Developing Career-Enhancing Persuasion Skills
by Naomi Karten, www.nkarten.com

How Many of You . . .

Have ever been unsuccessful in making a persuasive case?

Have something right now that you would like to persuade someone about?

Objectives:

To offer you ideas, information and advice regarding:

1. Truths about persuasion
2. Ethical issues in persuasion
3. Case study of a successful persuasion
4. How not to be unpersuasive
5. A 4-step plan for making a persuasive case

Robert Cialdini

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Truths about Persuasion
- Existing beliefs, attitudes, values reign.
- The gut tends to overrule the head.
- Some issues take time (lots) and patience (LOTS).
- No matter what you do....
- But food often helps.☺

The Ethics of Persuasion
“Ever since the time of Plato, concerns have been expressed about whether persuasion is an ethical activity.”
Source: Richard Perloff. The Dynamics of Persuasion

Setting Boundaries on Issues
Issues outside the circle are off-limits.

- Criminal, illegal, immoral, unethical
- Impossible to implement
- Acceptable issues
- Simple issues
- Damaging to the reputation of others
- Deliberately hurtful to others

Setting Boundaries on Methods
Methods outside the circle are off-limits.

- Violence, pain
- Bribes, payoffs, or kickbacks
- Abuse (verbal, physical, etc.)
- Mind control, coercion or brainwashing
- Browbeating, threatening or intimidation

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Case Study
Goal: increased responsibilities and more $$$
- Woman in male-run company – 5 bosses
- 2.5 years as controller and doing well, in her view
- Unsure how her capabilities are viewed
- No college degree
- Believes people without degrees are viewed as less valuable, regardless of their abilities.
- Salary 50% of those with a degree
- Knows she can succeed
- Wants to feel confident in persuading others

Case Study
After receiving my advice . . . . . . . (drum roll)
She received a $10,000 raise!!!

Learn from Everyday Experiences

Actually, the Issue is not
How to Be Persuasive
but rather
How Not to Be Unpersuasive

Developing Career-Enhancing Persuasion Skills
Focus on the perspective of the Buyer.
How to Be Unpersuasive

Example #1: Ms. Pooh-Pooh

LESSON: If you wish to persuade, be supportive of others.

Example #2: Mr. HotHead

LESSON: If you wish to persuade, don’t annoy people.

Example #3: Mr. Talkaholic

LESSON: If you wish to persuade, banish negative perceptions.

A 4-Step Plan

1. Set the stage. 
2. Prepare your case. 
3. Present your case. 
4. Face the outcome.
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Tweaking Considerations
1. One shot vs. sustained
2. Explicit vs. subtle
3. Major vs. minor
4. One vs. many
5. Upward, lateral, downward
6. Feasible vs. defiant

A 4-Step Plan
1. Set the stage.
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1. Set the Stage
Build a foundation for persuading:
- The etcetera list
- Build relationships with those you might want to persuade.
- Remember the Reciprocity Principle.

A 4-Step Plan
1. Set the stage.
2. Prepare your case.
3. Present your case.
4. Face the outcome.
2. Prepare Your Case

a. Choose your cases wisely.
Don't wear out your welcome.

b. Be clear about your desired outcome.
Clarify what you want and why.

c. Do your homework.
- Find out what others are doing.
- Identify allies.
- Gather evidence.

Related Research

c. Do your homework.
Enhance the impact of your evidence.
- Internal factors:
  - the credibility of the source
  - evidence quality
  - novelty
- External factors:
  - your credibility
  - message delivery

Source: Richard Perloff. *The Dynamics of Persuasion*
2. Prepare Your Case

d. Analyze the Buyer.

- What are the Buyer’s priorities?
- What must the Buyer accomplish to be successful?
- How does the Buyer attempt to persuade?
- What pleases or bugs the Buyer?
- What stands out in the Buyer’s workspace?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication preferences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Written vs. spoken?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Colorful charts vs. text?</td>
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<td>- Summary vs. in depth?</td>
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<th>Personality</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Detail oriented vs. big-picture oriented?</td>
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<td>- Introverted vs. extraverted?</td>
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<td>- Logical vs. emotional?</td>
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<th>Work-specific values</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Costs? Revenue? On-time delivery?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Customer satisfaction?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Good relationships?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stress avoidance?</td>
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2. Prepare Your Case

e. Identify the benefits of accepting your case.

- increased revenue?
- decreased costs?
- faster throughput?
- higher quality?
- fewer defects?
- happier customers?
- etc.

2. Prepare Your Case

f. Identify the pitfalls of NOT accepting your case.

- decreased revenue?
- increased costs?
- slower throughput?
- reduced quality?
- more defects?
- dissatisfied customers?
- etc.
2. Prepare Your Case

Research finding:

We experience the pain of a loss much more vividly than the joy of a gain.

Source: Ori Brafman and Rom Brafman. *Sway: The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior*

<table>
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<th>2. Prepare Your Case</th>
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<td>g. Identify possible objections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Take a position against your own case.</td>
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<td>- Solicit possible objections from others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Analyze these objections and find ways to counter them.</td>
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<th>2. Prepare Your Case</th>
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<tr>
<td>h. Offer ways to reduce the risk. (Size matters.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- When proposing something BIG, divide it into phases.</td>
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<td>- Offer three options or alternatives.</td>
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<td>- Find ways to demonstrate value while minimizing risk.</td>
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A 4-Step Plan

1. Set the stage.
2. Prepare your case.
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3. Present Your Case

a. Time your case wisely.

b. Structure your case.
   - State what you’re proposing.
   - Explain the basis for your reasoning.
   - Use terminology relevant to the Buyer.
   - Keep your arguments simple.
   - Make your language you-oriented – “Here is what you will be able to do.”

b. Structure your case – EXAMPLE
   The case: funding for a major hardware purchase
   - Three boxes – call them X, Y and Z
   - It doesn’t matter what they are or what they do.
   - Here’s what they’ll enable you to accomplish . . .
3. Present Your Case

c. Communicate with confidence
   - Practice, practice, practice.
   - Don’t act pushy.
   - Persuade group members individually.

Research finding:
A poorly delivered presentation can damage even the best evidence.

3. Present Your Case

d. Handle questions skillfully.
   - Recognize what Buyers’ questions signify.
   - Ask follow-up questions to buy time.
   - Don’t fake it!

3. Present Your Case

e. Be willing to compromise.

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A 4-Step Plan
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4. Face the Outcome
a. If you don’t succeed (this time)
   - Express appreciation.
   - Request an explanation.
   - Ask “What do I need to do in order to try again?”
   - Accept that some issues take time.
   - Respond to a clear “no” graciously. Do NOT argue or yes-but.

b. When you succeed
   - Express appreciation.
   - Thank those who helped you.
   - Be low-key about your success.
   - Deliver on your promises!

Absolutely Positively NO!
4. Face the Outcome

c. Do a personal retrospective.

- What did I do well or not so well?
- What worked and what didn’t?
- What should I do the same or differently next time?
- How can I become more persuasive?

Cartoons by Mark Tatro
www.rotategraphics.com

Thank you for joining me this evening.
I wish you success as Master Persuaders.

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