

Persuading and Influencing Others: Getting People to Do What You Say (911 words)

The ability to persuade and influence others is a vital skill for personal and professional success. There are a few strategies to keep in mind. It's critical that you include all of the ingredients of persuasion, get all of your points across precisely, organize your ideas in the proper order, and balance style with substance.

Ingredients of Persuasion: For centuries, there have been some steadfast strategies that really work to persuade and influence others. Cicero was onto something. The five canons of rhetoric (ingredients of persuasion) are invention, disposition, style, delivery, and memory.

Invention means that there is something new: New ideas, new methods, new twists, the latest research. **Disposition** is an old word for organization. The more organized the presentation of your ideas, the more credibility you will enjoy. **Style** refers to your word choice, simple language, moderately challenging vocabulary, or a grand approach sounding almost like listening to poetry. **Delivery** is the mechanical aspect of the exchange of information. It can include the channel of communication to use, email, text message, face-to-face. Delivery also includes nonverbal aspects such as sitting, standing, providing a handout, using visual aids, your voice, the volume, discussion or lecture. Memory is to create some sort of memory aid, for yourself and for the other person. Using an acronym or an acrostic can help. Having a pattern such as moving left to right, top to bottom, largest to smallest, closest to farthest, or alphabetical order. This type of memory aid makes it easier for you to remember what you want to say and also easier for the other person to remember what you said.

So, do your homework and be a thought leader in your industry, organize your ideas to have the greatest impact, fine-tune your word choice, make it come to life in your delivery, and make it memorable. Follow these steps and you will be wildly effective and people will most likely do what you suggest.

Get Your Point Across Precisely: The key to getting your point across is to be disciplined in your approach and be clear and concise in your communication. A great technique to get your point across is the SEER method of explanation. Make a Statement, provide an Explanation, provide an Example or two, and review with a Restatement of your main point.

This formula follows a person's natural train of thought. You will be able to share your ideas clearly and efficiently and the other person will understand precisely and take action effectively.

Organize Ideas in Proper Order: I have found over the years that there is an order and sequence that seems to have the greatest impact in persuading and influencing others. This formula is called Monroe's Motivated Sequence: Attention, Need, Satisfaction, Visualization, and Action.

You get peoples' attention by sharing a startling statistic, a shocking statement, asking a question, telling a story, or referring to the situation at hand. You establish the need. There is a problem with the status quo and explain how it directly affects them. Then share your idea of how to satisfy that need or solve the problem. Get them to visualize the future. Have them imagine the negative consequences if they don't follow your suggestion. Then have them picture the positive benefits if they do what you suggest. Finally call them to action. Tell them exactly what you would like them to do. It is also wise to cite two sources other than yourself and have a visual aid that demonstrates the positive outcome you seek.

Try the Motivated Sequence. It balances logic with emotion. It helps people make a good decision and feel good about the decision we asked them to make. That's the least we can do for people.

Balance Style with Substance: Sometimes we feel out-of-balance when trying to persuade and influence others. We approach it like Goldilocks, too hot or too cold, too little or too much, too much feeling and too little fact, too many facts and too little feelings, too general and too specific. When it comes to persuading and influencing others, too much of anything is manipulation. Balance is critical.

There are three pillars of proof we must balance to be effective. These are ethos, logos and pathos. Think of these three principles like the legs of a three-legged stool. All three of the legs of the stool need to be the same length to be effective as a stool and to avoid looking crooked. Ethos, Logos, and Pathos need to be the same depth, otherwise you will be ineffective as a communicator and you will seem crooked, too. **Ethos** is your credibility, your trustworthiness, your reputation. You always drag yourself along into the conversation. What do people think when they think of you? **Logos** is the reason, rational, and logic of your suggestion. Does this make sense? Does this add up? Are the ideas well-researched and believable? **Pathos** is the emotional aspect of the other party, their fears, hopes, reservations, and desires. Take the time to really understand the other party and incorporate their concerns into the conversation.

Your style will shine through during your discussions. The key is to balance your good reputation and status, by investing time to research thoroughly, and by investing time to understand others fully. You can balance style and substance.

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