman. The authority power uses the “rightness” of the request based on association of the role.

The Consistency Power

Consistency is important because it makes individuals feel comfortable, gut-level confident that we are making the right decisions. Leaders persuade by making people comfortable. The consistency power forms the bedrock of our internal self-guidance system. People are slaves to consistency and conformity. We use past performance data as an easy, safe, comfortable, non-thinking guide to make current decisions and to generate action.

The secret to benefiting from the consistency power is to learn what the person you are trying to persuade will be comfortable with. By learning about the person and how they acted in the past about issues being discussed, frame your request so that a positive decision will be consistent with past actions. Set up a safe "consistency zone" for each person to make relatively risk-free, comfortable decisions.



The Reciprocity Power

Reciprocity is the well-documented, universal psychological requirement to have the recipient of a gift give back something in return. You create indebtedness, an IOU that must be repaid in some way at some point in time.

The Hope Power

This drives all human motivation. It is the foundation for all human decision and action. Decisions and actions to achieve hopes, needs, wants and dreams always trump logic, reason and cognitive thought. This wonderful power is easy to activate. Adding the right powers to the hope power, you will have a formidable multi-pronged arsenal for success.

COMMUNICATION

Persuasion is based on giving, receiving and understanding information. To persuade effectively, you must be able to understand an individual's needs, wants and desires, and be understood when proposing an idea or solution. Effective communication is more important now than ever, especially as employees are encouraged to ask questions of "why?" True communication only occurs when the message is received and understood as intended. Communication is the basis for all interaction and is the process of understanding, and being understood.



IN CONCLUSION

The most persuasive arguments come from leaders who exhibit high ethos, and appeal to both logic and emotion. All of these require listening to, understanding and empathizing with your employees. By listening and understanding, leaders build trust among the organization. Listening also helps one base persuasive arguments on the facts or logic that others find compelling. As a High Performance Leader, it's essential to listen and understand the employees of your organization. Leaders who do not exhibit these qualities have a difficult time persuading and rely on coercive power, rather than leadership.

The Power of Persuasion is a tool for moving an organization and it's people forward, by inspiring individuals to reach beyond their limits and creating motivated teams. High Performance Leaders have a firm hold on how to help individuals develop trust and ownership through the use of persuasion. By establishing a common view with the people under your leadership, you take an active role in convincing individuals that they are the basis of present changes for a better future.

1. Williams, Ray B. "Leaders Need To Use Influence and Persuasion, Not Authority." *Psychology Today*. N.p., 30 May 2009. Web.



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