



Leadership Development

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7 Secrets of Persuasion - How to sell an idea

Whether you're making a sales presentation, running for office, asking someone for a date, befriending a VIP, chairing a meeting, asking your boss for a promotion – whether you're a trainer, a manager, an author on a TV talk show, or out to make yourself a leader in your chosen field – whatever you're doing, the skills of persuasion are critical.

Persuasion is all around us and it makes sense to have the clearest possible understanding of what the process is about. What follows are 7 'secrets' to help you.

1. Listen first

You've heard this before! A thousand times. We all have! Yet few do it correctly. Most people don't really listen – they fake paying attention and then interrupt (but... but...but...) to get their comments in. Or they listen too fast – here's a little exercise we sometimes use at seminars.

Would you shout out loud SILK, SILK, SILK.

Now what do cows drink.....?

If you thought milk you're listening too fast.

Cows drinkwater!

Listening , like everything requires practice. The more you listen, the more you are fascinated by what people have to say, the more they will like you, trust you and want to do business with you.

It's amazing how much you can learn by simply keeping quiet. When you ask relevant questions and listen, you learn what matters to the other person. And there's an added bonus — listeners quickly become popular.

Below-average people monopolise the talking. Above-average people monopolise the listening.

Rapt attention is the highest form of flattery. Listen to people as if you have all the time in the world. Visualise a neon sign above their head reading 'Make me feel important'.

2. Find out & match

Find out and match is the fundamental psychology of persuasion so

- Find out what the other person wants – (ask questions and listen) then
- Match your product/idea/proposal to that.

A speaker on the podium must know what the audience is interested in and match



Course Content

- Listen first
- Find out and match
- Be flexible
- Learn to tell stories
- Don't rely on words alone
- Be courteous
- Go for it

Follow Up Courses

- Effective public speaking is the no 1 skill for leaders to position themselves ahead of the crowd. LDL's Effective Speaking & Presentation course can help you deliver stunning, memorable presentations that move people to act.

their presentation to it.

Modern management thinking stresses the importance of matching the individual's personal goals to the goals of the organisation. How do you motivate an individual in your team? Find out what they want to achieve and match the task you have to that.

These examples reinforce the concept of find out and match. To influence anyone, the core skill is: find out what's important to them, their hot button, and then match to it.

3. Be flexible

Before buying into our proposals, people want to know that we are flexible enough to respond to their concerns.

A willingness to adjust our viewpoint to incorporate other people's ideas is one of the key skills of persuasion. Mostly this goes without saying when we are with customers, but what about when we are with internal colleagues?

Once coworkers realise that we are flexible enough to listen to their views and respond to their concerns – ie that we genuinely do have their interests at heart, they are much more likely to go along with our proposals.

4 . Learn to tell stories

Stories are the key to human contact. Not statistics, not facts, not bullet points. What do people see in their minds when they listen to you? Stories don't have to be long. Tell a story of what happened to you or a colleague.

Martina King, Managing Director of Capital Radio in London, tells the story of how she called on a prospective customer and somehow allowed the prospect to tell her about his family, his kids and all the difficulties he was encountering. Driving back after the meeting, Martina thought what a waste of time that was. She felt guilty at not making her presentation and selling her product.

The next day he phoned and booked an ad — the first ever from that account.

5 . Don't rely on words alone

Bring your thinking to life. Make it visual. Create an exhibit, use diagrams, flow charts, models, prototypes. Architects have long known how powerful models can be for influencing buyers.

Warning to presenters! This is not an excuse to produce yet another PowerPoint deck. At LDL the first thing we do when coaching presenters is to turn their slide show off. You would be amazed how quickly people improve their presentation skills.

Are we saying ban PowerPoint? No. Just use it sparingly and always create the slides after you have written and rehearsed your presentation, not the other way around.

6 . Be courteous with everyone

Not just the people you want to persuade. Malcolm Forbes said – 'You can easily judge the character of others by how they treat those who can do nothing for them'.

Courtesy costs nothing but what it buys is priceless. Handling situations, especially tricky ones, in a positive, constructive way makes everyone a winner.

There is a quality about courteous people that makes us trust them. If they go out of their way to be pleasant, polite and well mannered, then somehow we sense they have our interests at heart. They are more likeable and we are keen to do business with people we like.

7 . Go for it.

Are you energising peopleor are your batteries dead? Are you putting them to sleep or knocking them out? Passion persuades. Never, ever forget that people are more persuaded by your convictions than by your arguments.

Throw yourself into it. Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. Remember the words of the song 'Dance like no one is watching. Love like you've never been hurt. You've got to come from the heart if you want it to work'.

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Leadership Development Ltd

Leadership Development Ltd

495 Fulham Road, London, SW6 1HH

Tel: +44(0)20 7381 6233 | **Fax:** +44(0)20 7381 6918 | **E-mail:** learning@ldl.co.uk