

THE 5 PATHS TO PERSUASION

The Art of Selling Your Message

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MAIN IDEA

- A two-year study of 1,700 executives, found that there are actually only five general types of decision making styles in use:
1. Followers (36-percent) – who make decisions based on how other highly successful people have made decisions in the past.
 2. Charismatics (25-percent) – who get enthusiastic about new ideas but rely on others to think through all the details.
 3. Skeptics (19-percent) – who automatically distrust anything they hear, especially if it conflicts with their view of the world.
 4. Thinkers (11-percent) – who need to methodically work through all the advantages and disadvantages before making a decision.
 5. Controllers (9-percent) – who have to be hands-on and involved in every aspect of the decision making process.

If you accurately identify the preferred decision making style of the person you're selling to, you can then tailor your sales process to provide them with more of what they need and less of what won't influence them to act. This will ensure your message gets its best possible reception which, in turn, will lead to your being more persuasive and getting more business done

"The five styles of decision making span a wide range of behavioral characteristics. Controllers, for instance, shun risk, whereas Charismatics actively seek it out. But in spite of such differences, people often mistakenly use a one-size-fits-all approach when trying to persuade others, concentrating too much on the content of their argument and not enough on how the intended recipient wants to receive the information. In fact, we know of numerous companies that force their salespeople to use canned presentations, with the same format and order of information – down to the exact number of PowerPoint slides! – for different customers in diverse industries. Such tactics simply don't work. In our research, we have found that far too many decisions have gone the wrong way because of a crucial mismatch in how information was presented versus how it should have been presented. Knowing the difference can dramatically improve your ability to sway executives. Human behavior is far too complex for cookie-cutter approaches. But the breakthrough of our new framework is that you don't have to start from scratch every single time you're dealing with someone new. With this information, you can tap into the full power of persuasion. You will push through your initiatives and close deals. In short, by learning how to make your arguments stick, you'll avoid mistakes and you will get business done."

– Robert Miller and Gary Williams

1. Differentiating The Five Decision Making Styles Pages 2 - 3

Before you make an attempt to try and influence someone, first identify and categorize how they like to make decisions. If you can accurately decode their personal decision-making style and preferences, you'll have the inside running on how best to persuade them to move forward with your proposal. With this level of information, your presentations can then evolve from a cookie-cutter or one-size-fits-all approach to a custom-tailored proposal executives will be predisposed to accept.

2. How To Persuade Followers Page 4

Followers can be the most difficult to identify because very few executives will like this label. Fortunately, however, followers are the most straightforward to persuade. As long as you've laid the proper foundation and supplied enough proof that your proposal has worked in comparable situations in the past, followers will often be willing to give you a favorable decision right on the spot. Followers are always looking for a bargain, so if your proposal shows that you're offering one, you'll be halfway there.

3. How To Persuade Charismatics Page 5

Charismatics live for the next big idea. They are quick to embrace bold innovations with energy and enthusiasm. Therefore, they are easy to sell to, as long as you provide them with balanced, detailed information that the charismatic decision maker can pass along to his or her details person to go through. Charismatics make decisions quickly but always require someone to be following through on the details for them later on.

4. How To Persuade Skeptics Page 6

About one-in-five decision makers will be skeptics – inherently suspicious of anything you say. These are the people who will doggedly march to the beat of their own drummer, even if the rest of the world is going in a different direction. Fortunately, this also makes them one of the easiest types of decision makers to persuade. All you have to do is present them with a good proposal and build their confidence in you as a source of good ideas. Do that, and skeptics will make decisions quickly.

5. How To Persuade Thinker Decision Makers Page 7

Decision makers who are thinkers pride themselves on their ability to outsmart and outmaneuver their competitors. Therefore, they read extensively and often become widely considered as experts in their field. To persuade them, be prepared to discuss the pros and cons of not only your proposal but also every conceivable alternative. Thinkers won't be prepared to make a decision until they have analyzed all the options thoroughly.

6. How To Persuade Controllers Page 8

Controllers are actually a rare breed (less than one-in-ten decision makers) which is just as well because working with them is frustrating. Controllers have to feel like they are in charge every step of the way. They can't really be persuaded to do anything. The main allies on your side are sufficient time for them to come around and the opportunity for external events or the actions of competitors to underline what you're proposing.

