The Science (and Art) of Persuasion

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Getting to Yes

PG is all good and well but you have to get the prospect to say ‘yes’ to your charity and the idea of a gift
Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive – Robert B. Cialdini
The Art (and **Science**) of Persuasion

**Liking** – We say ‘yes’ to people we like. The more we like them, the more we want to say ‘yes.’

**Social Proof** – We look to what others do to guide our behavior

**Reciprocity** – We feel obligated to return favors performed for us

**Commitment and Consistency** – We want to act consistently with our stated commitments and values

**Authority** – We look for experts to show us the way

**Scarcity** – The less available the resource, the more we want it.
DONE!
What do you want from this talk?
The Art (and Science) of Persuasion

Liking – We say ‘yes’ to people we like. The more we like them, the more we want to say ‘yes.’
Liking - social science experiment

Repeat the diner’s order back to them EXACTLY as they said it

70% increase in tip
Whuh....??

Matching creates feelings of liking

Matching strengthens the bonds between people
Liking – social science experiment

“Mirroring” – Negotiation experiment with MBA students

67%

12.5%
Mirroring – the art
Mirroring – “Just the facts, ma’am”

- BULLET....
- POINT....
- STYLE......
Mirroring - indirect

- Ahhhhhh......
Mirroring – the art
Words and phrases
Percentage of Chart Which Resembles Pac-man

- Yellow: Resembles Pac-man
- Purple: Does not resemble Pac-man
The Art (and Science) of Persuasion

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**Social Proof** – We look to what others do to guide our behavior
Americans are.....
How can ‘social proof’ be true?

Humans are surprisingly poor at understanding the factors that affect our own behavior.
Social proof

Infomercials

“Operators are waiting – please call now”
Social proof

Infomercials

“If operators are busy – please call back later”
Social proof
Social proof – social science experiment

Arizona Petrified Forest National Park
Social proof – social science experiment

Existing signs

“Your heritage is being vandalized every day by theft losses of petrified wood of 14 tons a year mostly of small pieces at a time.”

NEGATIVE SOCIAL PROOF
Social proof – social science experiment

NEGATIVE SOCIAL PROOF SIGN:

"Many park visitors have removed the petrified wood from the park changing the natural state of the Petrified Forest."
NEUTRAL SIGN:
“Please don’t remove the petrified wood from the park, in order to preserve the natural state of the Petrified Forest.”
Social proof – social science experiment

NEUTRAL SIGN:
“Please don’t remove the petrified wood from the park, in order to preserve the natural state of the Petrified Forest.”
Social proof – social science experiment

BAIT
Social proof – social science experiment

Neutral social proof signs
(don’t remove…)

1.67% wood taken

Negative social proof signs
(visitors have removed…)

7.92% of wood taken
What **should** the message be?

“**98% of visitors leave this park in its natural state by taking only pictures, leaving only footprints.**”
Who drives to work on the highway?
Social Proof
Social proof – the art of testimonials

Close as possible to audience you’re trying to reach
Social proof – the **art** of the box chart

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Social proof – the art of the ask
Social proof – the art of the bequest ask

“Mrs. Hu, thank you for your generous gifts over the years. You’ve been such a loyal and tremendous supporter of our organization. You know, many donors who give as regularly as you have put our organization in their will; what are your thoughts about doing that?”
AVOID Negative Social Proof

“Only 8% of classical music listeners give to WCMU radio station…. Please give…. ”
Things I Do When I Have to Study

- Study
- Tell People I Have to Study
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**Reciprocity** – We feel obligated to return favors performed for us
Reciprocity: social science experiment

Check with ONE candy   Check with TWO candies
Reciprocity: social science experiment

Check with ONE candy

3.3% raise in tip

Check with TWO candies

14.1% raise in tip
Reciprocity: social **science** experiment

23%
Reciprocity: pump up the volume

1. Significance \(\text{(two is better than one)}\)

2. Unexpected \(\text{(candy after turning away)}\)

3. Personalized \(\text{("I’m giving you this second candy because you were a really nice customer")}\)
Reciprocity
Reciprocity – the art
Reciprocity – the art of small, personalized gifts
Final advice on reciprocity!
People who find you on Facebook

- High School people you hated
- College people you hated
- Work colleagues you hate
- Actual friends

(GraphJam)
The Art (and Science) of Persuasion

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Reciprocity – We feel obligated to return favors performed for us.

Commitment and Consistency – We want to act consistently with our stated commitments and values.
Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Control Group:

17% said “Yes”
Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Experimental Group:

Most said “Yes”
Commitment and consistency – social science experiment

Experimental group:
2 weeks later

76% said “Yes”
Commitment and Consistency
Commitment and consistency – the art

Written pledges

“Can you please respond to this email with a 'yes' that it's your intention to make the $500 gift we discussed?”
Commitment and consistency – the art

• Advisory groups – written report

• Volunteers – talk about your org to a friend
Commitment and consistency – the art

Ask volunteers to write a fundraising letter to their friends and follow up with phone calls.

Ask a low-level supporter with potential to host a dinner party/cocktail party.
Time spent when you can't sleep

- Blue: Trying to fall asleep
- Red: Calculating the exact amount of sleep you'll get if you fall asleep right this second
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**Authority** – We look for experts to show us the way.
Authority – social science experiment

Control group:
Casually dressed young man

Experimental group:
Same man in a business suit
Authority – the art

Would you make a $100,000 gift through this person?
Authority – When it comes to TRUST and BELIEVABILITY

• How you **appear** to the other person

• What you **sound** like

• What you **say**
Why villains in Scooby Doo are arrested

For actually committing a crime
For putting on a costume and scaring people.
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**Scarcity** – The less available the resource, the more we want it.
Scarcity – social science

This is not your father’s Oldsmobile.

1988
Tired old Olds…

• 2003 – after years of flagging Oldsmobile sales

• Fewer Olds ads

• No retooling
Scarcity

Oldsmobile announced they were going out of business

2003

BEST SELLING CAR OF THE YEAR
The Day the Twinkie Died
Nov 16, 2012
Scarcity
Scarcity – the art – Jeopardy style!

**Answer:**
Harvard announced the price of scholarships was doubling and the old price was only good for two more months.

**Question:**
How did Harvard College raise 148 new scholarships in two months?
"John, if you make a gift of $100,000, you will qualify for the scholarship matching challenge, making a total campaign gift of $200,000."

“John, only 20% of the challenge match funds are left. Several other donors are thinking about using the match. If they do, I can’t guarantee there will be any match left for you. Will you make a gift of $100,000 now to qualify for the match?”
Scarcity – the art
planned giving context

“Cynthia, you and John qualify for a 6.0% charitable gift annuity.”

"Cynthia, right now, you and John qualify for a 6.0% charitable gift annuity. In three months, we expect the gift annuity rates to drop, and I'll only be able to offer you and John a rate of 5.7%. If you act before January to establish the annuity, we can set up the annuity at the higher 6.0% rate."

LOSS AVERTION
Why I carry a huge purse

- It's pretty/cute
- It was on sale
- I have too many things
- To sneak food into a movie theater
Café Circles

Liking  Social Proof  Commitment and Consistency  Scarcity  Reciprocity  Authority

STAND UP!

Pick the technique YOU learned here today that YOU think would be most persuasive with a donor.

Tell your colleague about it in 30 seconds or less. I’ll time you.

Then listen to your colleagues favorite technique. 30 seconds or less.

Switch partners! Repeat!
Why did we just do that exercise?
Questions?
Bonus Tracks
Perceptual Contrast

Things look different, depending on how they are presented to you.
Perceptual Contrast

Rienzi P. and the CRUT
Making perceptual contrast work FOR you

• Present not-so-good choice first

• Present best choice next and last

• Don’t present too many choices
Fluency

• A message that is difficult to decode, pronounce, understand, is less CONVINCING than one that is easy.

• Ex: “If the glove don’t fit, you must acquit!”
Fluency:
Use a rhyme and your gifts will climb

“Help this pup to grow up!”

A fixed rate gift annuity supports our animal shelter
Disfluency
Fear: Fight…or Freeze?

Research shows that fear-arousing communications motivate audience to TAKE ACTION to reduce the threat….

Except when it describes a danger and the audience isn’t told how to reduce that danger.

- Block out the message
- Freeze
Fear Motivates

“The only thing we have to fear is...fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”
Hilliard, Ohio school bond levy

“Unite for Kids”
“Building Tomorrow Today”

“Our Kids Can’t Wait” – fear/loss aversion
DID YOU HAVE FUN TODAY?
What I'm hearing from you, Tze, is that it's important that we're able to keep attracting the best students, even if they, like you, have a father who wasn't there for most of their childhood, and that it's important that Harvard is able to provide a full ride for students, like you had. Is that correct? That's Harvard’s goal too. I’d like for you to consider making that possible for the next generation of students with a gift of $250,000."
Speaker Information

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