Influencing and Persuasion skills

MTD Training

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Preface

Being able to influence and persuade others to get them to do what you want them to do is a key skill not only in business but in life as a whole!

We only achieve real results through others and that takes effective communication skills.

In this textbook you'll will learn the key skills and the techniques so you can win people around to your ideas, influence others on certain decisions and persuade them to take certain a certain course of action all by the way that you communicate with them!

Sean McPheat, the Founder and Managing Director of management development specialists, MTD Training is the author of this publication. Sean has been featured on CNN, BBC, ITV, on numerous radio stations and has contributed to many newspapers. He's been featured in over 250 different publications as a thought leader within the management development and training industry.

MTD has been working with a **wide variety of clients** (both large and small) in the UK and internationally for several years.

MTD specialise in providing:

- In-house, tailor made management training courses (1-5 days duration)

- Open courses (Delivered throughout the UK at various locations)

- Management & leadership development programmes (From 5 days to 2 years)

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MTD provide a wide range of management training courses and programmes that enable new and experienced managers to maximise their potential by gaining or refining their management and leadership skills.

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Our programmes are delivered when and where you need them! We believe that training should be fun, highly interactive and provide "real world" practical techniques and methods that you can use back in the office – and that's exactly what we provide.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Influence and Persuasion Are Forms of Communication

All human interactions are a form of communication. In the business world, nothing can be achieved without effectively communicating with, influencing, and persuading employers, employees, clients, suppliers, and customers. If you look at the most successful business people in the world, you will see people who have mastered the art of influence and persuasion. And that's the difference between being a good communicator and being an advanced communicator – people with advanced communication skills understand not just how to communicate with others, but also how to influence and persuade them. It requires practice, finesse, and a skill set that goes beyond those that the average person possesses.

> If you look at the most successful business people in the world, you will see people who have mastered the art of influence and persuasion.

Even though these skills are so important to success in the workplace, there are many individuals who find that there is a limit to their persuasion and influence skills and that they seem to have reached a stumbling block in their progress. They may sometimes struggle to convey their thoughts and ideas in an accurate manner, or they may be unable to understand what the other person is thinking or feeling and why they might be resisting the attempts to persuade or influence them.

Some people might try to persuade and influence by being abrasive or aggressive. They may get agreement from time to time, but there will be underlying, perhaps passive disagreement that affects the team. True persuasion and influence means that you are able to convince others of the merit of your ideas without needing to bully or disrespect others. Instead, you learn to understand what a particular person needs to hear, believe, or see in order to be persuaded. Then you are able to deliver the missing information or communication in the way that the other person is actually able to hear it.

> Some people try to persuade or influence others by being abrasive or aggressive. They may get agreement from time to time, but there will still be underlying (and perhaps passive) disagreement that affects the team.

This is why persuasion and influence are actually forms of advanced communication. They require that you as a communicator stop thinking about what you want to say or how you want to say it, and that you instead figure out what the other person needs to hear. It requires that you are self-aware enough to recognize when you are doing what feels most comfortable for you rather than what will produce the results that you are want. And it requires that you are calm and confident enough to keep trying to identify what it is that the other person needs to hear from you – even when it seems that you don't have a chance of getting the other person to your side. In this ebook, we'll examine methods you can use to enhance your communication skills so that you are able to successfully influence and persuade others.

1.2 Manipulation vs. Influence and Persuasion

Some people are uncomfortable with the concepts of influence and persuasion because they feel that they are manipulating others in some way. However, they are thinking of the negative connotation of manipulation. At its root, to manipulate something means that you are able to change or alter it in some way by choice. But to manipulate is a negative process if the intention behind the effort you are exerting is one that is selfish or harmful in some way.

In the sense that we will be discussing influence and persuasion, we will be assuming that the intentions behind the effort you exert are positive. They are designed to help the individual, the team, the company, or the clients that you are communicating with. For example, you might be dealing with an employee who has a negative behavior. If you want to influence the employee or somehow persuade them to alter their attitude or behavior, you need to be very clear on why you want their behavior to change. If it is only because you find their behavior annoying, then your personal reasons aren't going to lead to positive influence. However, if you have a clear understanding of how their behavior and actions are affecting you as a manager, your team's ability to perform, or the client's experience with the organization, then you have a positive foundation for being able to communicate this to your employee.

1.3 Establishing Rapport as a Means to Influence and Persuasion

Rapport is an important concept in the business world. It's behind most relationships that you will have with bosses, subordinates, suppliers, partners, and clients. Rapport means that you establish a level of relationship with someone so that you feel comfortable working with the other person. More importantly for our topic, rapport is essential for influence and persuasion.

Think about it a moment. Are more you likely to be persuaded by someone that you don't like or someone that you do like. How about someone that you know versus someone you don't know? The fact is that as human beings, we find comfort in relationships. When we need to make a decision, such as whether or not to agree with someone else, we will be more likely to agree with someone with whom we have an established relationship. We prefer the known to the unknown, even if the known isn't necessarily our favorite person in the world. Rapport doesn't mean that you have to consider the other person a friend. But it does mean that you:

- Feel comfortable communicating with the other person

- Get a sense that you have shared goals, values, or desired outcomes

- Have trust that the person is somewhat reliable and honest based on past dealings with the person or the person's reputation

- Feel that you are being heard by the other person

- Treat the other person with respect (and receive the same in return)

After reviewing the foundation of persuasion and influence – communication skills – we will spend the majority of this ebook exploring methods of establishing rapport as a way to influence others. We will also examine some persuasion theories to understand why we might be persuaded by another person – and just as importantly, why we may not be persuaded by them. You will learn techniques that will immediately make you a better communicator, better at building rapport with others, and thereby better at persuading and influencing others.

2. Review of Communication Basics

2.1 Introduction

Imagine you are on one side of a wall and the person you want to communicate with is on the other side of the wall. But there's more than the wall in the way. The wall is surrounded by a moat that is filled with crocodiles and edged by quicksand. These barriers could be things like different cultures, different expectations, different experiences, different perspectives, or different communication styles, to name just a few.

> Communication skills are the tools that we use to remove the barriers to effective communication.

You might experience only one of these barriers at a time, or you might find yourself facing them all. Persuading and influencing the other person requires that you recognize these barriers exist between you, and that you then apply the proper tools, or communication skills, to remove those barriers preventing your message from getting through.

Of course, communication is a two-way street. The person on the other side of those barriers will also try to send messages back to you. Your ability to understand them clearly could be left to a dependence on their ability to use communication skills. But that's leaving the success of the communication to chance. Instead, you can also use your own communication skills to ensure that you receive messages clearly as well.

Finally, there isn't only one point in your communication with another person at which you have to watch out for barriers. To be successful at influence and persuasion, it's important to recognize that these barriers to communication can occur at multiple points in the communication process.

2.2 The Communication Process

The communication process involves multiple parts and stages. These are:

- Source

- Message

- Encoding

- Channel

- Decoding

- Receiver

- Feedback

- Context

At each of these stages, there is the potential for barriers to be formed or problems to arise. The steps in the process are represented in Figure 1 and explained further in the following information.
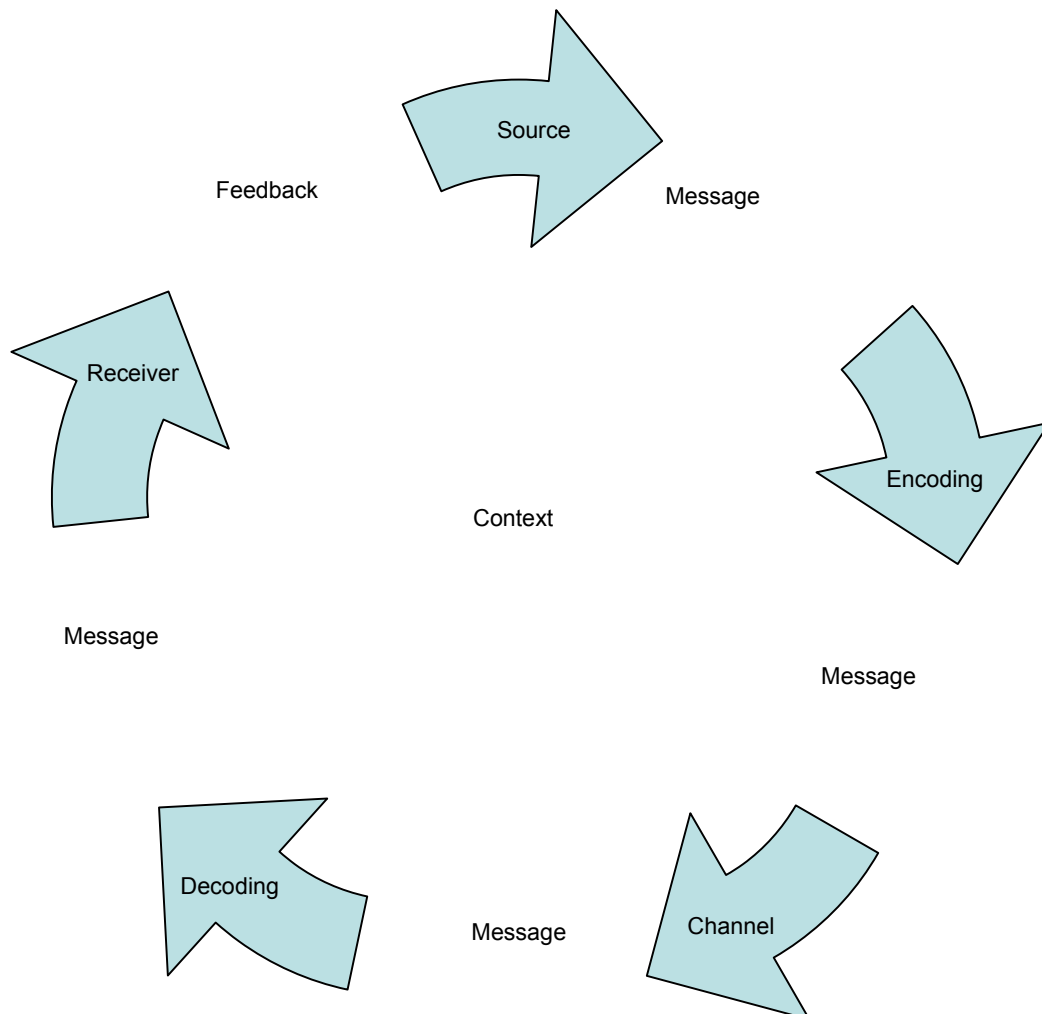
Feedback   Source   Message

Receiver   Encoding

Context

Message   Message

Decoding   Message   Channel

Figure 1: The Communication Process

2.2.1 Source

The source of the communication is the sender, or for our purposes, you. In order to be a good source, you need to be clear about the message that you are sending. Do you know exactly what it is that you want to persuade the other person to do? You'll also want to be sure you know why it is that you are communicating. What result is it that you expect? If you cannot answer these questions, you will be starting the communication process with a high chance of failure.

> The source of the message is the sender. The sender must know why the communication is necessary and what result is needed.

2.2.2 Message

The message is simply the information that you want to communicate to the other person. In the case of persuading or influencing another, it is the information that you feel will make your case to the other person. Without a message, there is no cause for communicating. If you cannot summarize the information that you need to share, you aren't ready to begin the process of influencing or persuading another.

> The message is the information that you feel will make your case to the other person. Without a message, there is no cause for communicating.

2.2.3 Encoding

Encoding is the process of taking your message and transferring it into a format that can be shared with another party. It's sort of like how messages are sent via a fax. The information on the paper has to be encoded, or prepared, before it can be sent to the other party. It has to be sent in a format that the other party has the ability to decode or the message will not be delivered.

> Encoding is the process of taking your message and transferring it into the proper format for sharing it with your audience. It requires knowing your audience and ensuring that your message provides all of the information that they need.

In order to encode a message properly, you have to think about what the other person will need in order to understand, or decode, the message. Are you sharing all the information that is necessary to get the full picture? Have you made assumptions that may not be correct? Are you using the best form of sending it in order to ensure the best chance of the message being properly received? Are there cultural, environmental, or language differences between you and the other party that could cause miscommunication?

Of course, to encode a message properly, you have to know who your audience is. You need to have an understanding of what they know and what they need to know in order to send a complete message. You need to use language they will understand and a context that is familiar. One simple example of how you can do this is being sure to spell out acronyms. We sometimes forget that not everyone is familiar with the acronyms that we may use on a regular basis. Attention to small details like this can establish the rapport that will lead to persuasion and influence.

2.2.4 Channel

The channel is the method or methods that you use to convey your message. The type of message you have will help to determine the channel that you should use. Channels include face-to-face conversations, telephone calls or videoconferences, and written communication like emails and memos.

> The Channel is the method of communication that you choose such as face-to-face, by telephone, or via email.

Each channel has its advantages and disadvantages, but it is possible to establish rapport with the other person by using any of these channels. However, since communication is mostly a non-verbal information exchange, you are able to employ more techniques to influence and persuade another person if you do it in a face-to-face meeting. That way you have all of your communication methods available to you – words, body language, tone of voice, and more.

2.2.5 Decoding

Decoding happens when you receive the message that has been sent. The communication skills required to decode a message successfully include the ability to read and comprehend, listen actively, or ask clarifying questions when needed.

> Decoding is the point at which many people's attempts to persuade or influence another person will fail.

This is where most people will fail to persuade or influence another person. They will not understand how the other person decodes information. Everyone is used to communicating in their own way – we do what is comfortable for us. For example, maybe I prefer to email you. But you would actually be better able to decode my message if we were face-to-face. So I need to pay attention to how you prefer to decode information if I am going to be successful at persuading you or influencing you. I need to then deliver my information to you in the method that you prefer so that your ability to decode the information is not a barrier to persuasion.

2.2.6 Receiver

Since you have thought out your message, you've certainly also thought about what you want the desired result to be on the part of your listener. But it's important to realize that each person that receives your message will be listening to it through their own individual expectations, opinions, and perspectives. Their individual experiences will influence how your message is received.

> You have expectations for a response from the receiver when you send a message. You can increase the chances of getting this result by addressing your audience's concerns or addressing specific benefits as part of your communication.

If you are attempting to influence or persuade an entire group, you won't always be able to address each person's individual concerns in a message. But you should know who the key decision makers are that you need to persuade, and address your message in a way that is most likely to appeal to them.

Part of planning a message when you want to persuade the other person is that you think ahead of time about what some of their thoughts or experiences might be. For example, if you are releasing a new product and want to persuade customers to try it, you would want to be certain to address the specific benefits to the customer, or what improvements have been made since the last version was released.

2.2.7 Feedback

No matter what channel you have used to convey your message, you can use feedback to help determine how successful your communication was. If you are face-to-face with your audience, you can read body language and ask questions to ensure that you have been successful in persuading or influencing them. If you have communicated via writing, you can gauge the success of your communication by the response that you get or by seeing if the result you wanted is delivered.

> Feedback lets you gauge how successful you were at persuading or influencing another. It also offers a chance to adjust your techniques for the future.

In any case, feedback is invaluable for helping you to improve your persuasion and influencing skills. You can learn what worked well and what didn't so that you can be even more efficient the next time you communicate with that person or the next time you need to try to influence or persuade them.

2.2.8 Context

The context is the situation in which you are communicating. It involves the environment that you are in and that in which your audience is in, the culture of your organization(s), and elements such as the relationship between you and your audience. Your persuasion and influencing process will not look the same when you are communicating with your boss as it will when you are communicating with a friend. The context helps determine the tone and style of your communication.

> Context involves things such as your relationship with your audience, the culture of your organization and your general environment.

3. Using Another's Communication Preferences to Influence and Persuade

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we examined the stages of communication, which is the basis for persuading or influencing another. In this chapter, we'll look further at what the actual mechanisms of communication include and how you can use that information to improve your ability to persuade others. We'll look at the communication process again from the standpoint of how your message is formed in your brain, how it is received in the other person's brain, and what happens in between these stages. We'll look at the ways that our own experiences have impacted our ability to influence others and we'll look for ways to identify the challenges that another's experiences might provide to our ability to influence them as well. The process we'll be examining is shown in Figure 4 below:
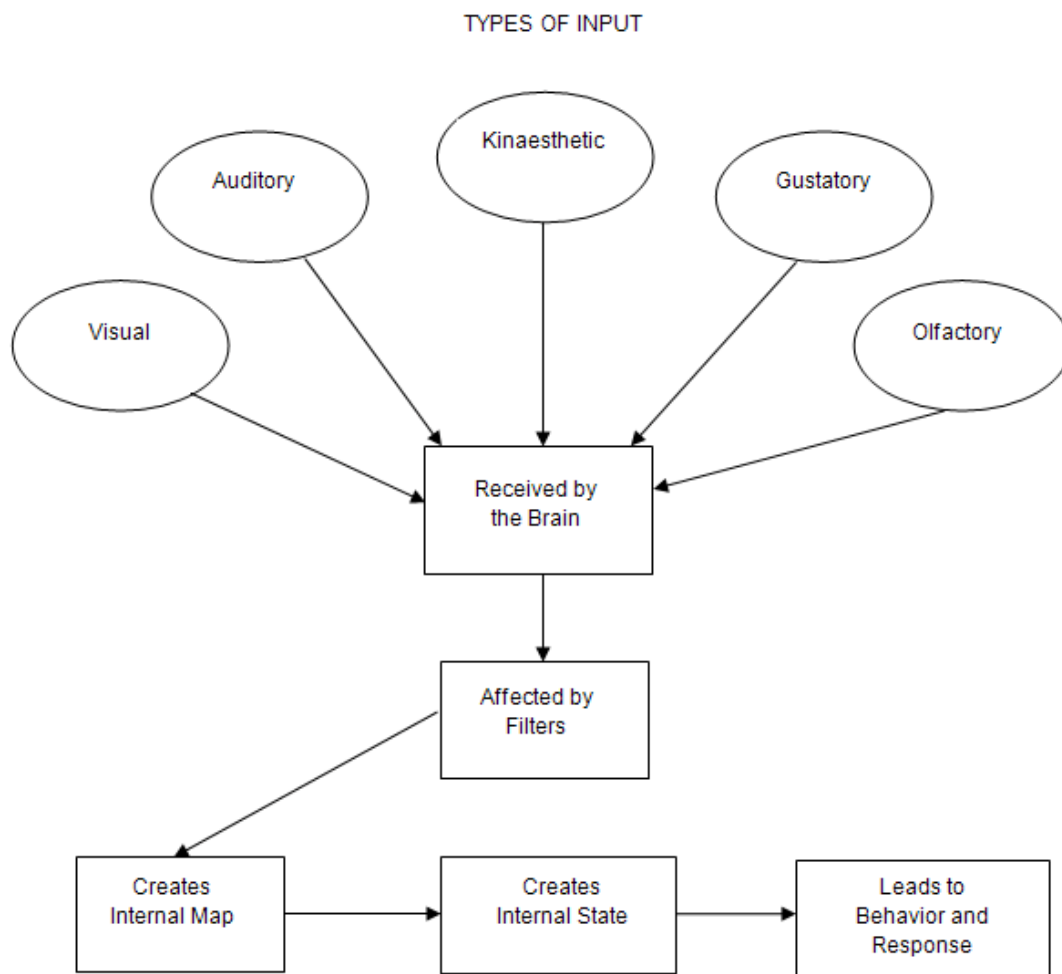
TYPES OF INPUT

Figure 4: How Information Moves through the Brain

Figure 4 shows us that communication starts with input – what I say to you, or the email I send to you, or you see the angry look on my face. You interpret that input through filters that are made up of your experiences, history, prejudices, and more. That interpretation creates what we call an 'internal map' of meaning. It's made up of the pictures you see in your mind. The map is how your brain processes and makes sense of the filtered input.

If it recognizes the input, as in, if you've seen me make that face before, you are able to easily map out what is happening. You would probably start picturing me yelling at you, or sensing how you are about to feel. That map generates a state of being within your mind. You might suddenly be in a state of mind such as anger, fear, resistance, or any other emotion and associated thoughts. That state of being will then lead to your behavior and your response to me. Will you scowl back at me? Ask what's wrong? Run away? My ability to persuade you relies upon my ability to predict and influence this process based on what I know about you and how you tend to think and process information.

> My ability to persuade you relies on my ability to predict and influence your response to me based on what I know about you and how you tend to think and process information.

3.2 Types of Input

The brain is constantly bombarded by input. Some of it we process consciously, such as when we read a book or listen to another person. And some of it we process unconsciously, without thinking about it in order to do so. Still other information our brain won't process simply because it is not important or it would result in information overload. Imagine sitting in a crowd of 1,000 people and trying to hear everything they are saying. Notice that it's impossible to understand and process everything that you're seeing and hearing. Now try listening just to one person standing near you. As long as you can hear their voice, you can understand and process the information.

> Some input we process consciously, some we process subconsciously, and some we ignore.

The brain receives this information in the form of input through five main channels that are represented by the five senses:

- Visual – what we see

- Auditory – what we hear

- Kinaesthetic – what we feel, touch, sense, or experience

- Gustatory – what we taste

- Olfactory – what we smell

In business communications, the chances are good that you will not be using the latter two senses. They might be used if you produce food or beverages, or your olfactory sense could be used if you make perfume or to alert you to danger such as a fire. But in general, you will be communicating in the workplace with the first three types of input: Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic. These three are often referred to as VAK for simplicity's sake.

> The three input types of Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic are often referred to as VAK.

3.3 Filters

Our mental filters are just what they sound like – filters our brain uses to process input. As our brain receives information, the intended meaning of that information may be changed by our filters so that the result is not the same as the original intention. The way we will interpret the information is dependent on our own personal filters. Everyone has different filters that will affect how the input reaches the brain. But these filters will cause your brain to do one of three things:

- Delete – this information will not be processed because it is filtered out as unimportant or not acceptable.

- Distort – most filters will distort information so that the meaning the receiver applies to the input is not the same meaning that input would have for a different receiver. The meaning is shaded, changed, or added to by our filters.

- Generalize – in this case, our filters identify input as being similar to something we've experienced before. The brain then applies the same meaning to this input as it did the last time. The danger with this type of filter is that the meaning of the input may actually be very different.

> Everyone has different filters that will affect how the input reaches the brain.

Our filters come from a number of different sources that comprise the total sum of our experiences. As we learn about and make decisions about the world, we come to expect there to be certain patterns that will occur and that causes will lead to effects. Some things that act as filters as we process information include our:

- Values

- Beliefs

- Past Experiences

- Prejudices

- Feelings

- Environment

3.4 The Internal Map, Internal State, and Behavior or Response

Now that the input has been filtered, it will be processed by the brain in order to gain meaning from it. This process is called creating an internal 'map.' It's as if your brain dissects and organizes the information into a pattern or a picture that it can make sense of. If it sees a pattern that it recognizes, it will automatically apply meaning to the input based on that existing pattern. If it doesn't recognize the input or the pattern, it will create a new map and apply the most likely meaning based on past experience of similar input. Of course, this all happens in a fraction of a second.

> The pictures we generate to give meaning to the input are referred to as the internal 'map'. That interpretation of meaning leads to a change in our internal state, which then generates our behavior and response.

Whatever meaning the brain maps out for the input, it creates an internal state of being. You can imagine this very easily if you think about the last time you heard some bad news. You processed the input in a way that you understood that the meaning was negative, which led to an internal state of being such that you might have started to feel angry or sad or displeased. You might have even physically felt a response to the meaning, such as a tightening of the chest or a quickening of the pulse.

Finally, this leads to your behavior or response to the input. In our example of hearing bad news, you would respond with sympathy, empathy, fear, or anger. You might cry or yell. Your brain searches for the words to describe what you want to say in return. Whatever that internal state is that is created will determine how you behave and respond to the input you receive. In other words, the input you received, filtered, and interpreted will determine what and how you give back in response. Understanding this process – and learning how to affect it – is the key to being able to influence or persuade another!

So how can you determine a person's preferred sensory channel for receiving input? If you are paying attention, the person will give you clues through their language and through their behavior. We'll look at both verbal and nonverbal clues.

3.5 Verbal Clues

As we said, the preferred channel for receiving input is not static – it can change from time to time and depending on what kind of input is being received. For example, we don't 'see' music first – we hear it. If we are talking on the phone, we are using our auditory channel even if we have a general preference for the visual channel. So how can we determine which 'channel' the person is using during our communication with them? One way is to listen to the verbal clues they are giving us. The words that someone is using give you an indication as to which type of 'mode' they are in – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic. Or, they may use language that doesn't clearly indicate which mode they are in, which we refer to as 'unspecified.'

> The words that someone uses can give you an indication as to which 'mode' they are thinking in – visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic.

Take a look at Figure 5 to get an idea of some of the common verbal language that people will use when they are in each form of internal representational thinking. If you respond using similar language, it is a signal to the other person that you are thinking similarly – that you are on the same 'wavelength' as they are. This helps to establish rapport, which in turn will make your efforts to influence or persuade another more successful.

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic	Unspecified
See	Hear	Fell	Sense
Look	Listen	Touch	Experience
View	Sounds	Grasp	Understand
Appear	Make music	Get hold of	Think
Show	Harmonize	Slip through	Learn
Dawn	Tune in/out	Catch on	Process
Reveal	Be all ears	Tap into	Decide
Envision	Rings a bell	Make contact	Motivate
Illuminate	Silence	Throw out	Consider
Imagine	Be heard	Turn around	Change
Clear	Resonate	Hard	Perceive
Foggy	Deaf	Unfeeling	Insensitive
Focused	Loud	Concrete	Distinct
Hazy	Melody	Get a handle on	Know
Picture	Unhearing	Solid	

Figure 5: Verbal Indications of Thinking 'Modes'

You can see that the verbs that indicate action correspond to the way in which the person is perceiving that action.

Some additional phrases that a person might use in each mode of thinking are shown in Figure 6 below:

Visual	Auditory	Kinaesthetic
An eyeful	Afterthought	All washed up
Appears to me	Blabbermouth	Boils down to
Beyond a shadow of a doubt	Call on	Chip off the old block
Birds eye view	Clear as a bell	Come to grips with
Catch a glimpse of	Clearly expressed	Control yourself
Clear cut	Describe in detail	Cool/calm/collected
Dim view	Earful	Firm foundations
Flashed on	Enquire into	Get a handle on
Get a perspective on	Give me your ear	Get a load of this
Get a scope on	Give you a call	Get in touch with
Hazy idea	Given amount of	Get the drift of
In light of	Grant an audience	Get your back up
In person	Heard voices	Hand in hand
In view of	Hidden message	Hand in there
Looks like	Hold your tongue	Heated argument
Make a scene	Ideal talk	Hold it
Mental image	Key note speaker	Hold on
Mental picture	Loud and clear	Hot head
Minds eye	Manner of speaking	Keep your shirt on
Naked eye	Pay attention to	Lay cards on the table
Paint a picture	Power of speech	Pain in the neck
See to it	State your purpose	Pull some strings
Short sighted	To tell the truth	Sharp as a tack
Showing off	Tongue-tied	Slipped my mind
Sight for sore eyes	Tuned in/tuned out	Smooth operator
Staring off into space	Unheard of	So-so
Take a peak	Utterly	Start from scratch
Tunnel vision	Voiced an opinion	Stiff upper lip
Under your nose	Well informed	Stuffed shirt
Up front	Within hearing	Too much hassle
Well defined	Word for word	Topsy turvey

Figure 6: Common Phrases Used in Each Mode of Thinking

Now that you have a general understanding of how the words a person uses may indicate the mode in which they are currently thinking, let's take a look at each mode in further detail. As you learn to identify and recognize the information that others are giving you in their actions, you will get better and better at responding in kind.

3.6 Visual Representation System

The visual representation system involves the process used to translate communication into pictures in the mind. You can determine whether a person tends to prefer this form of communication by identifying certain behavioural cues. These people:

- Stand or sit with their heads and/or bodies erect, with their eyes up.

- Are breathing from the top of their lungs and their upper shoulders and breathe fairly rapidly.

- Often sit forward in their chair and tend to be organized, neat, well groomed and orderly. Appearance is important to them.

- Memorize by seeing pictures, and are less distracted by noise.

- Often have trouble remembering verbal instructions because their minds tend to wander.

- Are fast talkers.

- Feel that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

- Use picture descriptions during conversation.

- Are interested in how things look.

- Must see things to understand them.

- Like visually-based feedback.

- Use gestures that may be high & quick.

3.7 Auditory Representational System

Those with a preference for an auditory representational system tend to prefer to translate communication into sound. Indications that you have someone who prefers this system are that they:

- Will move their eyes sideways.

- Breathe from the middle of their chest.

- Typically talk to themselves and some even move their lips when they talk to themselves.

- Are easily distracted by noise.

- Can repeat things back to you easily.

- Learn by listening.

- Usually like music and talking on the phone.

- Memorize by steps, procedures, and sequences.

- Like to be TOLD how they're doing.

- Respond to a certain tone of voice or set of words.

- Will be interested in what you have to say about a topic.

- Are medium to fast talkers.

- Translate conversation to sounds associated with the topic.

- Are excellent at repeating back instructions.

3.8 Kinaesthetic Representational System

Those that prefer a kinaesthetic representational system check the input they receive in communication against what they are feeling. Some indications that you are communicating with someone who prefers this system are:

- They breathe from the bottom of their lungs, so you'll see their stomach go in and out when they breathe.

- They often move and talk very slowly.

- They respond to physical rewards and touching.

- They also stand closer to people than a visual person does.

- They memorize by doing or walking through something.

- They will be interested in your idea if it "feels right."

- They check out their feelings prior to expressing their thoughts.

- They are very physical people and like to touch during conversation.

- They like to walk through something before doing it.

- They use gestures that are low and smooth.

3.9 Auditory Digital Representational System

Finally, we can't forget about the representational system that we all use at some time – checking communication internally by talking to ourselves. People who are functioning in this system will exhibit some indications as well, such as:

- Spending a fair amount of time talking to themselves.

- Wanting to know if your idea "makes sense."

- Speaking in a clipped, crisp monotone.

- Breathing patterns like a person who prefers auditory, higher up in the chest.

- Dissociated from feelings.

- The auditory digital person can exhibit characteristics of the other major representational systems.

3.10 Eye Movements as an Indication

In the late seventies and early eighties researchers discovered that people move their eyes in a certain way when they think. Students were asked a series of questions and the researchers noticed that their eye movements, when thinking, followed a structured pattern. They realized that by looking at someone's eyes, you could tell how they think, at least how they are thinking at the moment. Figure 7 below demonstrates that you can tell the way they are constructing their thoughts by watching their eyes. Imagine you are facing the person in the figure to understand the directions of the eye movement.
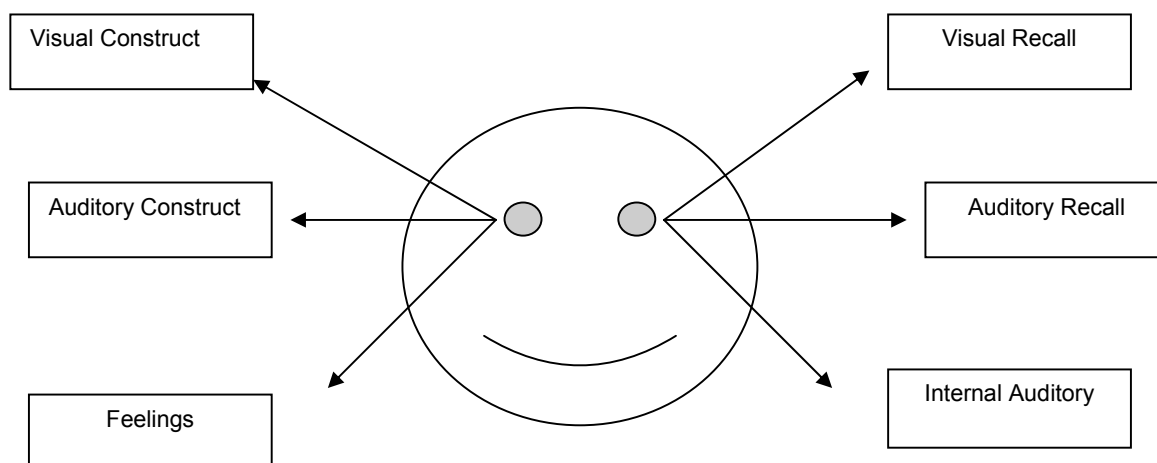
Figure 7: Eye Movements as Indicators

The basic guideline is that when:

- **People are looking up** – They are visualizing

- **People look horizontally to the left and right** – They are remembering or constructing sounds

- **People look down and to their left** – They are talking to themselves

- **People look down and to the right** – They are accessing their feelings.

3.11 Phrases for Use in Response to Each Representational System

Once you have identified the representational system that the person is using to communicate to you, you can use that information in determining how you want to respond to the other person. The more you can respond in the system that the person prefers or is using at the time, the more you are subtly building rapport with them, and the more likely they are to be persuaded by you. Following are some examples of how you might use this information in responding to someone you've identified as using each representational system.

VISUAL

Sample sentences:

If I could show you an attractive way in which you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to look at it, wouldn't you?

If this looks good to you we will go ahead and focus on getting the paperwork done.

Other phrases to use:

- It looks to me like…

- Show me what you mean…

- It appears that…

- Picture this…

- Let's focus on…

AUDITORY

Sample sentences:

If I could tell you a way in which you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to hear about it, wouldn't you?

If this sounds good to you we will go ahead and discuss how to set up an account.

Other phrases to use:

- I hear what you are saying, and it sounds to me like…

- Tell me more about that…

- Let's make it loud and clear what we mean…

- What you're saying rings true…

KINAESTHETIC

Sample sentences:

If I could help you get hold of a concrete way in which you know you could have whatever you want, you would at least want to get a feel for it, wouldn't you?

If this feels good to you we will go ahead and set up an account by handling the paperwork.

Other phrases to use:

- I think you're getting a handle on it…

- We need to stress the pressure we're under…

- Once we get a grip on these numbers you'll be in good hands…

4. Techniques for Building Rapport

4.1 Introduction

We've already talked about how communication methods can help build rapport. Now let's look at some more techniques to help you affect the other person's feeling about you – which in turn will help you persuade them. Rapport has been defined as "unconscious sameness." When you feel that instant connection with someone, it is because you find that they are like you in certain ways. These ways can be quite superficial, e.g. posture and voice tone, or very deep, sharing beliefs and values. Rapport is the ultimate tool for producing the results you want with other people and thus it is vital for influence and persuasion.

4.2 Six Steps to Building Rapport

Whether you know the person or not, there are six main steps to establishing rapport with anyone. Figure 8 demonstrates the six steps.
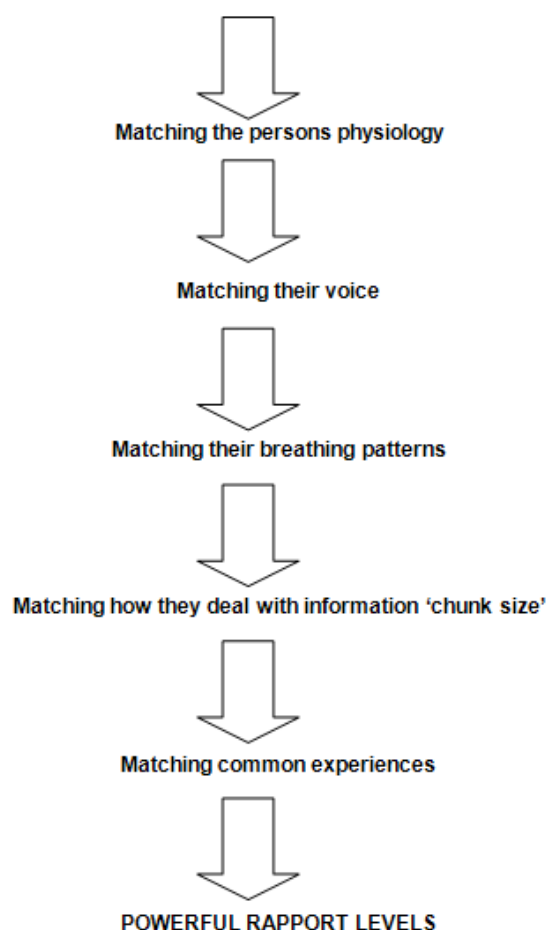

Matching the persons physiology

Matching their voice

Matching their breathing patterns

Matching how they deal with information 'chunk size'

Matching common experiences

POWERFUL RAPPORT LEVELS

Figure 8: Six Steps to Building Rapport

When you bear in mind that as much as 93% of all communication is down to the tonality of your voice and your body language, building rapport is far more than just talking about common experiences. It's an important point to remember that people are more readily influenced and persuaded by people they like. And people like people when they are similar to themselves. When they don't see any similarity, it so much more difficult to have any sort of relationship with that person - never mind to influence or persuade them! Let's now look at each of the six steps to building rapport.

4.2.1 Match the Person's Sensory Modality

To match a person's sensory modality means taking all of the information you learned in chapter 3 and putting it into use. You will want to listen for the indicator words and eye movements that were covered and then respond in a similar way.

4.2.2 Mirror the Person's Physiology

Since so much of our communication is non-verbal, we receive the majority of our information from another person through the subconscious messages they are sending with their physiology or body language. This is a great reason to understand body language because you can use it to send the message to the other person that you are on the same wavelength as they are. Mirroring others is very natural – we actually often do it subconsciously and automatically when we feel rapport with someone.

> Body language is a useful tool that you can learn to use.
>
> You can mimic another's body language when you want to build rapport with them.
>
> You can use a person's body language to gauge how well your attempts to persuade or influence are going. Are you doing well or is there something you need to change?

To see this, next time you are in a conversation that you are enjoying or with whom it is important to you to make a good impression, notice their body language. Now notice yours. Chances are, you have subconsciously mimicked their body language. If they lean forward, you lean forward. If they cross one foot over their knee, you do the same. This is our automatic response to someone that we want to establish a positive connection with – and it's one you can use to enhance your rapport with someone.

When you are in a situation where you want to convey rapport with another person, you can intentionally mirror their body language. If you are standing in the hallway and they lean to one side, mirror their action. If they sit back and relax, do the same. You are sending subconscious signals that you are on their side, which is paving the path to persuasion.

You can also use this tool to gauge whether or not others are being persuaded by what you are saying. Are they using words that express agreement, but sitting all wound up with crossed arms and legs? Unless they just happen to be cold, chances are that there is some matter still unresolved in their mind. You may have persuaded them at a superficial level, but they aren't yet entirely convinced. You can use this signal as information to you that you still need to do some explaining or ask some additional questions.

4.2.3 Match the Person's Voice

You can also match the tone of voice and the speed at which a person talks. For example, if they are a fast talker, try to speak faster yourself. If they happen to speak slowly, watch your own pace and slow it down. Also be sure that you don't let their slow speaking aggravate you, a sure way to damage your rapport! If you are communicating with a person who has an accent that is different than yours, also be careful that you don't unconsciously mimic their accent. This can be seen as offensive. You will know that you are being effective at influencing the other person if they begin to match your voice.

4.2.4 Match the Person's Breathing

Sure, we each have a different rate and depth of breathing when we are not thinking about it. If you are rather fit and the person you are speaking to is not and you are walking to a meeting together, chances are you won't be able to put this tool into use. But whenever you can, try to match the other person's breathing in pace and depth. Breathe in when they do and exhale when they do. This is another subconscious way of indicating that you are in support or agreement with the other person and can help you build deeper rapport.

> Whenever you can, match the other person's breathing in pace and depth.

4.2.5 Match the Way the Person Deals with Information

This is not the same advice as matching the other person's way of thinking. Instead, this advice refers to matching the 'chunk size' of information that the person is comfortable dealing with. For example, do they want to take information one small detail, or chunk, at a time? Or are they a 'big picture' person and want to just get the broad strokes overview?

> Match the 'chunk size' of information that the other person is most comfortable dealing with.

This is a challenge for many people because if you are a detail-oriented person, you will naturally feel that it is important to convey information to the other person in small, specific chunks. But if that person is a 'big picture' person and you attempt to feed them every tiny detail, they are going to get bored, overwhelmed, or upset. Since you want to influence the other person, and since you are the one that understands how important using the right 'chunk size' of information is, you should adapt the preference of the other person. Not doing so can quickly turn against you when it comes to rapport.

4.2.6 Match Common Experiences

Matching common experiences is about finding some commonality to talk about. We might attempt to match experiences, interests, backgrounds, or acquaintances. This is often the first thing we attempt to do when we meet someone new – we look for things we have in common. It's a natural, fast way to build rapport. We ask where they are from, what they do, or how they know the other people in the room. But be sure that you don't choose to focus only on this step – if the preceding steps are out of sync, the other person won't feel that any rapport-building is natural and sincere. You can't just find a thing or two in common and instantly be able to persuade another – you need to put the other techniques into action as well.

> Be sure not to concentrate only on this step without performing the earlier steps.

4.3 Calibration

When you are using these tools, it's important to remember that you need to be subtle. Matching and mirroring should appear natural, not intentional. You don't want the other person to become acutely aware of the fact that you are using these techniques to influence or persuade the other person. Many people would automatically reject what you are saying if they feel you are trying to persuade them too vigorously.

> Calibration means learning to notice how the other person is reacting to your attempts to build rapport.

Typically, the other person will be focusing so much on what they have to say that they will not even notice your attempts to build rapport. But calibration is one way of determining whether you are in rapport with someone and whether or not you are beginning to influence and persuade them. This basically means that you need to develop your ability to notice what is happening to such an extent that you can begin to see people's reactions to communication.

This takes some practice because most of us are naturally more focused on ourselves and what we want to say in a conversation. But remember that when you are attempting to persuade someone, you want to make it easy for them to come to agreement with you. To do so, you need to be attuned to how they are reacting to you. So you will need to almost be in two minds at once – one 'mind' is involved in the conversation, sending your message and responding to input from the other person. The other 'mind' is standing outside of the conversation and observing.

Practice noticing what the other person is telling you – both verbally and non-verbally. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are they relaxed and comfortable or stressed and tense?

- Am I relaxed and comfortable?

- Are their words and their body language matching or are they saying different things?

- What are they telling me about their preferred methods of communicating? What information are their words or eye movements giving me?

If the person seems to be comfortable with what you are doing and they are expressing agreement both verbally and non-verbally, more than likely you are beginning to persuade them.

5. Linguistic Tools for Influence and Persuasion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine a series of methods that will help you to:

- Direct a conversation without dominating it

- Influence how others see a situation

- Persuade others to come to your point of view

These techniques are subtle, but they are effective when they are used with intention and with skill.

5.2 Reframing

Reframing is the process of making a shift in the nature of a problem. It is the process of changing a negative statement into a positive one by changing the "frame" or reference used to interpret the experience. If all meaning is context dependent, and if you change the context or content, then you will change the meaning.

All content is re-framable simply by changing the structure, the process, or the context. You can use this knowledge to help reframe how the other person sees a situation as well. By doing so, you can set the stage for persuading them to come to agreement with you.

> The basis of reframing is to separate intention from behavior and consequence so that you can then draw a correlation between them as part of your persuasive argument.

The basis of all reframing is to separate intention from behavior and consequence. Intention is the opposite of consequence. It is how you precede an action or behavior and consequence is what happens at the end of the action. Consequences can be either positive or negative.

In order to reframe something, you have several options. You can:

- Redefine the words

- Change the time frame

- Explore the consequences

- Change the chunk size

- Find a counter-example

- Ask for evidence

- Appeal to the positive intention behind the belief

- Change the context so that the relationship doesn't apply in the same way

Here is an example. As you read this ebook, imagine that you have had the following thought:

Learning Influencing and Persuasion Skills is hard

Redefine the words:

- *You don't have to learn them, you only need to become familiar with them.*

- *Learning them isn't hard, it just takes a little more effort.*

Change the time frame:

- *The quicker you do it, the easier it will see.*

- *You have plenty of time to practice and become more comfortable with them.*

Explore the consequences:

- *Unless you try it, you will never know how easy it can be.*

- *If you don't learn them, you won't be as effective in your job as you could be.*

Change the chunk size:

- Chunk up: *Is learning hard in general?*

- Chunk down   *How hard is to learn one specific skill?*

Find a counter example:

- *Has there ever been a time when you found learning………easy?*

- *Have you ever had an experience where you thought something was hard at first, but you eventually got the hang of it?*

Ask for evidence:

- *How do you know that?*

- *Why do you feel it is hard?*

Appeal to the positive intention behind the belief:

- *I can tell you want to learn these thoroughly.*

- *I know how much you want to improve your influencing and persuasion skills.*

Change the context so that the relationship does not apply in the same way:

- *How hard it is for you to learn depends upon who is teaching*

- *You learned to speak Japanese – now that was hard!*

5.3 More Linguistic Tools

In this final section, we'll look at some more methods for choosing words in a way that helps the other person to feel more rapport between you, that can help you move them past a stumbling block, and that let you guide the conversation without appearing to control it. These tools are a form of 'artfully vague' language, meaning that you need to do this with intention in order for it to be effective. Following are examples of what we mean:

- **Using someone's name** – addressing someone by their name is a way to establish rapport because it signals a level of connection, it can make them feel special, and it can subtly remind them that your message is directed to them. However, to use it effectively, you need to be sure of several things:

> Using someone's name establishes a level of connection when it is used correctly and appropriately. .

  - o Be sure you know how they want to be addressed. If a woman you are speaking to prefers Ms. Jones to Miss Jones and you use the latter, you will be irritating her rather than building rapport. Don't move to first names until either they have called you by your first name or you ask them if it's OK to call them by it. Once you're on a first-name basis, be sure you use the correct version of their name. Is it Robert, Rob, or Bob? Find out so you don't cause barriers to building rapport with this technique.
  - o Don't overuse it. Saying someone's name is an effective way to draw attention to a specific point. But if you use it in every other sentence, you're going to become obvious. There is a delicate balance to how frequently you use their name, so take care not to abuse it.

- **Mind reading** – with this tool, you indicate with your word choice that you know what the other person is thinking. If you are accurate, you've strengthened your rapport and you can manage an objection to what you are proposing to them before it is voiced. You can use language to persuade someone that they really do feel the way you are suggesting. Examples include:

> With this technique you us language to persuade someone that they feel the way you are suggesting.

  - o *I know you believe this might be difficult, but it will be worth it.*
  - o *I understand that you are concerned about the outcome, but your careful preparation will ensure success.*
  - o *Many people feel, as you do, that it's important to demonstrate integrity in our work and product.*

- **Lost Performative** – in this case, you are stating a value judgment that omits identifying the person who is doing the judging. This makes it a neutral, easy to agree with statement. It is called the lost performative because there is no indication of the source of the information. You are actually increasing your ability to control the conversation without taking and misinterpreting the other person's point of view. Examples include:

> In this technique you make a neutral, easy to agree with statement with no indication of the source of the information.

  - *It's a fact that people like people who are like themselves.*
  - *It's good to know that the economy is getting better.*

- **Cause and effect relationships –** this helps you put across a message when you want the other person to see the effect of what you are talking about. For example:

  - *Seeing you come in late makes me feel you don't care*
  - *Coaching will help you learn many skills*
  - *Attending this meeting will create changes*

- **Presuppostion** - a presupposition is something that you haven't stated but that is assumed to be present or true for your statement to be understood. For example:

  o *When we've finished your appraisal, you'll feel confident about the next six months* (we are presupposing that the confidence will come or that we will do something that will leave them feeling confident – all we have to do is finish the appraisal).
  o *As the economy picks up, we will see profits improve* (we are presupposing that the economy will pick up eventually).

- **Universal beliefs** – a statement of something as a universal belief implies that there is no exception to what you are saying. You can use universal beliefs to get the person in the habit of agreeing with you. Examples might be:

  o *Everyone wants to be happy at work*
  o *If you remain positive, you'll see better results*

- **Tag questions -** this tool gets the other person to think about what you said and then answer it in their mind. Since we can think about five times faster than we can talk, this can work well in persuasion and influencing.

  o *As we take more action, our market share goes up,* ***doesn't it?***
  o *By listening more closely, you've learned much more,* ***haven't you?***

- **Embedded commands** – these are exactly what they sound like – a command in your language without actually commanding someone to do something. These words speak to the subconscious and form part of a larger context, like:

  o *So, looking at your priorities makes you feel better now?* (Embedded command is 'feel better now.')
  o *It's good you've decided to get that report finished by 2pm.* (Embedded command is that you've decided – finish it by 2pm)

6. Framework Theories for Applying Persuasion and Influence Techniques

6.1 Introduction

You've learned a great deal at this point about building rapport and have gotten some insight into how the words you choose can help to persuade someone. But how do you know how to apply those tools? To answer this question, we'll look at some theories posed on how persuasion works. Yes, you have some tools now to help you influence and persuade others, but this information will give you a framework for how you can apply them.

6.2 Rank's Intensify and Downplay Model

In this model, Henry Rank describes a model of persuasion using two opposite strategies: intensification and downplay. This means that when you are in a situation where you are attempting to persuade someone else, you use the two strategies to highlight certain aspects of the conversation and to downplay other aspects of the conversation.

6.2.1 Intensify

When you intensify something, you draw attention to it by making it more significant. You use three tools to intensify something: repetition, association and composition. You will recognize these concepts from commercials and other marketing campaigns because they are effective at getting you to hear a message and purchase their product. If you think about it, you are doing the same thing when you are attempting to persuade someone, only your product is an idea or a decision.

- o **Repetition** – When you repeat something multiple times, it is more likely that the other person will remember it, which can help them to be influenced by it. Plus, when you repeat something enough, the listener is more likely to accept that thought or statement as true. You see this in commercials when an advertisement repeats a word over and over again. New, improved, bargain, or other descriptors are commonly repeated in hopes that you will remember the statement.

○ **Association** – In this technique, you draw a connection for the listener between your concept and another idea with which they are already emotionally connected. You can use negative or positive emotions in this technique. For example, you can persuade someone to keep a job by associating the loss of a job with the loss of their home and their family's comfort. You can persuade someone to accept a delegated task by associating it with a sense of pride in accomplishment or by letting them know you are choosing them because you associate them with intelligence and prudent thought. You see this in commercials when the 'beautiful people' are using the product and smiling brightly, or when the guy who uses the product gets the girl. The advertiser is trying to draw an association between their product and the emotional experience of the people being portrayed.

○ **Composition** – This strategy uses the structure of your argument to compare the outcome being portrayed against an outcome that is less desirable. You are basically making your option look or sound better by contrasting it with another possible outcome. In advertisements, you can think of 'before and after' commercials or someone who is unhappy before a product and happy afterwards. There can be a strong emotional tug here as well.

6.2.2 Downplay

On the other side of the intensify coin, you have downplaying. It is the opposite strategy from intensification. Here the goal is to distract from certain aspects of the situation. The methods you use to downplay a fact or statement are the opposite of the ones you would use to intensify them. In this situation, you would use diversion, omission, or confusion.

- o **Diversion** – this is a basic distraction technique. You simply divert the person's attention to something by drawing their attention to another feature or characteristic of your argument. For example, if you are trying to convince your boss to let you work from home, he or she might zone in on the fact that they wouldn't be able to supervise you directly. Instead of letting the conversation dwell on that issue, you could divert their attention to the fact that you would be more productive without distractions, which in the long run will save the company money and will make your boss look good when you are getting things done faster.

- o **Omission** – this is exactly what it sounds like; you simply do not say anything about a topic that you think might sway the other person from your point of view. However, you need to be careful when you use this tactic because in a work scenario, you may be required to use full disclosure. Or, if you omit information when you work with a customer and it is information that they discover after the fact, if they consider it important information they will not appreciate the fact that you omitted the information in the first place. However, if you can safely leave certain information out of a conversation that you think would dissuade the other party, you can choose to do so. It might be something that you can address after you have already gained agreement, at which point the item may no longer have as much importance.

- o **Confusion** – although this is not the most noble of persuasion tactics, it is effective. If you can establish yourself as the expert with the complex or highly scientific information, you may override the other person's position simply because they are not able to deliver their position with the same amount of detail. If you know the topic you are discussing inside and out and the other party does not, you will be at an advantage because you will be able to show a depth of knowledge that makes it seem as if because you know more you must also know better.

6.3 Monroe's Motivated Sequence of Persuasion Steps

In the 1930s, John Monroe developed a series of steps that he believed were the keys to persuading another individual. The steps are:

- Attention

- Need

- Satisfaction

- Visualization

- Action

6.3.1 Attention

To get someone to listen to your argument, you need to get their attention. You have about five seconds when talking to someone to engage their attention before they will lose focus. You can do this in several ways.

- Use their name with a tone that conveys urgency or importance

- Use emotion to demonstrate your position – smile, frown, be exasperated – whatever emotion conveys the strength of your position

- Physically touch them if you have the level of rapport where this is appropriate. Put your hand on their forearm or shoulder to draw their attention.

- Bring up a topic that you know they are passionate about and segue into your argument – but be sure there is a valid connection so you don't seem to be changing the topic too quickly

- Start with a statement that conveys the benefit of your position for the other person

6.3.2 Need

Once you have the other person's attention, work to keep it. You can lose their attention as quickly as you have it if the other person doesn't see the need to continue listening. To keep the other person's attention, you have to be familiar with what is important to them. What do they want? What do they value? Why should they care about your side of the argument? Once you can answer these questions, you are ready to 'hook' the listener by focusing on what they care about.

6.3.3 Satisfaction

In this step, you describe to the listener how your position will meet the need you addressed in the previous step. Will your solution solve their problem? Will it prevent them from having to deal with additional problems? In other words, what benefits will the listener receive if they are persuaded by your argument. Or what negative consequences will they avoid?

6.3.4 Visualization

Visualization means that you can create a picture for the listener of what the situation will look like once they have been persuaded to accept your position or agree to your decision. Help them do this by describing what the world will be like 'after' they agree with you. For example, use language like:

- Imagine what it will be like when you no longer have to…

- Can you see how this would reduce your work load (solve your problem, increase your profits, etc.)

- Picture yourself leaving work on time once we make this change (or some other way their life will improve once they agree with you)

6.3.5 Action

Once you sense that you are approaching agreement, you need to cement it by suggesting the next step or action that will put your solution in motion. Don't wait – act as soon as you can so that the other person is not left stewing and thinking things over more (and perhaps changing their mind).

6.4 The Integrity Principle

When you are persuading or influencing another, you are assuming a position of leadership. However, you won't be perceived as a leader unless you exhibit the trait of integrity. Integrity can be defined simply as being true to your word, being authentic in your actions and speech, and demonstrating the kind of behavior that you expect others to have. In other words, don't ask others to trust or believe in you or your solution if you haven't demonstrated that you are trustworthy.

Integrity is something that you have to practice continually. It takes effort to honor your word every time and to be the example you want from others even when you are under stress or simply have a personality conflict. But the benefits you can gain from developing integrity are enormous when compared to the damage you can do in the workplace – and to your ability to persuade others - if you lack it.

Think for a moment about characteristics of people who have tried to persuade you that you didn't like. What, specifically, were the attitudes, behaviors, or traits of that person that has you still thinking of them in a negative light? Probably you would list things like favoring certain people, not coming through on promises he or she made, gossiping, taking credit for another person's work, or treating you disrespectfully. All of these issues can be traced to a lack of integrity.

So how do you practice integrity? There are three key areas that you can concentrate on developing. As you read each description, ask yourself how you would feel someone trying to convince you of something did not possess these key characteristics.

2.3.1 Sincerity

Also called authenticity, people with this facet of integrity:

- Do not put up a false front

- Accept responsibility for their commitments and strive to meet them

- Are honest about their own limitations

- Accept responsibility for their mistakes

- Tell the truth

2.3.2 Consistency

You can demonstrate this facet of integrity by:

- Treating people equally as much as possible

- Following through on promises

- Working as hard or harder than is expected

- Having the same expectations or rules for yourself as you have for others

2.3.3 Substance

Substance refers to integrity becoming a part of who you are being in all your work relationships by:

- Keeping private information private

- Not gossiping or complaining about team members to other team members

- Doing what's best for the team and not just yourself

- Giving credit where credit is due

- Caring about the development of your employees if you are a supervisor

- Making it a priority to maintain clear communication and resolve any conflicts

If you have read this information and realized that you have not always acted with integrity in the workplace, you are certainly not alone. But going forward, you can now recognize that integrity can be built one action at a time. As you get more practiced at it, you will find that it becomes a habit. And once you start seeing the results that come from practicing integrity, you will want to keep going.

7. Influence and Persuasion in Sales

7.1 Establishing a Basis for Persuasion in Sales

Although the information shared to this point can certainly be used in sales, there are a few additional points that are specific to a sales relationship. Before you can persuade a customer to choose you or your company, you need to establish a basis for doing so. You can do this by following these steps:

1. Demonstrate Your Understanding

Putting yourself in your customer's shoes lets you look at the scenarios they are facing and helps you to concentrate on finding the best solution for their scenarios. When you work with your customer, the interaction is not about you – it's about them. Ask questions that demonstrate you are well-informed about their business their needs, and how your organization can help them to be more successful in their own business.

2. Generate a Friendly, Responsive Environment

Don't underestimate the impact of being friendly and responsive. Your attitude in working with the customer, meeting their needs, and handling their requests says a great deal about you and your organization to the customer. Plus, your responsiveness – how quickly you respond to their objection and how well you meet their expectations – will be an important decision point for any customer in whether or not they will be persuaded to use your company. One good rule of thumb is to under-promise and over-deliver for your customers. You'll be demonstrating an exceptional level of customer service that they will want to experience again in the future.

3. Provide Evidence and More Evidence

You need to be able to demonstrate to your customer that you, your organization, and your product or service are the best choice for the customer. Be able to explain precisely how your offering will benefit the customer in ways that the competition cannot. Give the customer testimonials from other customers and show them before and after scenarios that prove how your product or service has made a difference for other customers and how it can do the same for them. No matter what you do, be sure that anything you share is fully verifiable.

4. Demonstrate Your Expertise

Who would you be more apt to buy from – someone who knows the basics about your industry or someone who you see as an expert in your field? As you work with the customer, demonstrate that you understand what you are presenting to them. Share information that shows you understand their field, the upcoming trends, and the challenges people in that industry are facing. You'll instill confidence in the customer to choose your product or service over the next provider.

7.2 Persuasion During Negotiations

There are several things you should do before negotiations begin in earnest. Negotiations require that you are able to persuade the other party of your terms, conditions, or requests. First, you should be certain that you understand any objections that have already been raised – the root of them as well as possible causes for them. You should be sure that you have presented your proposal in terms of the value that it offers the client – in every sense possible. You need to be sure that you have adopted the right attitude for negotiating – that is, the attitude that will make you most persuasive. And finally, you need to know for certain where your 'lines in the sand' are. These are the conditions that you have to have met in order for an agreement to be reached, without which you are willing to walk away.

7.2.1 Identifying the Root of the Objection

Customers may tell you directly why they are objecting, but they might not. They might try to be polite or evasive, or they simply might not be comfortable expressing themselves directly. So it will be your job to explore the objection in order to get to the root of it. You will need to listen to the client – both to what is being said and what is not being said.

Start by asking some questions that will help uncover the root of the objection. The exact questions you use will vary depending on what the client says, but some possible examples include:

- What is your main concern with this point?

- Why does that particular concern worry you?

- If your concern were handled, what would the result look like?

- What is your main priority in considering this offer?

- What information do you still need?

- What would the ideal offer for your situation include?

- What are the main factors you will consider in choosing your provider?

Notice that these are all open-ended questions. They give the prospect the opportunity to talk so that you can learn more information as well. You could also focus on questioning in ways that redirect the prospect to focusing on the benefits of your product or service. Some examples of these types of questions include:

- We've talked about the fact that you have a challenge with _____. What would it be worth to your organization if that challenge were resolved?

- How would it help you to be more competitive if you didn't have to deal with the problems caused by _____ anymore?

- What value can you see in eliminating _____ from your daily workload?

If you find that the prospect is not willing to give you more information, you might need to examine other possible reasons for their objection.

7.2.2 Failure to Create Desire

All sales require that your client has a desire to own your product or use your service. If you haven't yet created that desire, you will face objections and not make the sale no matter how persuasive you think you are being. This idea comes from the sales method known as AIDA, an acronym which stands for:

- A – Attention

- I – Interest

- D – Desire

- A – Action

This is very similar to Monroe's Motivated Sequence Model that we discussed in Chapter Six. The point is that if you haven't created the desire for your services, you will not persuade the customer that they need your services. Why would they buy something that they don't want? You will need to go back and establish desire by demonstrating the benefits your offering will provide to the customer. If you do this well enough, you won't have to do any more persuading – the customer will already want what you are offering.

7.2.3 Failure to Be Perceived as an Expert

Another common reason underlying objections is that your customer doesn't yet see you as a partner in their business. At the very least, they should see you as a source of expert information and assistance when they need it. If they don't see you that way yet, you will need to work at reinforcing their perception of you as a benefit to their organization in order to persuade them to complete the sale. You can do this by taking some simple steps like:

- Sending customers information from industry publications or other sources that are related to their business

- Keeping informed about any regulatory changes to their business

- Following your customers in the news so that you know what their challenges are and what they might need in the future

- Creating a network of contacts so that if your customer needs something you don't provide, you have a specific person that you can refer them to

- Continuing to receive training on developments of the products that your company offers, as well as any products that your competition is offering

- Attending conferences that are related to your industry and sharing what you learn with your customers

Once you are perceived as an expert in the customer's field, you will find that objections become much rarer. The customer will come to you asking for advice and suggestions rather than you having to go to the customer and 'sell' to them.

7.3 Adopt the Correct Attitude

Your mind needs to be in the right place when you enter into negotiations. Otherwise, you will simply not be as persuasive as you could be. You don't want your emotions to get in the way of your ability to interact with the other party and you want to be prepared to continue providing the best quality service you can for the customer. Here are some tips for ensuring you have the right attitude:

• Be confident in yourself, your organization, and the value that your product or service provides

• Remember that objections to your proposal are not objections against you personally

• Remain calm in order to keep thinking clearly and responding well

• Be patient because not everyone thinks at the same pace or in the same way

• Remind yourself that the goal is to find a solution and agreement that provides value to both parties

7.4 Know Your Ultimate Conditions

We know a few things about customers by now. We know that they are likely to try to get the lowest price and most favorable conditions possible. We know that they can have unrealistic expectations or unreasonable demands. But we also know that there is a point during the negotiations at which they are willing to walk away from the table and go to the competition instead.

You need to know the same information about your own position. At what point will you decide that persuasion and influence is not possible, and that you would be better served pursuing another customer? What are the requirements that an agreement must include in order for you to take it? What are the points on which you are willing to make concessions and the points on which you are not? If you don't know this going into the negotiations, you could waste time arguing points that are not critical for you. This might take more than your own input to determine, so if you are negotiating as a team, be sure to schedule a meeting to discuss this ahead of time.

8. Resources

Businessballs.com. Sales and Selling – Training and Techniques.
http://www.businessballs.com/salestraining.htm#changingfaceofselling

Changingminds.org. Rank's Intensify / Downplay Schema.
http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/overall/rank_schema.htm

IncreaseBrainPower.com. Persuasion Techniques.
http://www.increasebrainpower.com/persuasion-techniques.html

Mindtools.com. Communication Skills Articles, various.
http://www.mindtools.com/page8.html

MTD Training Academy. Advanced Communication Skills.
http://www.mtdacademy.com