

PERSUASION

The Art of Getting What You Want

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MAIN IDEA

Persuasion is the art and science of getting exactly what you want. In its highest form, you use persuasive techniques to position yourself as an expert and to help other people get what they want. Persuasion can and must be used to create win-win situations for everyone involved. This is a key distinction between manipulation and persuasion. Manipulative techniques never result in a lasting relationship, whereas those relationships (business or personal) based on the use of persuasion tools do endure.

A map of the overall persuasive process is: **Position + Presentation x Influence = Persuasion**

“Persuasion truly is the art of getting what you want. Most of us throughout our lives have failed to reach the levels of success that we dreamed of, and not because it was not available to us. We have failed to reach those reasonable goals because we have failed to persuade those who can help us achieve them. And the biggest reason they will not help is because we have not asked them. People cannot help you achieve your dreams of success if they do not know they exist. But remember, as Zig Ziglar says, ‘You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want’. The art of persuasion is identifying what the people you are persuading want and helping them achieve it. Virtually every element of human interaction involves some level of persuasion.”

– Dave Lakhani

Part 1 – Position Page 2

The first part of the persuasion process is to position yourself and your audience. This positioning will consist of three different elements:

1. Develop and project your desired persona.
2. Ensure your audience matches your presentation abilities.
3. Deliver your story in an engaging manner.

Part 2 – Presentation Page 3

The second part of the persuasion process is to effectively present your story to your intended audience. This requires that you accomplish two things:

1. That you establish relevancy and build rapport.
2. That you give a powerful presentation of your message.

Part 3 – Influence Pages 4 - 6

Influencing your audience in the direction you want to head is the final step in the persuasion process. There are seventeen specific tactics you can use to enhance your influence and become more persuasive:

1. Persona – Upgrade your appearance, communicative skills and personal positioning.
2. Transfers of power and credibility – Learn how to use either active or implied transfers.
3. Storytelling – Improve your ability to tell great stories.
4. Gurudom – Become a recognized expert in your field.
5. Conviction – Become better at changing people’s beliefs.
6. Familiarity – Identify what is familiar and provide that.
7. Exclusivity – Make the listener feel like they’re getting exclusive information.
8. Curiosity – Create curiosity wherever you can.
9. Relevancy – Prove to the listener what you have to say is important to them.
10. Permission – Give the listener permission to try new ideas.
11. Social Match – Show others have already accepted these ideas.
12. Concurrence – Show someone they like shares your opinion.
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15. Likeability – Make yourself likeable to persuade more.
16. Giving to Receive – Find small things you can give away.
17. Accountability – Make commitments and keep them.

Part 4 – Persuasion Pages 7 - 8

When using the persuasive process to sell, advertise, negotiate or attempt to persuade the masses electronically, there are six key tenets which should be used:

1. To persuade effectively, always have outcomes in mind which are clearly defined.
2. The best interests of the person should always be an integral part of the persuasive process.
3. Persuasion based professionals always tell the truth.
4. Set realistic time limits. If you cannot persuade within that time frame, move on.
5. Form long-term relationships with those you attempt to persuade. Don’t burn through people.
6. At all times, act ethically. Persuade people only to do those things in their best long-term interests.

1. Position

The first part of the persuasion process is to position yourself and your audience. This positioning will consist of three different elements:

1. Develop and project your desired persona.
2. Ensure your audience matches your presentation abilities.
3. Deliver your story in an engaging manner.

Position 1 Develop and project your desired persona.

Before you attempt to persuade anyone to do anything, stop and check you have properly developed your persona first. Your persona will be the sum total of:

- The way you dress and the quality of the clothing you wear.
- Your personal grooming standards.
- Your perceived status as an expert.
- The quality of your presentation skills.

Your persona will be shining through right from the very first time you meet a person so check you are doing the things which will appeal to people in a positive, authoritative way. Ideally, you want the people you're speaking with to look at you as the one person who can help them solve the problem which is holding them back.

Your intentions also form an integral part of your persona. If you're attempting to manipulate the situation, people will pick up on that. The key differences between someone attempting to manipulate and someone attempting to persuade are:

- *Manipulators are inwardly focused.* They attempt to generate outcomes which are good for themselves alone. Manipulators have no qualms about using time sensitivity or the potential for loss to apply pressure for a decision to be made quickly. Manipulation is always a short-term strategy only as once these tactics have been exposed for what they are, they lose their effectiveness.
- *Persuaders, by contrast, are outwardly focused.* Persuaders are attempting to create an environment that lets everyone win. In the pursuit of win-win solutions, common grounds and beliefs will be explored vigorously and thoroughly. The persuasion process is based on learning what the other person needs and then identifying the best product at the best price to fill that need.

Persuaders have a positive persona because they are perceived as problem solvers. Manipulators, by contrast, have a negative persona because of the fact they're only interested in forcing through their ideas regardless of the merits of the situation or otherwise.

"Good persuasion is a practiced art, a carefully orchestrated dance between you and the person you are persuading. That orchestration involves understanding the true needs and desires of the person you are persuading, understanding his or her criteria for action, and finally presenting information in a way that is congruent with his or her indicated desires. Manipulators spend a great deal of time creating a facade, but persuaders create a persona, a carefully crafted part of themselves that allows them to interact with others from a position of power and influence. A persuasive persona is an accepted part of who the person is."

– Dave Lakhani

Position 2 Ensure your audience matches your presentation abilities.

In practical terms, this means spending your time trying to persuade people who can make decisions rather than those who cannot. Many unsuccessful salespeople spend long hours persuading those in the organization who are the easiest to approach and influence but who ultimately have no authority to take action. As a result, nothing ever happens.

In positioning your audience, not only do you have to ensure you're talking to the right people, but also:

- You have to make sure your timing is right.
- You have to meet in a place where people will be free of distractions and likely to be receptive to your message.
- You have to do some background research and understand where your listeners are coming from.
- You have to provide some background information which will provide a context for your presentation.

Position 3 Deliver your story in an engaging manner.

You'll always be far more successful in persuading others if you deliver your story in manageable chunks rather than in one long brain dump. Delivering your story in chunks also allows you to customize your story to the needs and interests of your audience. You can integrate examples and other tie-ins which are relevant rather than theoretical.

An engaging delivery also incorporates frequent opportunities for feedback to be given. In this way, you progressively recheck your story is being well received and understood.

"Leave me penniless and naked in any town in America and by the end of the day I'll have clothes, food, lodging, a way of earning an income, a following, and enough money in my pocket to start again. Why? Because I know exactly how to persuade people to do what I need them to do for both of us to achieve our goals."

– Dave Lakhani

"Virtually every element of human interaction involves some level of persuasion, but particularly sales, negotiation, copywriting, advertising, and media relations. Many scholars, philosophers, and scientists have explored the process, yet few get it right consistently. They dismiss the fundamental survival requirement of persuasion. They've analyzed it as a process that can be used if necessary, but don't understand that persuasion isn't a tool we use optionally; it is one we are required to use in order to survive. The essence of life itself is persuasion, how well we persuade ourselves, how well we persuade those around us, and how we are ourselves persuaded by those who persuade us."

– Dave Lakhani

"True persuasion is based in truth, honesty, inquisitiveness, and the ability to tell a good story and to elicit the persuasion criteria of those you hope to persuade so you can meet their expectations easily. Manipulation is always bad, and never works long term. Many facets of effective persuasion are inherent in manipulation, but it is the subtle differences and outcomes that set the two clearly apart. Ultimately, manipulation always fails, but true persuasion lasts."

– Dave Lakhani

2. Presentation

The second part of the persuasion process is to effectively present your story to your intended audience. This requires that you accomplish two things:

1. Establish relevancy and build rapport.
2. Give a powerful presentation of your message.

Presentation 1 Establish relevancy and build rapport.

If you're meeting someone for the first time – either in a group setting or on an individual basis – you have to develop some familiarity, establish the relevancy of what you have to present, and develop rapport. There are several ways to achieve this:

- *In a group setting, get a good introduction from a trusted member of their group* – something along the lines of: "I know Dave is an expert on persuasion and this is why I am so excited to have the opportunity to introduce him to you today. I know you and I will learn many new ideas. With that, help me welcome our keynote speaker for today, Dave Lakhani". This introduction, or something similar, carries an implied endorsement which will immediately make everyone in the group sit up and take notice.
- *When meeting individuals, develop familiarity by asking a few questions* – which ideally will bring up some shared experiences you have in common. Failing that, if you get the other person to open up and tell you a little bit about themselves, they will start to feel more comfortable. Even if you discuss a common problem you've both experienced or a desire you both share, they will warm to you and automatically become more receptive to your persuasive attempts.
- *Enhance what you're saying with some personal testimonies* – preferably of people who were in similar circumstances and who solved a problem through the use of the product or service you may want to sell.
- *Keep in mind the primacy and recency effects* – meaning people are most likely to remember what you said first and what you said last than anything else. Therefore, put your very best points first and last. If you're presenting to a group, then adhere to the well known adage: "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them."
- *Mold your stories to fit the group or individual you're dealing with* – adding whatever is required to make the story powerful or dropping irrelevant points which will only confuse the discussion. If at all possible, practice your presentation so it comes across as polished rather than stop/start.
- *Think in advance what objections or potential sticking points are most likely to be raised* – and build in ways to overcome these points in your presentation or discussion. If this is done well, you can turn challenges into opportunities to preempt future problems.

"Leaders don't force people to follow – they invite them on a journey."

– Charles S. Lauer

"Your pitch or idea had better be immediately relevant to me or I'll destroy you with apathy."

– Dave Lakhani

Presentation 2 Give a powerful presentation of message.

To present your message in the most persuasive way possible:

- *Lead off with a powerful story or idea* – something your entire audience will relate to.
- *Use the law of contrast* – which means ask for more than you want at first, and then come back to a smaller decision. Most people will hesitate to make a big decision, but will make a small decision on the spot. Encourage this. Commit your audience to do some small and inconsequential things first. Make what you're talking about sound familiar and applicable to their own circumstances.
- *Use only enough graphics, brochures or other materials as you need to demonstrate your point* – and no more. Keep your audience's attention focused on you and what you're saying, not on your brochures.
- *Be aware of what your nonverbal language is saying* – because people always determine truthfulness and honesty from the speaker's face. Send the right messages. Smile. Not only will this make you more approachable but people will also agree with you more if you project enthusiasm and happiness.
- *Integrate a "reticular activator" into your presentation* – a symbol which when people see they will think back to what you're saying. For example, if you're doing a fund raiser for Special Olympics, you might ask people to remember your message each time they see a person in a wheelchair in the future.
- *Future pace what you want the listener to do and experience* – by having them mentally move forward in time and identify what they will feel like when they've made a good decision. Have your audience visualize how they will feel when they act on your advice and simply point out they can only experience that if they move ahead.
- *To generate some individual persuasion opportunities after a group presentation, end with an engaging and emotional story* – and the people who are highly receptive will seek you out to hear the rest of the story. This works exceptionally well. It also has an equivalent in an e-mail message that ends with: "I'm afraid I'm running out of time. Call me back at this number and I'll finish the story."

"It is not worth an intelligent man's time to be in the majority. By definition, there are already enough people to do that."

– G. H. Hardy

"Everyone lives by selling something."

– Robert Louis Stevenson

"In business, you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate."

– Cester L. Karrass

"Persuasion is an art form that improves through practice. No one is born a powerful persuader. In order to become an effective persuader, you must take the time to learn about what makes people make the decisions they make. You have to analyze your current persuasion process and yourself see where you can improve. You need to practice. You have to test the insertion of certain techniques or ideas into your current presentation and study the feedback to understand how to use them more effectively for the fastest and best result."

– Dave Lakhani

3. Influence

Influencing your audience in the direction you want to head is the final step in the persuasion process. There are seventeen specific tactics you can use to enhance your influence and become more persuasive:

1. **Persona** – Upgrade your appearance, communicative skills and personal positioning.
2. **Transfers of power and credibility** – Learn how to use either active or implied transfers.
3. **Storytelling** – Improve your ability to tell great stories.
4. **Gurudom** – Become a recognized expert in your field.
5. **Conviction** – Become better at changing people's beliefs.
6. **Familiarity** – Identify what is familiar and provide that.
7. **Exclusivity** – Make the listener feel like they're getting exclusive information.
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Influencer 1 **Persona**

Persona is the invisible persuader. It's so pervasive and such an integral part of the persuasive process very few people take note of it, or think too much about it. There are three components of your persona you must focus on and develop in order to enhance your persuasion skills and processes:

1. **Your appearance** – because whether you realize it or not, people judge you by how you dress and your personal grooming standards. Dress better and you will become more persuasive in everything you do.
2. **Your voice and communication skills** – since this has a great deal of impact on your ability to persuade. Learn to vary your voice to maintain interest and underscore important points. If people like listening to your voice and the pace at which you present new information, this will automatically make you more effective in persuading them.
3. **Your positioning** – which simply means whether others perceive you as being successful or not. Manners and mannerisms contribute strongly to your personal positioning. If you project the air of authenticity and professionalism, you move into a position where others will be influenced by what you have to say. Conversely, if you come across like a homeless person or even an absent minded professor type, it will be very difficult to get people to do what you are suggesting. Powerful people use etiquette to good effect.

Influencer 2 **Transfers of power and credibility**

The company you keep, including your current client list, has a strong impact on your ability to persuade. People also make assumptions based on the quality of your friends and associates. If either your friends or your clients are respected and trusted, you will be also.

These transfers of power and credibility can be either:

- **Active** – in the form of testimonials; or
- **Implied** – in the form of media coverage or public relations.

This is an area where you have to give something to get something better back. Work hard to serve some high quality clients, and then be prepared to be known for the company you keep. When appropriate, be willing to transfer your own power and credibility to help others become more persuasive themselves. Over time, this transfer of power will flow back to you in the form of great credibility for yourself as well.

Influencer 3 **Storytelling**

Everyone loves hearing a good story. Stories slide past our logical barriers and engage our emotions. Most people are trained from early childhood to enjoy a great story. To become more persuasive, improve and enhance your story-telling skills and abilities.

To tell a great and persuasive story:

- Know your story inside and out, and think about it in advance.
- Start with a "grab-me-by-the-ears" statement.
- Lay the groundwork by providing some background.
- Engage the listener's emotions, not just their logic.
- Add some extra layers of proof for your suggestions.
- Answer the questions they're most likely to have.
- Give enough information so the listener can draw a conclusion.
- Get some feedback from the listener.

Storytelling is a performance art that must be practiced to be improved. Polish your delivery mechanisms by telling stories frequently. Write the same way – by telling a good story.

Influencer 4 **Gurudom**

If you're a recognized expert in your field, people will take more notice of your opinions. To become a guru:

- **Narrow your focus** – define a clear area of expertise and know a lot about a little.
- **Study your subject matter intensively** – because it takes about 1,000 hours of practice to become an expert at anything.
- **Develop some opinions and original ideas** – and then start sharing your opinions with others. Just be sure you can back up whatever you say with facts.
- **Publish** – write a book, a white paper or something similar. This provides instant credibility.
- **Get your own radio program or cable TV program.**
- **Write a blog** – a Web-based log which tracks the development of your ideas. Do regular posts so people can develop a taste for your ideas and ongoing research.
- **Promote yourself** – by developing your own press kit you can send out with your information products. Or send out copies of good articles about you to clients and associates. Spread the message that you're an expert in your field, and before long gurudom will be yours for the taking.

Influencer**5****Conviction**

People defend their beliefs with passion. To increase your ability to persuade others, take the time to understand what their personal belief systems are. Then focus on presenting ideas which build on those beliefs as far as possible rather than trying to change them.

People are most likely to be receptive to changing their beliefs when the current situation has caused them stress, concern or confusion. If you present new ideas with conviction and credibility, you create an environment where the person accepts the new ideas. The most successful persuaders let the other party make up their own mind and reach their own conclusions. To be able to persuade others, at times it will be necessary to put your own beliefs aside and focus on the belief systems of the people you are attempting to persuade.

Influencer**6****Familiarity**

Familiarity breeds trust. The more familiar you are with the person who is presenting a new idea, the more likely you are to accept the information and act upon it. Accordingly, get to know the people you are attempting to persuade very well. Find some common ground first before you try and influence them one way or another.

The best persuasive conversations don't just dwell on common interests but also incorporate a new shared experience you have created together. Get to know the people you're trying to persuade, find out what makes them tick, respect that and then invest in crafting an experience you can share. Doing this will increase your persuasiveness noticeably.

Influencer**7****Exclusivity**

The more exclusive you make someone feel, the more likely it is they will be receptive to what you're saying. Everyone wants to feel unique. If you can create a perception the other person is about to be admitted to an elite "inner circle" of people with access to information or products the general public don't have, your ideas will be very well received.

So how can you do this in practice?

- Develop programs people must qualify to join.
- Sell only to customers who have reached a specified volume.
- Create special groups with desirable privileges.
- Create clubs or groups around an exclusive theme.
- Create a list of people who have your cellphone number.
- Control and limit the availability of your product.
- Have a sliding price scale which goes up in the future.

Influencer**8****Curiosity**

When it comes to persuasive emotions, curiosity is king. You should always try and generate some curiosity wherever you can, because curiosity is the catalyst to change. To generate curiosity, ask good questions. A good probing question to ask is: "How will you define success or how will you know when you have succeeded?" By asking this, you not only get to the core of the criteria the other party is using but you also pique their curiosity. This is often not something people think about in specific detail and as they go through the actual criteria they intend using, you can suggest some new ideas and suggestions they may not even have thought about explicitly.

When people are curious, they will be willing to make changes and to consider new possibilities. You then want to direct their thinking so they end up making the only logical decision – to go with what you have been suggesting.

Influencer**9****Relevancy**

Relevancy means to provide people with options they need rather than choices which are of no practical use. To use relevancy in the persuasion process, pre-qualify the people you're speaking to. Get to know their actual needs and requirements in fine detail and then give them options which will meet their actual needs.

Ask: "What makes this person a good match for what I have to offer?" If you are familiar enough with their circumstances that you can answer this question in some detail, then your ideas will have greater persuasive clout. Relevancy and familiarity are closely linked when it comes to persuasion.

Influencer**10****Permission**

If people give you permission to explain your ideas or even to establish a business relationship with them, this skews the persuasive process in your favor. It places you in a position where you have more power to influence them to move in the desired direction. Accordingly, it's always in your best interests to make it as easy as possible for people to grant you permission to influence them.

In practical terms, the best ways to do this are usually:

- Ask people to take a trial or test drive of your product.
- Provide a guarantee or warranty.
- Tell people what you want them to do next and give them permission to make a decision right now.
- Ask people to act as if they have already made a decision and are now starting to enjoy the benefits.
- Ask the boss if employees have his or her permission to make the best decision for their company today.
- Provide reassurance and emotional support.

Influencer**11****Social Match**

The concept of social matching means we determine what is correct by finding out what other people have decided previously when facing the same decision. If you can present your audience with examples of what other people have done in the past, you can get them to take some action.

Keep in mind, however, the examples you use must be relevant to the discussions at hand. People are influenced more by what the people they admire are doing than they ever are by what other groups do. There has to be a match between the people who are modeling the behavior you want and their needs or interests. When the two groups are aligned adequately, you are in effect giving the people you're trying to influence implicit permission to mimic the decisions already made by the people they admire.

This concept lies at the heart of the social phenomena of the "in crowd" – the people everyone else wants to be like for one reason or another. If you can show that the people the other party admires has already decided to use this product, you give them permission to do the same. This can be used advantageously in a number of different areas.

Influencer**12****Concurrence**

Concurrence refers to an agreement in opinion. It is always much easier to persuade someone if you can show them someone else they know and respect shares their opinion. To use concurrence advantageously, take the time to find someone the other party respects who likes what you have to offer. This increases the likelihood the person you're trying to persuade will think along similar lines.

Concurrence is built upon a foundation of trust. In fact, trust is enhanced by concurrence. If you really want to start a persuasive negotiation on the right foot, get someone the other party trusts to introduce you. There will be a transference of power there which is very real and worthwhile.

Influencer**13****Empathy**

As a persuader, you naturally want people to identify with, relate to and understand your situation, feelings and motives. When people understand where you're coming from, they'll more than likely come to the same conclusion you have. To reach that level of empathy, the key is to use emotions.

The more emotional you can make the other party's decision, and the more you can get them to relate to your ideas, the faster they will become empathetic. As you layer on top of your own experiences the experiences of others they like and respect, the people you're persuading will become even more empathetic. Note, however, you want the other person to feel empathy, not sympathy.

Influencer**14****Inconsequence**

Popular wisdom states the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. The same is true of persuasion. To get people on your side, it's very rare for them to have to accept one big idea. Instead, you get the other person to accept a whole lot of little ideas until his or her resistance to the big idea is reduced to a manageable size.

Inconsequence requires the small points agreed to or the small concessions made need to lead to the big decision you want them to make. This is not a party trick where you get people to say yes to a bunch of things and then throw in a completely different idea you also want them to say yes to. Instead, you want to carefully select the most influential and easiest to accept idea first. Get the other person's agreement on that point, and then others. By the time a final decision is required, it will be very easy for them to come to the appropriate conclusion.

In some ways, inconsequence is actually a covert persuasion tactic. It engages the feeling of accomplishment. Once a few points have been ironed out, and some minor agreements reached, it will feel good. Both you and the other person will feel like progress is being made. Rapport and friendship will increase because you'll feel like you have something in common. On the basis of the fact solutions have been found to a number of different aspects, the other party will feel like they are in reach of finalizing a solution to the bigger problem. There will be no desire on their part to revisit old points or go over old ground with someone new. This is the beauty of inconsequence as an influencer. The other person or people will be much less likely to want to restart the process with someone new when the promise of finalizing a solution is right on the horizon.

Influencer**15****Likeability**

Most people want to do business with those they like rather than those organizations they dislike. It's always much easier to accept ideas from someone you like as opposed to speaking with someone you feel complete indifference for.

Being likeable doesn't mean being best friends with everyone you want to persuade. Instead, you simply have to be pleasant and comfortable to be around. You're more likely to be likeable if:

- You have some shared experiences.
- You hail from the same geographical area.
- You have similar interests and tastes.
- You're well spoken and refuse to share rumors.
- You are knowledgeable and happy to share information.
- You use humor when appropriate to reduce tensions.
- You actively listen and participate in conversations.
- You share something personal to you.
- You're a good conversationalist.
- You have high self-esteem.
- You're in a good mood.

It's human nature to want to try and reward the people you like. To use this advantageously, work at accentuating the commonalities you share with those you're trying to persuade.

Influencer**16****Giving to Receive**

Look for little things you can give away as part of your persuasive efforts. The more unique the gift is, the more memorable it becomes and the greater the chances are it will be appreciated. Generic gifts are fine but collectible items – baseballs or color photos signed by celebrities for example – are even better. Quite simply when you give someone something memorable, they feel somewhat obligated to give you something in return, which is often their agreement to your proposal.

One of the tried and true ideas is to give people a free sample of your product or service. Or you might make a concession in a negotiation. Both of these gifts are good because the recipient won't fall foul of any corporate guidelines forbidding them from accepting gifts of any kind.

Influencer**17****Accountability**

Deep down most people like to keep their word no matter what. Everyone likes to feel accountable. If you're smart as a persuader, you'll use this to good effect by getting your audience or the other party to make some small commitments during the course of the discussion.

For example, if you get them to agree to some concrete and time-specific next steps, you increase their level of commitment. If things drift or go off track, you can get moving again by pointing out the other person is not holding up their end of the deal. This is of course a two-way street. You should also be making commitments of your own and holding yourself accountable for your own performance. If you follow through on your own commitments, it's reasonable for you to expect the other party to do likewise.

"Everything you are involved in requires some level of persuasion. Go out and persuade someone to help you get what you want. Your biggest reward may be in your next conversation!"

– Dave Lakhani

4. Persuasion

When using the persuasive process to sell, advertise, negotiate or attempt to persuade the masses electronically, there are six key tenets which should be used:

1. To persuade effectively, always have outcomes in mind which are clearly defined.
2. The best interests of the person should always be an integral part of the persuasive process.
3. Persuasion based professionals always tell the truth.
4. Set realistic time limits. If you cannot persuade within that time frame, move on.
5. Form long-term relationships with those you attempt to persuade. Don't burn through people.
6. At all times, act ethically. Persuade people only to do those things in their best long-term interests.

Persuasion → Selling

To be persuasive when selling, don't just give a dry and lifeless recitation of features and benefits in the hope someone will accept your ideas and agree to buy. Instead, use the ISELL persuasive selling process in this way:

- I** *Identify qualified prospects* – Spend your time working with those who need your product and are a good fit. Don't waste your time with just anyone who will talk to you but have some simple screening questions to ask which will show you who's able to buy and who is not.
- S** *Start your story* – Make sure people are ready to listen and it's a good time for them before you launch into your attempt to persuade. Link what you're going to tell them with the important issues they have already mentioned. Get things off to a good start.
- E** *Educate, answer and encourage* – Build curiosity by asking good questions and then educate them as you answer those questions. Encourage them to ask more probing and specific questions as you go along to increase their interest. Provide high quality information.
- L** *Lead them to their best decision* – Break the big decision down into manageable chunks and have them agree to these minor point throughout the discussion. Clear the stage so they can make the major decision, specify what the next logical step is and then ask them to move forward decisively.
- L** *Let them buy* – Don't keep talking when the person is ready to buy. That's a recipe for disaster, as you can talk them out of buying. Whenever the person has convinced themselves this is the right thing to do, stop talking immediately and get the order signed, take their money or start drawing up the contract. You might take the opportunity to up-sell by offering them add-on products and services. Keep in mind your goal is never to complete a one-off sale but to move the other person into a cycle which will generate multiple opportunities for them to buy additional products from you in the future. Therefore, when the other party agrees to buy, give some thought to what you can do to lay a good foundation here for the future.

Persuasion → Advertising

"Far too few people understand what makes advertising persuasive today and far too few business owners know how to understand if it is profitable. Most of the people writing copy and creating ads do not have a clue what makes ads work. I am not talking about the people who work in big agencies, though many of them do not understand it either. I am primarily talking about the people who create your ads. They are the guy at the newspaper or trade magazine who throws your ads together, or the on-air talent on your radio who writes ads when she's not on the air and voices them, too. None of these people have bad intentions. Quite the opposite, in fact."

– Dave Lakhani

The key to good advertising is to find your own message and drive it home. You won't do that by using bits and pieces of your competitor's ads. Instead you have to tell the story only you can tell. You want ads that are so distinctive a competitor couldn't come along and insert their logo instead of yours and run the same ads themselves.

"You must make the product interesting, not just make the ad different. And that's what too many of the copywriters in the U.S. today don't yet understand."

– Rosser Reeves, advertising guru

Profitable and persuasive ads follow two straightforward steps:

1. *Develop ads which interrupt and tell a persuasive story in and of themselves* – First and foremost keep in mind you're trying to tell a story which will gently interrupt, persuade and then compel the audience to take some action. To grab attention, you need a headline which compels you to read or hear more. The body of the ad should then be a one-on-one conversation that tells an interesting story, answers questions and provides motivation to either learn more or take action. Persuasive ads use words and images to create dynamic pictures in the minds of prospective customers. They dramatize what will be the results if you do not use the product or service offered, and do so congruently rather than reading like a shopping list flung together for convenience. Great ads focus on one idea or one action item, and have a clear and concise call to take the next logical action. Persuasive ads have a rhythm and pace which figuratively lifts prospective customers and compels them to take action.
2. *Measure the effectiveness of your ads* – Pure and simple the only measure of how well your ads are working is how much more or less business you have this year compared with last year. The only way you can track this is by measuring what sales are generated by which specific ads. To do this:
 - Use specific toll-free numbers keyed to different ads.
 - Use landing pages on your Web site which are specific.
 - Run different offers in different media and compare.
 - Evaluate results over the period ads run.

It really doesn't matter how you track your ads as long as you actually do it. There is no substitute for good information. By tracking what makes some of your offers more persuasive than others, you gradually learn how to make your ads more persuasive. This will be far more profitable for you over a number of years than anything you could ever achieve by copying what your competitors are doing.

Persuasion

Negotiating

In theory, good negotiations are win-win. The reality is, however, superior persuaders can craft an arrangement which is not optimal for either party and yet which both sides finds acceptable. It doesn't really matter which party feels like they have "won" or "lost" as long as everyone understands and agrees with the reasons for the conclusion reached.

Ideally you want to begin the persuasive negotiation process from a position of power and authority. To do this, you need to be fully informed about:

- All the hard and fast facts about what can and cannot happen.
- Which of your items are flexible and which are not.
- What trade-offs your organization would find acceptable.
- What the likely boundaries of the other party are.
- The authority of the other party to make a decision.
- The other person's preferred style and persona.

The key steps in negotiating persuasively are:

1. *Let the other party present their proposal first* – and you may be pleasantly surprised to find they are offering more acceptable terms than you were going to ask for in the first place. This is great, because the negotiation is over before it even starts. It also lets you adjust your pitch to suit.
2. *Test your assumptions about what is truly negotiable and what is not* – by asking some questions and posing some scenarios for the other party to respond to. Stress that different is fine as long as both parties are fine with that.
3. *Once you test something, put the idea on the back burner and agree on inconsequential items first* – by looking at the areas you know you will be able to agree upon. Build some momentum.
4. *Don't respond to emotional issues* – but acknowledge them openly and keep focused on the key issue at hand. Remember, you can always walk away if necessary so mention that if they keep dwelling on irrelevancies.
5. *Lay your cards on the table openly and succinctly* – and make sure the other party knows precisely what you're asking for. This is a time for clarity, not ambiguity. This often breaks an impasse. For example, if you disclose accepting their offer would bankrupt you, obviously you're not going to do that. They need to know where you stand.
6. *When you've come to a tentative agreement on the best way to move forward, reiterate what the next steps will be* – and clarify what each party will do. Don't assume that they view things the same way you do but be very specific about what needs to happen next.
7. *To seal the agreement, continue to persuade* – meaning do something tangible to follow up. Have dinner with them. Give them some kind of gift or sample. Acknowledge their contribution to your negotiation.

"Keep in mind throughout, like all persuasive situations, the most flexible person will persuade best. Negotiations can be a great deal of fun; they are much like a chess game with all players doing their best for themselves. Once concluded, review what else you could have done to be more persuasive because this time will not be the last for you. And the more you know, the better you will be the next time around."

– Dave Lakhani

Persuasion

Persuading electronically

To persuade effectively nowadays, you have to learn how to persuade electronically using Internet technologies. This is such an important source of information for business people that it is rapidly becoming the first place people turn for new ideas. If people can't find you when they need your product or service, you're missing out on a lot of business.

The key areas to get up to speed with in terms of using electronic media to persuade effectively are:

- **Web sites** – Have a Web site which matches your persona and the image of your company. Effective Web sites:
 - Look professional.
 - Are quick loading and easy to navigate.
 - Are laid out in ways which are conducive to reading.
 - Have enough information.
 - Offer follow-up newsletters or other relationship builders.
 - Have audio and video samples available.
 - Have a great headline on each page.
 - Are interesting and informative.
- **Blogs** – Web-based logs that are easily edited. Blogs give you an outlet for your ideas and a place where others can comment. Blogs can create exclusive access to you in some way that the people you're attempting to persuade will find very alluring and compelling.
- **Teleseminars** – These are Internet delivered seminars which people can participate in from their own computers rather than having to be there in person. Teleseminars are great for persuasion because they combine audio and visual components. Previously run teleseminars can then be made available through your Web site for others to view. The more information you pack into your teleseminar, the greater the potential value it will have.
- **Podcasting** – Effectively this is a do-it-yourself radio show broadcast over the Internet. People can download what you've put together to their digital music devices and then listen to it at whatever time best suits them. Podcasts can be set up to whatever level of professionalism you decide, so it's important to have podcasts that enhance your image as an expert in your field. Podcasting is very tightly focused, but is emerging as a key persuasive technology of the future. (For more information, visit www.howtopodcastforprofit.com).

"Persuasion, like any other skill, is one mastered through practice and application. It is imperative if you hope to persuade at the highest levels that you never stop learning. In order to master persuasion you must keep careful notes of those situations that worked exceptionally well and those that were notable failures. You must deconstruct and analyze each to find the clues to your success. That deep analysis is what trains your conscious thinking so that you can decide exactly what tactic to apply and when. More importantly, it trains your subconscious mind and helps train your intuition. It is that part of you that is interpreting the world around you and giving you subtle hints, warnings or affirmations about what you are doing."

– Dave Lakhani

"Persuasion is an art that will serve you well for the rest of your life. It is well worth mastering."

– Dave Lakhani